



# RAPID PRISONS ASSESSMENT REPORT

BANJUL, THE GAMBIA  
AUGUST 2019



Empowered lives.  
Resilient nations.

*Cover photo: Jeshwang Prison: Inmate inside an isolated cell.*  
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# LIST OF ACRONYMS

<b>ASP</b>	Assistant Superintendent of Prisons
<b>CO</b>	Chief Officer
<b>COMM. OFFICERS</b>	Commissioned Officers
<b>CRC</b>	Constitutional Review Commission
<b>GPS</b>	Gambia Prison Service
<b>GTTI</b>	Gambia Technical Training Institute
<b>IHRDA</b>	Institute for Human Rights and Development in Africa
<b>MDI</b>	Management and Development Institute
<b>MOI</b>	Ministry of Interior
<b>MOU</b>	Memorandum of Understanding
<b>NCOs</b>	Non- Commissioned Officers
<b>NDP</b>	National Development Plan
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organization
<b>PIU</b>	Police Intervention Unit
<b>RPA Report</b>	Rapid Prisons Assessment Report
<b>TRRC</b>	Truth, Reconciliation and Reparations Commission
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNDP RoL Project</b>	The Strengthening the Rule of Law and Enhancing Justice and Security Services in the Gambia Project



*Mile 2, Central Prison, Banjul: Prison personnel during the daily morning parade.*

# FOREWORD

It is with pleasure that I write this foreword for the Rapid Prisons Assessment Report which seeks to highlight the current conditions of our Prisons and Prisons Service. This report provides a detailed understanding of not only the challenges but the opportunities for the reform of the Prisons Service. The Gambia Prisons Service has gone through an immense struggle over the past few years but has started its work toward meeting the UN's Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Mandela Rules).

Towards the effort to ensure that prisoners' rights are respected, the Ministry of Interior, in collaboration with the Prisons Service, has made some progress in the renovation of the security wing by increasing the size and allocation of cells. The expansion program has been extended to Janjanbureh Prison which is in the Central River Region of the Gambia. Infrastructure work for Jeshwang Prison commenced in 2014 but have stalled due to lack of funding.

This Rapid Prisons Assessment Report, the accompanying Photobook and short video documentary vividly illustrate the urgent need for support. Currently, the Prisons Service is trying to provide prisoner care and security amidst dilapidated infrastructure, insufficient training and meager resources including the lack of basic office furniture. In order to meet the minimum standard of care to detainees, the Prisons Service must have the resources, training and tools to meet its duty. The government of the Gambia is committed to working with stakeholders and development partners in reforming the Prisons Service into rehabilitative rather than punitive institution.

The United Nations Development Programme's project on Strengthening Rule of Law and Enhancing Justice and Security Service Delivery in The Gambia has been a vital partner of the Ministry's and the Prisons Service. I am pleased to see the positive collaboration and effort to engage international and development partners to our reform work.

It is against this background that I fully endorse the Rapid Prisons Assessment Report 2019, the accompanying Photobook and short video documentary developed in partnership with the UNDP. The RPA Report and the supporting work illustrates a new era in prisons management. An era that is open, transparent and ready to evolve putting the care of prisoners and prisons personnel at the forefront.

Thank you



Honourable Ebrima Mballow  
Minister of Interior

# PREFACE

## **Rapid Prisons Assessment Report, Photobook & Documentary**

The Prisons Service of the Gambia has been in existence since the Colonial period. In a country of approximately 1,882,450 (2013 census), the three prisons are responsible for about 600 detainees. With the new government, the Prisons Service aspires to meet the Mandela Rules and transform the Prisons Service from an institution centered on punishment to one focused on rehabilitation. After decades of neglect and misuse, the infrastructure and assets of the Prisons Service are in a state of dilapidation. In order to improve inmate care, the Prisons Service must invest in infrastructure, assets and asset management and most importantly, in the training and skills development of our Prison personnel. The Prisons Service is hopeful in this endeavor. On 3 May 2019, the Prisons Service entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the National Authority for Legal Aid (NALA) and the Gambia Bar Association (GBA) to establish Prisons Legal Aid Desks. With support from UNDP's Strengthening Rule of Law and Enhancing Justice and Security Service Delivery in the Gambia (UNDP RoL), an office in Mile 2 and one in Jeshwang were renovated and furnished to provide a confidential space for inmates to meet with pro bono attorneys. A training center in Mile 2 provides skills development for some inmates but such initiatives should be expanded to mitigate against recidivism.

The Prisons Service offers the Rapid Assessment Report, Photobook and Documentary to fully illustrate the needs but also opportunities for transformation.



Ansumana Manneh  
Director General  
Gambia Prisons Service



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Gambia Prison Service has endured years of neglect and under-investment. During the previous government, it suffered from a poor reputation with allegations of human rights abuses. Detainees spend prolonged periods in pre-trial detention where a person can be held for five years awaiting trial. There are three Prisons in The Gambia: State Central Prison Mile 2, Jeshwang Prison in the St. Mary Island Region and Janjanbureh Prison in the Central River Region. According to records from all three Prisons at the time of the Rapid Prisons Assessment (RPA) (July 2019), there were 676 inmates out of which 325 were on remand. The legal frameworks for the Prison Service, including the Prisons Act 18 of 1953 are outdated and lack options for alternatives to detention or rehabilitation. The Prisons authorities stated that during the previous government, a number of personnel were promoted arbitrarily or summarily dismissed.

The UNDP's Strengthening Rule of Law and Enhancing Justice and Security Service Delivery in The Gambia (UNDP RoL), in partnership with the Gambia Prison Service decided to conduct a Rapid Prisons Assessment. In order to fully appreciate the current conditions of the Prisons, a photographer and journalist were contracted to photograph, video and report on all aspects of the Prison Service. The result of the RPA includes this report, an accompanying Photobook and short video documentary. The RPA provides an evidence base to plan for the best use of resources, prioritize needs and systematically address challenges and gaps. It is hoped that with these materials, the Prison Service will be able to mobilize the resources needed to meet its obligations under international human rights standards and the Mandela Rules.



