



# The UN Bangkok Rules on women prisoners



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## Global trends

There is an **increasing** number of **women in prison** globally.



Source: World Prison Brief, [prisonstudies.org](http://prisonstudies.org)

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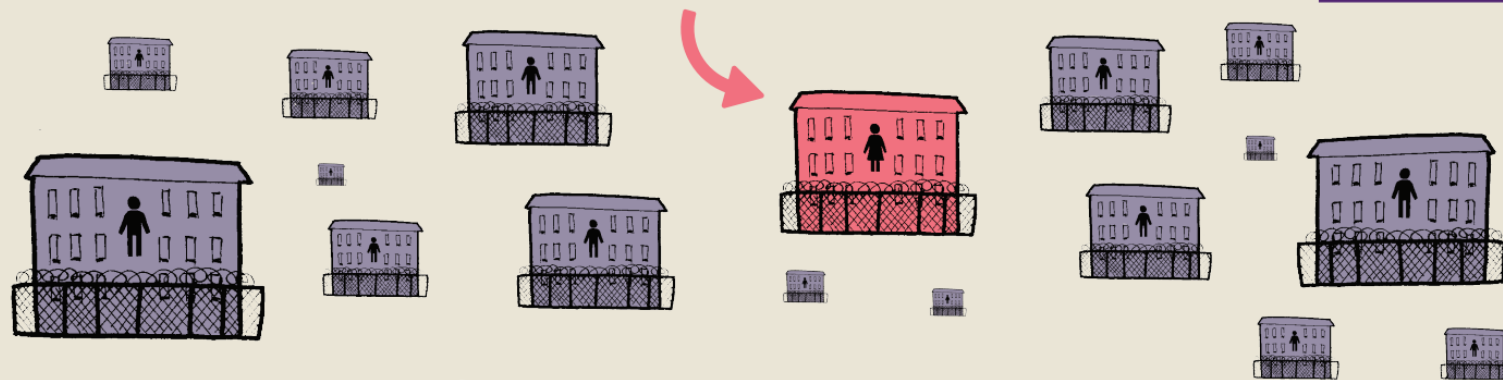
# Global trends

Europe:  
2010-2020  
decreased by  
29% to  
85,000  
women.



# Prison and probation set up for majority (men)

Only **2-9%** of national prison populations are **women**.



So prisons often **lack** programmes and services to meet their **specific needs**.

Source: WHO Europe [euro.who.int](http://euro.who.int)

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# UN Bangkok Rules

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## Detention conditions

- Admission, allocation, registration and classification
- Hygiene and healthcare services
- Safety and security
- Discipline and punishment
- Parental responsibilities, contact with the outside world
- Rehabilitation programmes and early release schemes

## Gender-sensitive sentencing and non-custodial

## Healthcare for women in detention

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*"The mere replication of health services provided for male prisoners is not adequate."*

UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women



## Healthcare for women in detention

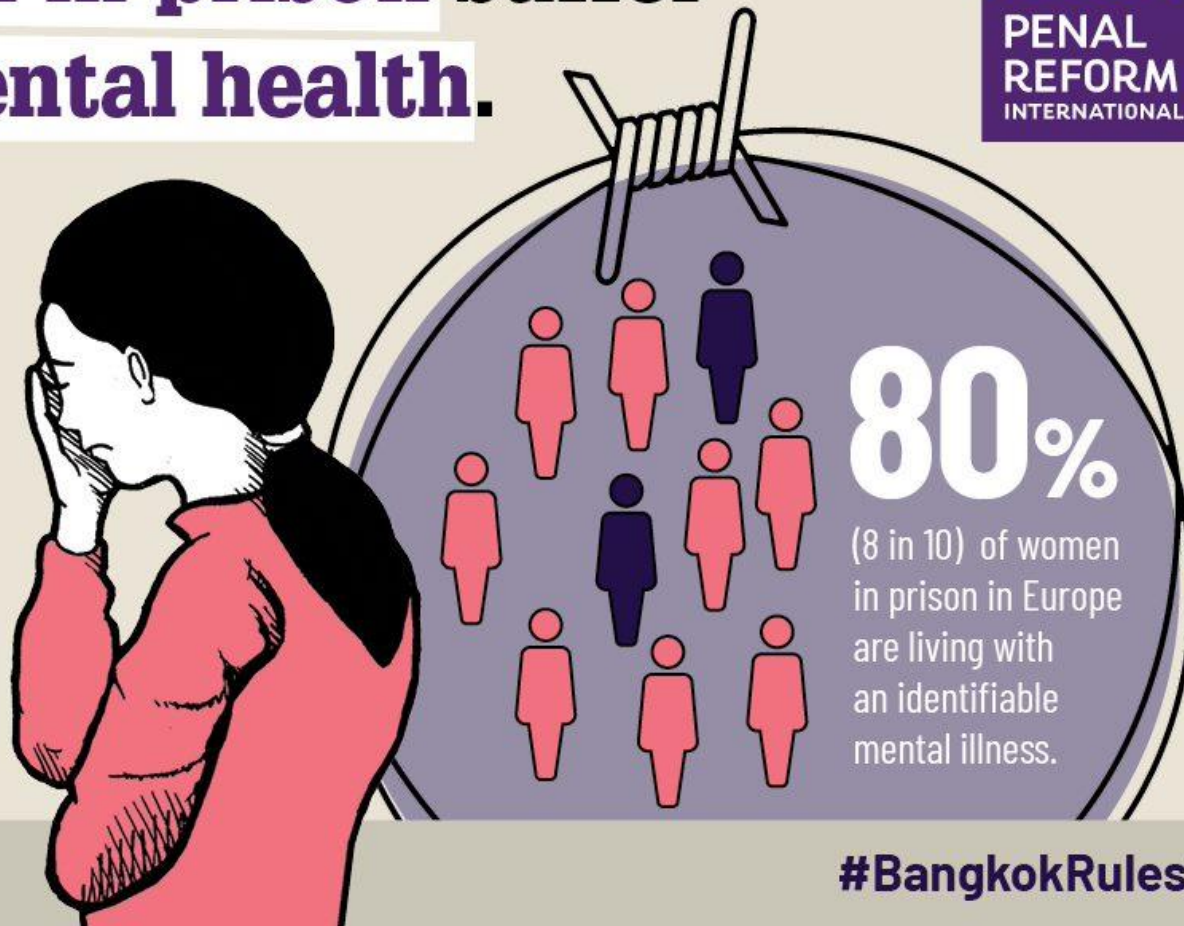
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- > Includes but also goes beyond periods and pregnancy!
- > Health screening upon entry may be first time seeing a doctor
- > Different needs from underlying health conditions and typical backgrounds
- > Mental health

