

National Consultation on the Situation of Prisons in Senegal: Improvement of the Condition of Detention, Social Integration and Prevention of Violent Extremism through Education

Concept Note

Hotel Faidherbe, Dakar, Senegal
23–24 May 2017

I. Background and Justification

The situation in Senegalese prisons is of a greatest concern given the overall context of insecurity that characterizes the sector. Despite the desire to humanize this space by adopting the name, “House of Arrest and Corrections (HAC)” instead of the term “prison,” which is perceived as more degrading, the fate of places of detention in Senegal and the detainees themselves has not improved. As a result, policies to rehabilitate marginalized populations and reintegrate them into society after their sentences, have never met the aspirations of the Senegalese state as a showcase of democracy and the rule of law in Africa.

In Senegal, threats to prison populations are in fact not only related to space and overcrowding. The surrounding hyper-terrorism and the process of radicalization in the Sahel have revealed new types of prisoners who have entered the prison environment. The risks of indoctrination from prison cells are therefore real and require greater vigilance. The presence of alleged extremists in Senegalese prisons creates an even more complex situation within the Senegalese society. Young prisoners are found to be more prone to recruitment by violent extremists, because they are incarcerated due to the state of socialization, limited religious knowledge and lack of professional prospects upon leaving prison.

Indeed, reintegration from Senegal's correctional facilities have largely consisted of a series of education programs, such as literacy and painting, developed by a number of organizations, but the space provided by prison administration, line Ministries, and NGOs are limited and the impact so far has been judged insufficient although the needs in the sector are important. A prison is not just a building, but it is also above all, an instrument of rehabilitation to regain a place in society. This obviously requires the development of training, education and vocational guidance that take into account what has been achieved during the sentence and the need for quality reintegration into society.

II. Why Prevention of Violent Extremism through Education (PVE-E)?

Violent extremism has become one of the most challenging threats facing many countries around the world. While eradication of poverty, promotion of citizenship and sustainable development are the priorities on the African continent to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the emergence and proliferation of violent extremist groups have created climates of fear and insecurity and are adversely affecting efforts to promote peace and effectiveness of human rights, including human security, namely economic, social and cultural rights.

Following the adoption of UNESCO's Executive Board Decision on "UNESCO's Role in Promoting Education as a Tool to Prevent Violent Extremism" (197 EX/46, 7 October 2015)¹, and the UN Secretary-General's "Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism" (A/70/674, 24 December 2015)², the importance of engaging in genuine prevention efforts has been prioritized, with a clear emphasis on the role of education as one of the most effective measures to create the conditions that make it difficult for violent extremist ideologies and acts to thrive. Furthermore, Doha Declaration endorsed by the UN General Assembly, calls for the integration of crime prevention and criminal justice into the wider UN agenda, with the understanding that the rule of law and sustainable development are interrelated and mutually reinforcing. To put into reality the Doha Declaration, The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has launched the Global Programme focusing on: judicial integrity, prisoner rehabilitation, preventing youth crime, and education for justice.³

SDG 4 on education, which promotes a transformative education agenda towards "inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all," highlights the commitment to address all forms of exclusion and marginalization, disparities and inequalities in access to education, participation and learning outcomes. This means that we must include our society's most vulnerable and most margined members, such as prisoners, in order to ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that are needed to build just, peaceful, and sustainable societies.

The UN Action Plan to PVE points to the certain recurrent drivers, which may lead to radicalization and violent extremism, including such factors as: *lack of socioeconomic opportunities, marginalization and discrimination, poor governance, violation of human rights and the rule of law, and prolonged and unsolved conflicts, and radicalization in prisons*. It further shows that harsh treatment in detention facilities can play a role in the recruitment of people who have joined violent extremist groups and terrorist organizations. Several factors drove prisoners to join such groups may include *"inhumane prison conditions and inhumane treatment of inmates, corrupt staff and security officers, gang activity, drug use, lack of security and proper facilities, and overcrowding (p. 8)."* UNODC notes that the prison overcrowding rates in the Sahel are among the highest in the world, exceeding 230% according to its estimates. Detention conditions in the region raise a number of security and human rights concerns, as well as a concern often leading to the radicalization of prisoners, through violent extremists' network in prisons, which radicalizes other prisoners, gains access to potential recruits, and coordinates crimes outside

¹ <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002348/234879e.pdf>

² http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/70/674

³ <http://www.unodc.org/unodc/doha-declaration/index.html>

prison.⁴ In Senegal, such network targets inmates who are used to prison conditions and have low knowledge of religion. Financial incentives from terrorism can be very attractive to people whose life conditions are very poor.