*Mile 2, Central Prison, Banjul: Member of the Riot Squad patrolling the perimeter from the roof.*

# BACKGROUND OF THE GAMBIA PRISON SERVICE

The Constitution of the Gambia (1997) directs the Prison Service to be headed by a Commissioner of Prisons (Part II, §182). The Constitution states that the Commissioner of Prisons is the administrative head of the Prison Service and responsible for its day-to-day operations (§183). The Prison Service is under the mandate of the Ministry of Interior along with other agencies, namely The Gambia Police Force, The Gambia Immigration Department, the Drug Law Enforcement Agency, and the Fire and Rescue Service.

The Gambia Prison Service is currently administered under the Prisons Act 18 of 1953 with several amendments, (one in 1960 and three in 1963). The Prisons Act provides for the maintenance of Prisons under the Prison Rules (Rules 2/1953); it also regulates capital cases (Reg. 7/1936). While, there have not been significant changes to the Prison Service legal framework, there has been some administrative changes. For example, since 1995 the head of the Gambia Prison Services is referred to as the Director General and not the Commissioner as stated in the Act. Despite the change in title, the functions are the same with head of the Prison Service directly answerable to the Minister of Interior.

The establishment of the Prison Service is mandated by the Constitution and the Prison Act 18 of 1953 is the legal framework. The Act was published in the Gazette (LN 27 of 1963) as legally required and thereby enacted into law. All the departments are staffed with the exception of a Commissioner of Finance who is meant to be the head of the finance department. At the time of this RPA, the department was headed by the Chief Superintendent of Prisons.

## LEGAL FRAMEWORK WITH RESPECT TO CUSTODY AND DETENTION

The legal framework guiding the custody of persons found in conflict with the law is stated in the Criminal Code (Act No. 25 of 1933):

- Remand in custody is as a result of bail being denied or the accused being unable to fulfill bail conditions. §39 of the Criminal Code.
- People arrested by police can be detained for a period not exceeding 72 hours and must be brought before a court of competent jurisdiction. (§19, 3b) of the Constitution.

- In the case of any offence, not punishable with death, a person may, instead of or in addition to, any other punishment to which he is liable and subject to any provisions of the criminal code, be ordered to enter into a recognizance with or without a surety or sureties, in such amount as the court thinks fit, conditioned that he shall keep the peace and be of good behavior for a time fixed by the court, or that he shall appear to receive judgment or sentence at for future sitting of the court or when called upon. (Chapter 39).

## Detention Areas and Categories of Inmates

The Prisons in The Gambia are divided into 4 broad categories:

**Security/Confinement Camp:** This is where convicts with special security needs are confined in Mile 2. It houses convicts with special medical needs, some mentally unstable inmates, high-level convicts such as military personnel, political prisoners and prisoners on death row.

**Convicted Prisoners:** The convicted prisoners are taken to a camp called the main yard in Mile 2 Prison or the cell for convicts in Janjanbureh and Jeshwang Prisons. This area accommodates all prisoners who have been found guilty by a competent Court in accordance with the Criminal Code. Inmates in this category wear blue suits and their sentences range from weeks to life imprisonment.

**Remand Prisoners:** The Remand wing is for Prisoners awaiting trial. This is applicable to people denied bail or unable to meet bail conditions.

**Juvenile Justice Wing<sup>1</sup>:** A person under the apparent age of sixteen years is detained in the Juvenile wing. Sometimes their maturity level is determined by a medical test. The Juvenile Justice wing in Jeshwang was built specifically to house juveniles in conflict with the law. Due to overcrowding in the Remand Wing at Mile 2, new structures were built to accommodate 124 adult remand inmates at Jeshwang at the time of this report. As such, juveniles are no longer segregated from adults at Jeshwang.

<sup>1</sup> Laws of The Gambia. Prisons Act 18 of 1953 (Chapter 20:01, Part 1. Preliminary section)

# ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The Gambia Prison Service is structured into administrative, operations, finance, logistics and supply departments. These structures are led by the departmental heads under the general supervision of the Director General of Prisons. There is only one administrative office and it is in Banjul.

These structures were established by the current administration to improve efficiency and ensure effective management of the Prison Service. Though these structures have been established, not all the positions have been staffed due to lack of capacity and funding.

The administrative office is headed by the Deputy Director of Administration under which there is human resources, statistics and records of inmates, training, gender, and recruitment. Operations are headed by the Deputy Director of Operations and Finance, Logistics & Supply which is meant to be headed by the Director of Finance but as of this report, it is currently headed by the Chief Superintendent of Prisons.

## HUMAN RESOURCES OF THE PRISON SERVICE

The administrative office recruits and provides basic training to new staff in accordance with the Prisons Act.

All newly recruited staff receives basic training on public management, weapon management, basic physical fitness exercise training, and basic riot training for six to eleven months. Prisons personnel (officers and administrative staff) receive short refresher training courses on:

- a. Public Order Management
- b. Anti-terrorism
- c. VIP Protection Course

The duration of the courses can range from two weeks to two months depending on course content. The Prisons management selects participants based on their physical fitness, commitment and dedication to the job for training at the Management and Development Institute (MDI), Prisons Officers of the Gambia Prison Service are studying professional courses on management, accounting, law, plumbing,

human resources etc. at the Gambia Technical Training Institute (GTTI). In 2018, the International Institute for Human Rights and Development (IHRDA) trained 50 Prisons personnel on best practices and provided a manual on Human Rights. The St. Steven's Institute has trained about 30 staff on Human Resources, English proficiency and ICT.

During the previous regime bilateral agreements were signed with the Nigeria Prison Service and the Russian government for capacity building. The Nigeria Prison Service signed an MOU with the Gambia Prison Service that included 20 senior officers from Nigeria coming to the Gambia in 2010 for a study tour and to make recommendations on capacity building courses. Between 2010 -2014, 3 batches of 5 ASP superintendents of the Gambia Prison Service went to Kaduna, Nigeria for a 6 month ASP basic training course. However, the training was discontinued during the previous regime. Also, during the previous regime, in 2010 four senior officers went for advanced Prison Service training for two weeks in Russia. Subsequently, two of the personnel have been relieved of duty while the other two are now working as police officers. The current DG is working to ensure these bilateral relations are revived for benefit of the Prison Service.