# Many women in prison suffer from poor mental health.



**COVID-19** and related responses are increasing mental distress.



Source: WHO Europe, [euro.who.int](http://euro.who.int)

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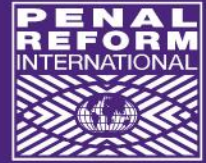


## Violence and women's imprisonment

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- > High rates among women in prison (8/10)
- > Direct and indirect causes of offending (from most serious through to petty offences)
- > Direct link to mental health illness

# Applying a 'gender-sensitive approach'



## Implementing the Bangkok Rules





# Taking violence into account at sentencing

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## > Bangkok Rule 61

When sentencing women offenders, courts shall have the power to consider **mitigating factors** such as lack of criminal history and relative non-severity and nature of the criminal conduct, in the light of women's caretaking responsibilities and **typical backgrounds**.

## Trauma informed approach

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- > Different needs due to experience of violence
- > Different impact of prison practices, eg body searches, solitary confinement
- > Higher vulnerability in detention, incl violence & (sexual) exploitation



# Gender-sensitive rehabilitation



PRI's projects (Uganda and Georgia):

- > Vocational training (IT etc)
- > Small business management skills development
- > Start-up/ capital for own business

## Vulnerabilities post-release

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- > Stigmatisation (research shows less support than for men leaving prison)
- > Discrimination in accessing employment/ education
- > Poverty
- > Homelessness, childcare, substance dependencies
- > Violence



# Women serving non-custodial alternatives

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- > Understanding differences for women not only in prison, but in serving community-based sanctions
- > PRI project with Kenya Probation and Aftercare Service



Woman serving a community service order in Kenya



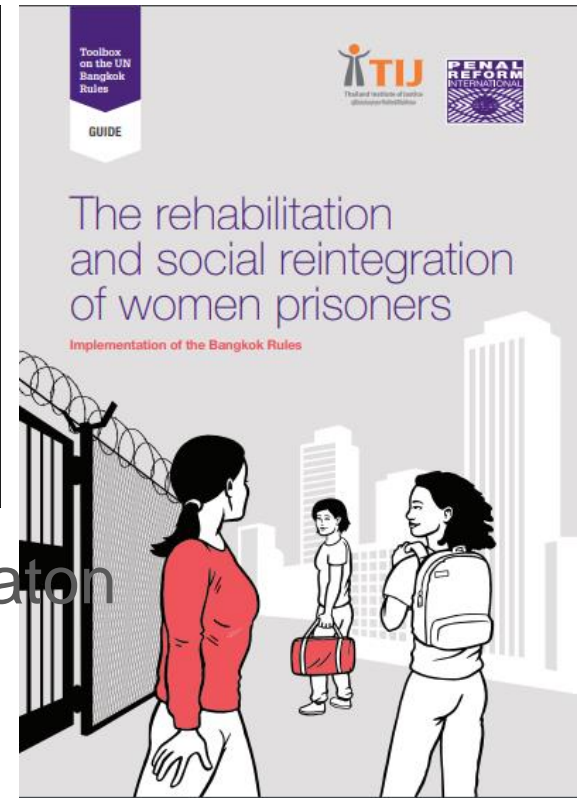
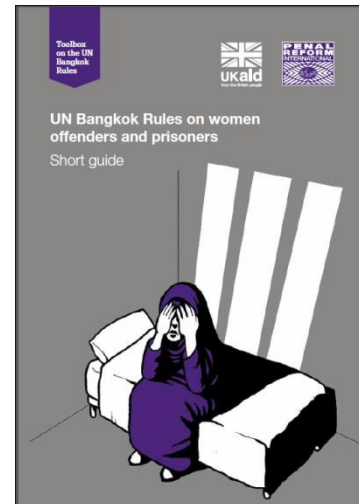
## Findings – women serving probation/CSO in Kenya

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- > Financial struggles to fulfil conditions
- > Length and scheduling of community service work – issues with providing for family
- > Safety issues – supervised by male probation officers. High rates of violence experienced, so sometimes led to breaches of their order
- > Stigmatisation
- > Most committed offences because of poverty - sanction did not address this

# PRI's Toolbox on the UN Bangkok Rules

- > Guidance Document
- > E-course/ Workbook
- > Research
- > Mental health guide
- > Guide on rehabilitation
- > Guidance on gender-sensitive probation
- > Bangkok Rules map of good practices



# Implementation of Bangkok Rules

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> Where are we 10+ years on?





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