To protect human rights, *Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners*⁵ was adopted in 1955 coordinated by the Office of High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), which aimed to set out generally accepted good principle and practices in the treatment of prisoners and the management of institutions. In this regard, in Senegal, the National Observer of Places of Deprivation of Liberty (ONLPL), set up in 2009, following the Senegal's ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment⁶, has been functional since 2012. The law has been working for several years to disseminate these minimum standards, as well as the international and national legal frameworks for the prevention and suppression of torture and strengthening of the capacity of national law enforcement officials. Encouraging results have been recorded in recent years.

III. Organization of a National Consultation on prisons in Senegal

Committed to providing countries with guidance to implement effective educational strategies, which nurture a culture of peace and non-violence, UNESCO along with partner organizations, educators and policymakers will organize a *national consultation on the situation of prisons in Senegal: Improvement of the condition of detention, social integration and prevention of violent extremism*.

UNESCO's work in this area builds on its longstanding commitment to peace and human rights education, and more recently PVE-E through Global Citizenship Education (GCED)⁷, which aims to nurture respect for all, building a sense of belonging to a common humanity and helping learners become responsible and active global citizens. UNESCO has also established *UNESCO Chair in Applied Research for Education in Prison*,⁸ which aims to promote applied research on various aspects of correctional education and foster more in-depth consideration and concrete actions at an international level. Senegal is a member of this UNESCO Chair.

The problem specific to African prisons is the lack of serious research on educational projects in favor of the prison population. Within the universities, very few departments are interested in this type of research. Many actions for the reintegration of prisoners have been carried out, but they are very poorly documented and made available to decision-makers. The Study and Research Group on Marginality and Exclusion in Senegal (GERMES) of Cheikh Anta Diop University (UCAD) sent many alert signals about the state of the prisons but the message has never seriously been taken with a view to finding lasting solutions. In other words, the proposed consultation could be a starting point for an awareness raising in favor of the prison population long ignored in the public policies.

⁴ UNODC Sahel Programme 2013-2017 // Progress Report January 2016.

https://www.unodc.org/documents/westandcentralafrica/Sahel_Programme_Progress_Report_January_2016.pdf

⁵ <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/TreatmentOfPrisoners.aspx>

⁶ <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/OPCAT.aspx>

⁷ <http://en.unesco.org/gced/approach>

⁸ <http://www.cmv-educare.com/en/>

Goal:

The consultation will offer the opportunity to reflect on the problems of prisons in Senegal and to propose to the decision makers and other actors working on prison education viable solutions to absorb the potential violent shocks to the Senegalese society.

Specific objectives:

1. Build a shared understanding of the prison problems in Senegal among different ministries and stakeholders, and reflect on the consequences if an urgent and adequate settlement measures are not taken;
2. Take stock of the provision of training during sentencing and the prospect of reintegration to the society by reviewing the current practices in prisons, as well as the legislative and institutional frameworks and policy gaps to better address the needs of the prison population; and
3. Propose an adequate framework of effective intervention for second chance activities better suited to the Senegalese context, linked to the Emergent Senegal Plan (PSE) and relevant regional and global frameworks to ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that are needed to build just, peaceful, and sustainable societies.

Expected Outputs:

- A. A report is produced indicating the recommendations resulting from the exchanges
- B. A plan of action to implement the recommendations is produced
- C. An advocacy strategy for the responsible authorities in the sector is developed.
- D. A coalition to follow up the recommendations is set up with a precise timetable.
- E. Identification of research topics

Method:

- Experts' presentations
- Small group discussions
- Debate in plenary sessions

Date and place of the consultation:

The consultation will take place in Dakar, Senegal from 23 – 24 May 2017.