The Riot Squad, led by the Riot Squad Commander, became fully operational in 2017. The Riot Squad is mandated to maintain peace and order within the confines of the prisons. It also safeguards the prison perimeters and against any threat or attack from within or outside the Prisons.

The Prison Service has a basic training curriculum for all staff, though the riot squad receives more advanced training by the Police Intervention Unit (PIU) on riot and weapon management.

The Prison Service has never had a training institute though the former armed forces guard room was used for training until it was converted into a vocational training center for inmates. Personnel trainings are currently held in an open space at the Administrative Headquarters in Mile 2. The Prison Service currently has 10 Prisons personnel trainers trained by the military at the Fajara Barracks.

## Staff Capacity

At the time of this report, the three prisons had a total of 857 Prisons personnel including: the administrative staff, prison officers, the Riot Squad, support staff and medical personnel. The personnel are classified into two categories: the Commissioned Officers (Senior Officers) appointed by the Personal Management Office and the Non Commissioned Officers (Junior Officers) appointed by the Director General of the Prison Service.

## PERSONNEL REGISTRATION

There is only one Administrative Office for the Prison Service and it is located at Headquarters in Banjul. The registration and maintenance of the Prisons personnel files are all done manually. The personnel records are used to assign tasks and track performance. The Office of the Chief of office keeps records for staff postings.

## Strategic Development Plan (2018- 2021)

The Gambia Prison Services' three year Strategic Plan outlines key priorities including three outcomes, objectives and activities. In the Strategic Plan, good governance, human rights, rehabilitation and reformation of prisoners are essential priorities.

Though the strategic plan is currently being implemented the DG stated very few achievements have been recorded since 2018 due to limited financial resources.

## PRISONS INFRASTRUCTURE

As noted above, the Gambia Prison Services has three established prisons facilities and a Headquarters:

1. State Central Prison (Mile 2) in Banjul
2. Jeshwang Prison an extension of the Mile 2 Prison also has a juvenile wing
3. Janjanbureh Prison in the Central River Region

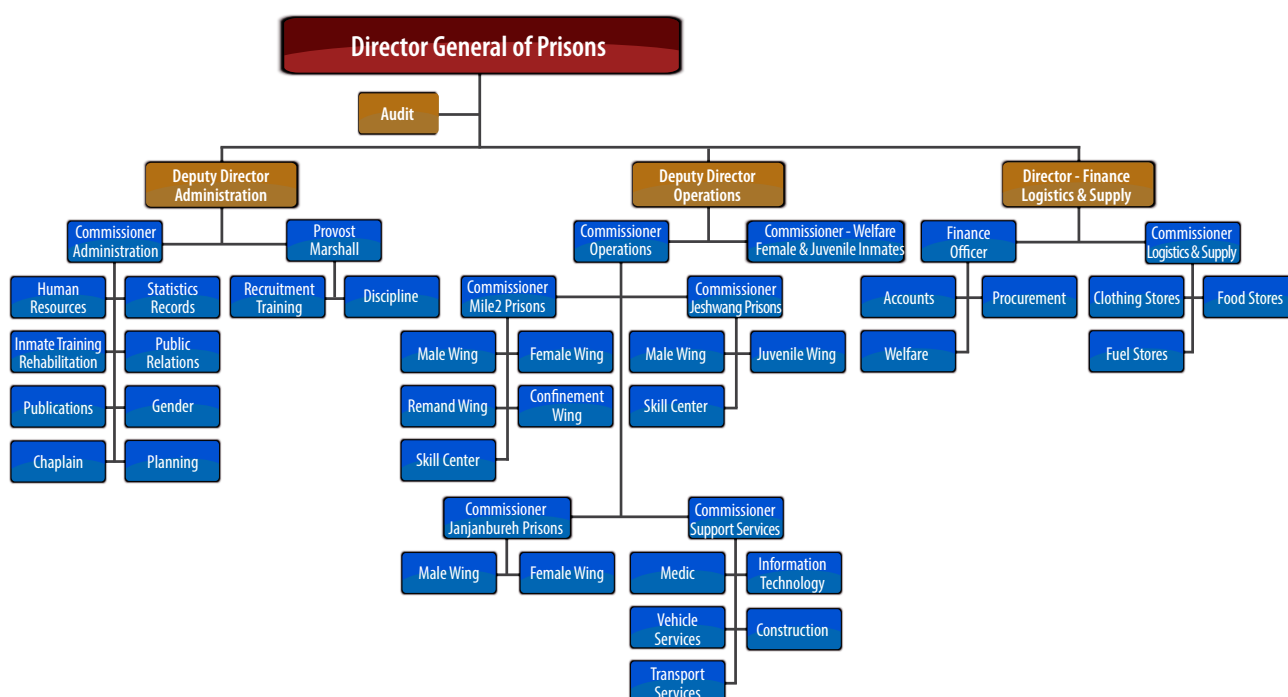
**Table 1:** Staff capacity of prisons

	Male	Female	Total
Administration Staff	58	64	122
Prison Officers	348	265	613
Riot Squad	72	36	108
Supporting Staff	Nil	3	3
Clinic Staff	6	5	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>484</b>	<b>373</b>	<b>857</b>

**Table 2:** Total Number of Commissioned and Non-Commissioned Prison Personnel

Prisons	Commissioned Officers	Non-Commissioned Officers	Total No. of Officers
State Central Prison Mile 2	58	64	122
Jeshwang	348	265	613
Janjanbureh	72	36	108
<b>Total</b>	<b>484</b>	<b>373</b>	<b>857</b>

**Figure 1:** Prison Service Organogram



## Mile 2

The Central Prison (Mile 2) is the largest and most populated of the three facilities. It was built during the colonial era (1920s) and most of the structures date back to that time. As such, they are in a state of dilapidation and in some cases ruin. The location of the prison is problematic in that it lies adjacent to a large garbage dump where trash is burned. The smoke and fumes from the burning garbage often enters the grounds of the prison and impacts the welfare of personnel and detainees. In addition, the prison is located near the water and suffers from drainage issues and pests.

The Administrative Headquarters is located across the road from Mile 2 Prison with 3 blocks and an open space for Prisons Personnel training.

Mile 2 has 10 blocks (101 individual cells and 46 shared cells) with 2 dormitory structures, 6 administrative offices, 1 Prisons Legal Aid Office<sup>2</sup>, 1 medical clinic and lab as well as the only rehabilitation center for convicted detainees. Mile 2 also has 6 block structures (28 rooms) housing Prisons Personnel. On average, 100 personnel live within Mile 2 to provide security for the prison, some with family members with them. The conditions for the personnel are also in a dilapidated state and renovations are urgently needed.

**Table 3: Mile 2 Infrastructure**

Mile 2	Number of structures
Administrative Structures	6
Cells	
Cell blocks	10
Dormitories	2
Staff Quarters block	6
Clinic	1
Dilapidated structures out of used (individual structure and blocks)	70

## Jeshwang Prison

Jeshwang is the smallest of the facilities and is located in Old Jeshwang town. The facilities are comparably better as they are newer. Classified as an extension of Mile 2, Jeshwang Prison was constructed to resolve the overcrowding situation in Mile 2. However, Juvenile wing is also established there due to lack funding to establish an independent Juvenile Prison facility. Due to the overcrowding in the Remand Wing of Mile 2, approximately 124 male remand prisoners

are now also in Jeshwang. The Prison Service has been able to construct new structures in Jeshwang but construction is often stalled due to lack of funds. As such, 12 individual cells have been completed and 7 structures are only partially built. There are housing facilities with 6 separated bedrooms for the Prisons Personnel and no rehabilitation/training facilities for the detained.

**Table 4: Jeshwang Infrastructure**

Jeshwang	Number of structures
Administrative Structures	3
Cells	
Dormitories	1
Individual cells	12
Clinic	1
Uncompleted Structures	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>24</b>

## Janjanbureh Prison

Janjanbureh is located approximately 300KM from Banjul and houses an average of 59 prisoners. The infrastructure is also primarily from the colonial era but has fewer structures than Mile 2. The Prison does not have a medical facility but a medical clinic is located across the road for the public and the Prison.

**Table 5: Janjanbureh Infrastructure**

Mile 2	Number of structures
Administrative Structures	1
Cells	
Cell blocks	2
Dormitories	3
Staff Quarters block	3
Clinic	0
Dilapidated structures out of used (individual structure and blocks)	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>

<sup>2</sup> The Prisons Legal Aid Desk was established through a Memorandum of Understanding signed and endorsed by the Prison Service, NALA and the Gambia Bar Association and facilitated by the UNDP Strengthening Rule of Law & Enhancing Security and Justice Services. The project established, renovated and furnished PLAD offices in Mile 2 and Jeshwang.

# RAPID PRISONS ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

The Gambia Prison Service is one of the fundamental institutions in the Rule of Law sector but with limited government resources and budget allocation. While the new government is poised for the reforms process, the Prison Service is in dire need for resources in order to meet international minimum standards for detainees (the Mandela Rules). Detainees are considered, by definition, a vulnerable group. They have legally lost their freedom of movement and remain under the care of government employees. As such, the Prison Service carries an enormous human rights obligation and duty.

The Prison Service is also ready for reforms at the institutional level. There is a strong need to provide basic, advanced and specialized training to its personnel and to professionalize its work space. In addition, there is dire need for resources for rehabilitation of infrastructure, water and sanitation facilities and developing and implementing training programs.

## ORGANIZATION & METHODOLOGY

### Organization

The Director General of the Gambia Prison Service, in consultation with the Director of Administration and Commissioner of Operations dedicated a liaison officer CSP. Joseph B. Mendy for this Rapid Prison Assessment exercise. An international photographer with a local writer were contracted to conduct the exercise under the supervision of the UNDP Chief Technical Advisor for Rule of Law (UNDP CTA). The UNDP Monitoring and Evaluation Officer provided considerable support and oversight often accompanying the consultants during the course of the exercise and fact checking to ensure the accuracy of this report. The Commissioner Bubacarr Jatta of Janjanbureh Prison also accompanied the photographer and consultant writer during their visit.

### Methodology

An unstructured qualitative method was used to collect statistical information from the Prisons authorities, inmates and other external law enforcement institutions which included the National

Agency for Legal Aid (NALA) and the Gambia Bar Association (GBA). Through a series of interviews and research, the RPA was able to compile and organize data to reflect the condition of the Institution. A detailed work plan was developed by the consultants in consultation with the UNDP CTA. The consultants conducted fieldwork from 8-13 July visiting all three prisons. The consultants were introduced to the Prison Service leadership on 8 July and spent from the 8-10th in Banjul photographing and interviewing participants from Mile 2 and Jeshwang. On 9 July, the consultants travelled to Janjanbureh and continued the exercise there until returning to Banjul on 10th July. The consultants continued photographing and interviewing from the 11-12th at Mile 2 and Jeshwang. After visiting Mile 2 once more, the consultant photographer left Banjul while the consultant writer continued interviewing and collecting the needed data. Draft copies of the photo book and documentary were shared with the DG on 30 August and to the Ministry of Interior on 04 October 2019 for review and feedback.

## COVERAGE OF RAPID ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

The RPA focuses on key areas effecting the administration and care of the detainees and the personnel: prisons infrastructure, kitchen facilities, medical care, water, sanitation, hygiene, nutrition, rehabilitation programs, recreational facilities and the care of juveniles. In the first round of photographs, the housing facilities for the Prisons Personnel were not captured. During the draft writing period, additional photographs were taken of these facilities in Mile 2 and included in the Photo book. An additional section covering the Prisons Personnel was also added. It should be noted that the collection of needed information, including data on the number of personnel or structures, dates, etc., were very difficult to obtain. The research and fact checking period continued into late September and even then, some information remained missing. It is an indication of the need to strengthen the institution as a whole and preserve institutional memory.

The RPA exercise gives an evidence based report on the current challenges and opportunities facing the Prison Service's reform efforts.