Participants and partners:

The consultation will be attended by 35-50 people from the following institutions and organizations:

- **Senegalese Experts:**
 - Researchers affiliated to the UNESCO Chair in Applied Research for Education in Prison
 - Groupe d'études et de recherche sur l'exclusion et la marginalité au Sénégal (GERMES) [Study and research group on exclusion and marginality in Senegal]
 - Centre d'études Diplomatique et Stratégique de Dakar (CEDS) [The Center for Diplomatic and Strategic Studies of Dakar]

- **Civil Society Organizations (CSOs):**
 - Amnesty International
 - Article 19
 - West African Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP)
 - La Rencontre Africaine pour la Défense des Droits de l'Homme (RADDHO) [The African Meeting for the Defense of Human Rights]
 - Ligue Sénégalaise des Droits Humains (LSDH) [Senegalese League of Human Rights]
 - L'Institut des Droits de l'Homme et de la Paix (IDHP) [Institute of Human Rights and Peace]
 - Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA)
 - Tostan
 - Mediators and personalities of social dialogue
 - Action by Christians for the Abolition of Torture (ACAT)

- **Government:**
 - Ministry of National Education
 - Ministry of Higher education & research
 - Ministry of Interior & public security
 - Ministry of Justice
 - Ministry of Youth, employment & citizenship
 - Ministry of Health & social action
 - Senegal Penitentiary Administration
 - National Observer of Places of Deprivation of Liberty (ONLPL)
 - Senegalese Human Rights Committee (CSDH)

- **Partners:**
 - UNODC and OHCHR will provide technical support

Senegal's Ministry of National Education and the National Commission for UNESCO serve as the focal point of the Senegalese government coordination. The National Commission will handle the logistics of the consultation.

Working languages:

The working languages of the workshop will be French.

Steering committee:

Principal Officer:

Oumar Ndong, Member of the Scientific Committee of the UNESCO Chair in Educational Research in Prisons.

Members:

Ms. Veronique Pétetin, Professor, Representative of Malal Almamy Talla, artist
Ms. Coumba Fall Venn, Pan-African Center for Gender, Peace and Development
Prof. Cherif Daha Ba, Director of Public Higher Education
Prof. Ouseynou Faye, Director of the Laboratory, GERMES
Prof. Ibrahima Thioub, Rector, UCAD and member of the Laboratory, GERMES
Ms. Borso Tall, Doctoral student in American studies, UCAD
Ms. Claudine Mendy, Lawyer, Amnesty International
General Mansour Niang, Former Director General of Prison Administration
Mr. Abdou Latif Aidara, Expert on security issues
Mr. Timothée Amousou, Expert on governance issues
Mr. Alfred Gomis, WANEP Senegal
General Alain Pereira, Board of Directors, WANEP
Prof. Samba Thiam, Director IDHP
Dr. Lori-Anne Thérroux-Bénoni, Director of the Institute of Security Studies (ISS), Bureau de Dakar
Dr. Akemi Yonemura, Programme Specialist, Education, UNESCO Dakar
Ms. Catherine Collin, UNESCO Dakar
Ms. Rokhiatou Gassama, Education Specialist, Civil Society
Ms. Aminata Daff, Inspector of Education, Rufisque Academy Inspectorate
Prof. Fatou Sarr Sow, Sociologist, UCAD
Prof. Djiby Diakhaté, Sociologist, IAM
Ms. Awa Ba, Country Program Director, OSIWA Senegal
Dr. Mathias Hounkpe, Director Governance Program, OSIWA
Ms. Afia Asantewa Kya, Director, Justice Program, OSIWA
Mr. T. M. Buah, Prison Program Officer, OSIWA
Ms. Aissatou Kebe, Directrice Programme TOSTAN
Ms. Penda Mbaye, Responsable programme TOSTAN
Mr. Thieyacine Fall, Human Rights, United Nations
Mr. Assane Dioma Ndiaye, Lawyer and President of LSDH
Mr. Moustapha Fall, Director of Programs, SYTO
Ms. Fatou Jagne Senghor, Director, Article 19
Ms. Wore Ndiaye Kandji, Program Officer, Goree Institute
UNESCO Dakar
UNODC
Senegalese National Commission for UNESCO
Penitentiary Administration
Ministries

Expected participants: 50