## KEY FINDINGS

Mile 2 has the highest number of prisoners (480) this includes the convicted prisoners and those awaiting trial. There are 562 Prisons Personnel in Mile 2 including Commissioned and Non-Commissioned officers. Jeshwang has 137 inmates out of which 13 are juveniles and 124 adult remand awaiting trial with 218 Prison Personnel both Commissioned and Non-Commissioned officers. Janjanbureh has 59 inmates and 77 Commissioned and Non-commissioned Prisons Personnel.

There is over-crowding in Mile 2's Remand Wing with 11 cell blocks having the capacity to house 5 persons per cell. It is currently housing over 211 males

on remand. Due to overcrowding and insufficient infrastructure, detainees in the Remand Wing live in deplorable conditions and this has led to the transfer of some to Jeshwang prison in Jeshwang.

There are more juveniles awaiting trial than those convicted and it was noted that the presence of a parent, caregiver or legal guardian for juveniles during trial is not required. Although UNDP established a Prisons Legal Aid Desk in Jeshwang in partnership with the Gambia Bar Association, services commenced in October and at this time there does not seem to be alternatives.



*Mile 2, Central Prison, Banjul: Inmate washing dishes.*

# CURRENT CONDITIONS OF PRISON FACILITIES

The information on the current conditions represents the summary of observations and interviews carried out in all three Prisons.

## ADMINISTRATION, COMMUNICATION AND TRANSPORTATION

The administration of the Prison Service is facing difficulties in terms of record keeping for both Prison personnel and inmates. During the visits, it was noted that there is only 1 computer in Mile 2 assigned to the Commissioner of Operations Officer. There are officers who use personal computers for professional work. 2 computers are allocated to Jeshwang with one with the secretary to the Deputy Director General of Prisons Office. Apart from these offices, the DG's, Director of administration, Human Resources and the Finance offices have computers. Due to insufficient computers and improper space to store information, records are kept manually and in dilapidated wooden shelves.

Moreover, staff lacks skills and capacity on data management, which makes it difficult to access quality and accurate data not only for this report but in general for the functioning of the Prison Service. The Prison office spaces are in poor condition with insufficient office furniture and equipment. The visitation room for inmates by family and friends is so small that it accommodates four persons at a time. Most visitors have to wait in an open space outside and take turns. The Prison Service has poor and inadequate communication equipment which is of



Mile 2, Central Prison, Banjul: Inmates being escorted from the prisons to the court.

**Table 6:** Number of vehicles, buses, truck, motorbikes, tricycle and ambulance

	Admin HQ	Mile 2	Jeshwang	Janjanbureh	Total
Official vehicles for staff use	6	2	1	1	10
Staff Buses	0	1	2	0	3
Motorbikes	0	3	1	1	5
Truck	0	1	0	0	1
Ambulance	0	1	0	0	1
Tricycle	0	0	1	0	1
<b>Total</b>					<b>21</b>

great concern in reference to the security of inmates and prison personnel, particularly those guarding the inmates. The Prison Service provides Closed User Group (CUG) lines to senior officers but other staff are not entitled to this communication mechanism. Due to these challenge the current administration took a step to improve communication by signing an MOU with Afri-cell telecommunication network to provide CUG with unlimited calls at the rate of 50 dalasi per month payable by the staff themselves.

The Prison has a total of 14 vehicles, 5 motorbikes, 1 ambulance and 1 motor tricycle. According to the Prisons authority they are currently facing challenges with transportation. 2 out of the 3 buses are grounded due to technical issues and very few vehicles are available for pick-up and drop-off of staff members. This has led to staff tardiness as they wait alongside the road for transport. It was stated that staff use their personal vehicles to escort inmates for court hearings, to fetch firewood and other work related activities. Among the staff personnel vehicles, 2 utility vehicles are assigned to the DG. The motor tricycle for Jeshwang was donated by the Riders for Health and is being used as an ambulance for the medical unit.

It should be highlighted that there is no Asset Management Unit in the Prison Service to monitor or track fuel usage, vehicle use, maintenance and repair, etc.





Mile 2, Central Prison, Banjul: Female Prison officers in-front of the main prison gate.

## PRISON PERSONNEL

The personnel lack technical skills to carry out daily duties. It has already been noted that only basic training is provided to the personnel and very few have specialist training like the Riot Squad members who are trained by the PIU. However, even the Riot Squad lacks the necessary equipment to carry out the job effectively and efficiently.

During this assessment exercise, the personnel described their working condition as deplorable due to the lack of working equipment, limited furniture and small work space resulting in frustration among the staff.

The staff quarters, particularly at Mile 2, are in a dilapidated state and not conducive for human habitation.

## SECURITY

The Riot Squad personnel are trained to provide for all the security needs of the prisons. There are five watch towers in Mile 2 Prison, however, three are in derelict condition and out of use. The two that are operational are mounted with Riot Squad personnel (uniformed in blue) on a 24/7 basis. This, however, is not the case for Jeshwang and Janjanbureh prisons which do not have watchtowers. The Prisons officers (uniformed in brown) watch over the inmates in shifts. Both the Riot Squad and Prisons officers escort inmates to court for their session.

According to the Riot Squad Commander, all equipment used by his team are borrowed from the PIU and not all the equipment needed is provided. It was also noted that the Riot Squad works with the PIU outside the prison perimeter during riots and in any location where PIU needs back up. There is a communication device that is being provided to Riot Squad members but it can only cover a distance of 2 kilometers. In addition to the above challenges, the security personnel do not have a facility to properly store their weapons.

## INFRASTRUCTURE

As indicated in this report, most of the structures dated back to the colonial era particularly Mile 2 and Janjanbureh Prisons. Due to neglect and inadequate budgetary allocations to the Prison Service, most of the structures are very old and in decrepit state. Most of the infrastructure is have broken walls and fans.

The office structures force 7 personnel to work in a shared office space meant for 3. The same problem was visible at the staff quarters were almost all the structures are in ruin and most personnel cannot be accommodated in them.

The sanitation facilities in both the staff quarters and the Prisons are rundown with most out of use and those in use are very problematic with shattered walls, broken floors and worn out toilets. Some infrastructure has been abandoned and is now being used to store rubbish and waste. Most of the structures are poorly ventilated, particularly the cell blocks where there is little light. In general the prison structures are not well lit.

In 2014, the Prison Service started the construction of new structures in Jeshwang prison though some of the structures have been completed, others remain unfinished due to lack of funds.

## ELECTRICITY

Electricity supply is provided by NAWEC (National Water and Electricity Company). The supply is unstable and is regularly cut off. Only Mile 2 has a generator in case of such power cuts. Janjanbureh had a solar inverter that is not functional.

## WATER

NAWEC also provides water to the Prisons. As in the case of the irregular supply of electricity, so too is the water supply which is also dependent on the availability of electricity. The Prison Service has constructed boreholes in Jeshwang to mitigate against the lack of water.



Janjanbureh Prison: Water stored in jerry cans inside a cell.

Janjanbureh Prison has no borehole and inmates travel kilometers to fetch water from local well (sankal kunda). This water is then stored in unfavorable conditions for days and at times becomes contaminated and not good for human consumption.

### KITCHEN FACILITY AND NUTRITION

The Kitchens were constructed during the colonial days with little or no ventilation and are also in poor condition. As a result, inmates cook in a semi-enclosed space. The Prison Service has taken steps to construct new kitchens for Mile 2 and Jeshwang, however, due to lack of funding, they are still under construction with no timeline for completion. Currently, there are no plans or funds to construct a kitchen for Janjanbureh.



*Mile 2, Central Prison, Banjul: Inmate baking bread inside the prison bakery.*

The current Prisons administration in an effort to improve conditions for prisoners, have improved the quality and nutritional value of food provided to inmates in consultation with the National Nutrition Agency (NANA). Inmates have generally reported an improvement in the quality and quantity of food in comparison with the previous administration. Though there is an improvement, the Prison is encouraged to do more in the area of food preparation. Many inmates complained that they still cannot eat the food because most of the inmates preparing the food are not trained and lack the skill and hygiene to cook food in large quantities.

The food storage facility does not have the capacity to store perishable food and most often vegetables are left on the floor which can easily be contaminated. Cereals are easily contaminated with pests and there is need to improve storage and preparation facilities to meet international standards.

The Prisons use firewood for cooking and groups of inmates escorted by a Prisons officer fetch wood in the nearby bush. This is clearly a security risk. An alternative to the use of wood may be natural gas, butane or propane. This change may improve kitchen conditions by reducing the smoke from the fires. There would be budgetary and cost issues however related to such a change.

The prisons do have a bakery within its parameters and the inmates are able to cultivate vegetables such as maize, millet and sorghum for their own consumption. It should be noted that inmates on remand depend primarily on food brought by friends and relatives from home.

### OVERCROWDING

During this assessment, it was observed that overcrowding was evident in the Remand Wing and the main yard of Mile 2. The space which is meant to have a capacity of 8 to 10 persons per room has over 20 persons per cell room. As such, the conditions in the cell rooms are tight with insufficient space for remand prisoners to sleep. The inmates sleep on top of wooden planks placed on cement bricks which are uncomfortable in itself apart from the crowded conditions of the cell rooms.

In an effort to decongest the Remand Wing, the Prison Service transferred some remand prisoners to the Jeshwang prison which was originally intended for low sentence inmates. Inmates in the Remand Wing said that they have yet to appear before a court of law and at least one inmate has been on remand for 5 years without charge case still proceeding in court.

### MENTALLY ILL IN DETENTION

Inmates with severe mental illness are sent to the Tanka-Tanka psychiatry hospital in Banjul. Those with minor mental health issues are detained in the security/conferment wing with other inmates in Mile 2 under the medical supervision of the Prisons clinic nurses. It should be noted that The Gambia has only one psychiatrist and one psychiatric hospital for the country.

### PRISONER UNIFORMS

The prisoners' uniforms are provided by the Prison Service and inmates are provided with two uniforms per year which is insufficient due to budget constraint. During this assessment, some inmates stated they are frustrated for wearing two uniforms for the whole



Mile 2, Central Prison, Banjul: Convicted Female inmates.



Jeshwang Prison: Juveniles inmates.

year. Some are torn and worn out. Inmates awaiting trial wear their personal clothes. Convicts on death row wear black uniforms while those convicted from low to life sentence wear blue uniforms. Convicted juveniles wear green uniforms.

## HYGIENE AND SANITATION

The toilet facilities are in deplorable condition with no hygiene equipment for maintenance. During the visits, it was noted that the inmates use only water to clean the toilets with no disinfectant or soap to kill germs or bacteria. The female inmates stated that while they are provided with sanitary pads, they lack enough toiletries due to delays in delivery. The male inmates stated that they are provided with one bar of soap for laundry and bathing which is delivered once a week. There are no toilet paper rolls or hand sanitizer.

The toilet facilities are slightly below the international minimum standard of 25 persons per toilet. In Mile 2, 29 inmates share 1 toilet. Most of the cells do not have a toilet within close range. Inmates are forced to defecate inside their cells using buckets at night to be disposed of the next morning.



Janjanbureh Prison: Inmates doing laundry and washing at the tap.

During the assessment exercise it was observed that particularly, in Mile 2, that the sewage pipes and facilities were broken with stagnant and running water in proximity to the Remand dormitories. The stagnant water in particular is a concern as it can serve as a breeding ground for mosquitoes. Mile 2 is also in close proximity to the national garbage dump where trash is also burned. Both the smell from the garbage and the fumes from the burning easily enter Mile 2 and impact the living conditions of the inmates and personnel. Inmates also complained of bedbugs and lice in their clothes and beds.

In Mile 2 and Jeshwang, inmate laundry is hung to dry inside the cell room. Given the size of some of the cells, hanging wet laundry can increase humidity, obstruct ventilation and restrict movement. Some inmates complained of insect bites and the spread of skin diseases/conditions due to close proximity with fellow inmates. This was of particular concern to the inmates confined to the Remand Wing. Inmates confirmed that insecticides are being sprayed on a daily basis but the situation remains the same.

The hygiene and sanitation of the prisons is of serious concern and there is an urgent need to address this situation.

## MEDICAL FACILITIES

Mile 2 has a medical clinic and the tailoring recreational center in Jeshwang also serves as its clinic facility. Janjanbureh uses the public clinic approximately 50 meters from the Prison. In total there are 11 medical personnel including the lab technicians. The Prison Service does not have a doctor but there is a visiting doctor who comes every Friday and refers serious medical cases to the Edward Small Teaching Hospital

The clinic has a laboratory where medical tests for tuberculosis, HIV, hemoglobin and spit are conducted. The laboratory, clinic and infirmary are in poor condition, under equipped, lack sufficient medications and medical equipment. There is only one refrigerator to store drugs and lab results which is damaged and unusable.

During the exercise it was noted that medicines are limited and inmates with severe health conditions must purchase their medication with help from relatives. Nurses and lab technician lack adequate and technical skills as there is no refresher or capacity development training for medical personnel.

### JUVENILES IN DETENTION

At the time of the assessment there were 13 juveniles out of which only one has been convicted. The juveniles interviewed stated that the presence of a parent or guardian during court hearings was impractical. Minors with families unable to pay attorney fees, prepare their own defenses.

The bathrooms lack proper hygiene and juveniles complain of skin infections caused by bedbug. They have access to basic education which does not meet the Gambia basic education standard. They have a vegetable garden. During the visits, it was noted that juveniles do not have access to outdoor activities (sports, physical exercise) due to ongoing construction.



Jeshwang Prison: Juveniles attending lessons in the classroom.



Mile 2, Central Prison, Banjul: Inmate sewing in the tailoring workshop.

### RECREATION

Most outdoor recreational facilities for all 3 Prisons are rundown and the few that are usable have broken floors. The recreational facility in Jeshwang is as parking space for bricks for the ongoing construction work and this has limited inmates' ability for outdoor activity. Inmates engage in indoor recreational activities such as checkers, art work, praying etc. There is a prison library supervised by an officer but run daily by a convicted inmate in Mile 2.

The inmates stated that they would like to engage with other inmates particularly in competitive outdoor activities.

### REHABILITATION

The Prison Service has provided some rehabilitation options to convicted inmates in Mile 2. Many of the inmates reported satisfaction in the program noting that it will give them the opportunity to contribute positively in their communities upon release. The convicts are trained on plumbing, ICT, electrical installation, and tailoring courtesy of the Insight Training Institute. Prisons personnel and trained inmates sew uniforms for the Prison Service.

Inmates who have academic qualifications or those who can read and write volunteer to teach their fellow inmates due to limited teachers. One of the observations noted was that the rehabilitation program lacks sustainability

# CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## ADMINISTRATION, COMMUNICATION AND TRANSPORTATION

- Provide more comprehensive training for administrative staff including data collection, management, and analysis at Headquarters and in the administrative units within Jeshwang and Janjanbureh. Of particular importance is the management of inmate files.
- Proper communication tools such as Motorola handsets or VSAT should be provided to all Prisons personnel.
- The Prison Service should have a Communications specialist to collate and distribute information to the inmates, personnel and to the public at large to improve transparency.
- Computers and computer training should be provided to all departments and personnel.
- An Asset Management Unit should be established, trained and properly equipped to ensure Prisons all assets are managed and maintained. Allocation and tracking of vehicles should be prioritized to ensure inmates attend court dates, vehicles are available in case of medical emergencies and to cater to official tasks.

## PRISONS PERSONNEL

- Develop comprehensive training curriculum for all Prisons Personnel including basic, specialized and advanced training to ensure personnel are enabled to meet Mandela Rules.
- Establish a Prisons Training Institute to house developed curriculum and offer training courses to other countries in the region to generate income.

## KITCHEN

- Prison Personnel should be trained to prepare food for inmates in compliance with hygiene and nutritional standards.

- Continue improvement in the standard of food provided to inmates.
- New kitchens should be constructed with proper ventilation, pantry and cold storages in working order with assigned daily cleaning schedules in place.
- Recommend the use of natural, butane or propane gas in place of firewood.

## INFRASTRUCTURE

- Watch towers should be built in Jeshwang and Janjanbureh with the remaining 3 in Mile 2 repaired.
- Proper toilet infrastructures that are fit for use (institutional rather than residential) should be installed in all 3 prisons.
- The Prison Service must first right size in terms of actual convicted detainees serving sentences. Data on sentence terms can provide an evidence base for planning for new structures, demolishing derelict structures and/or rehabilitating existing structures. An assessment on restructuring the prisons infrastructure and use of facilities is necessary before new construction is commenced.

## OVERCROWDING (REMAND WING)

- Recommend the Prison Service to work closely with other justice institutions and continue collaboration with NALA and the GBA on the UNDP supported Prisons Legal Aid Desks to reduce number of prisoners on remand.

## MEDICAL FACILITIES

- More nurses and doctors are needed.
- Rehabilitate the medical clinics in Mile 2 and Jeshwang. Install cold storage appliances, medical equipment and medications needed for inmates. Coordinate with Ministry of Health to ensure that delivery of medications and supplies is timely.

## AGRICULTURE

- Provide enough space for agricultural production for inmate consumption and sale of excess to generate income for inmates who cultivate.
- Coordinate with government ministries for seeds and farming tools.

## RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

- Renovation of the football, basketball and volleyball courts in Mile 2 is essential. The same structures should be established in Jeshwang and Janjanbureh.
- Prisoners should be given space and opportunity for adequate physical activity in open air on daily basis.

## REHABILITATION & REINTEGRATION

- Work in collaboration with the Ministry of Education to develop a standard educational program for adults and juveniles in detention.
- Employ trained teachers, particularly for juveniles.
- A wider range of books, including academic books should be added to the library in Mile 2. Libraries should also be established in Jeshwang and Janjanbureh.
- The rehabilitation and vocational training program should be expanded to more disciplines and include remand prisoners.

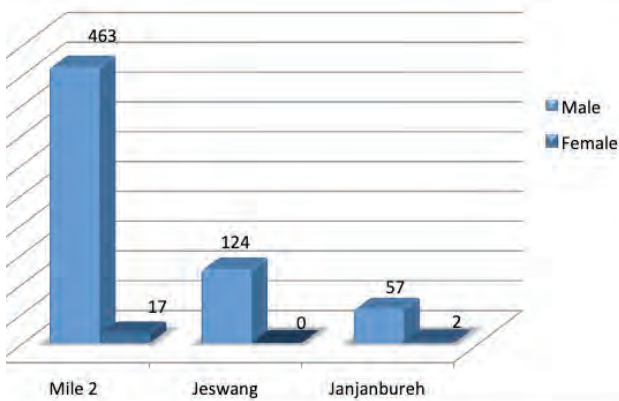


*Mile 2, Central Prison, Banjul: Inmate working on prison farm.*

# ANNEX: ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

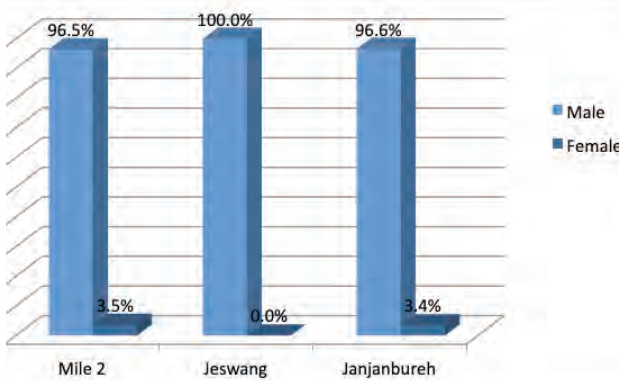
The data collected was done during the RPA but also after the exercise completed. It should be noted that obtaining data was at times difficult as records were not maintained for a period of time.

**Figure 1: Population of Inmates Base on Gender**



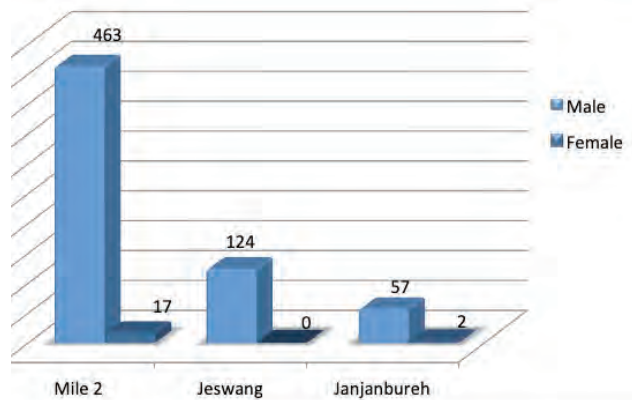
The chart above shows the total number of inmates in all three Prisons. At the time of this report (July 2019) the prisons were responsible for a total of 480 inmates (463 male / 17 female). Jeswang Prison housed 137 inmates (124 adult male / 13 juvenile male). Janjanbureh Prison housed 59 inmates (57 male / 2 female).

**Figure 2: Inmates disaggregated by gender**



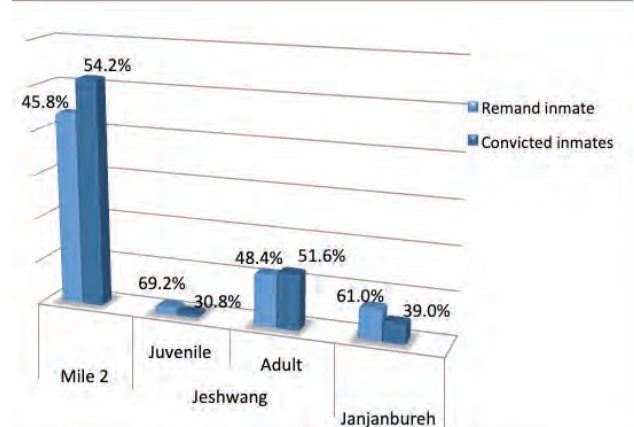
The chart above provides detainee data disaggregated by gender: Mile 2 (96.5% male / 3.5% female), Jeswang (100% male) Janjanbureh (96.6% male / 3.4% female).

**Figure 3: Population of Pretrial as Compared to Convicted Prisoners**



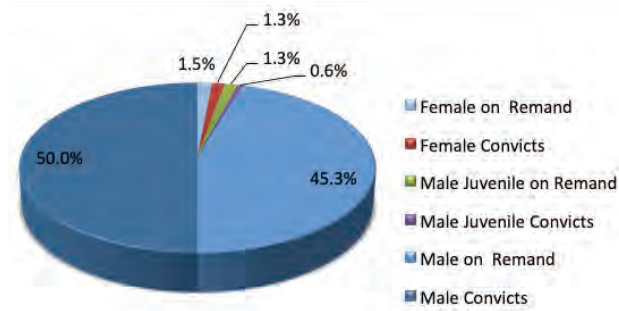
The above representation shows number of inmates awaiting trial to the number of convicts across all three established Prisons. In Jeswang and Janjanbureh Prisons, there are more prisoners waiting trial compared to those convicted.

**Figure 4: Proportion of Pre-trial compare to convicted prisoner**



The illustration above shows the proportion of pretrial/remand prisoners compared to the percentage of convicted prisoners. In Mile 2, 45.8% of prisons are on remand and 54.2% are convicted. In the Jeswang Juvenile Wing, 69.2% are on remand and 30.8% have been convicted. In the Jeswang Adult Wing 48.4% are on remand while 51.6% have been convicted. In Janjanbureh 61% are on remand and 39% have been convicted.

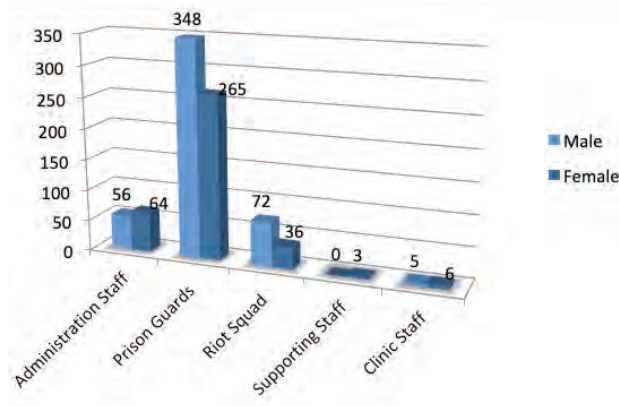
**Figure 5: Remand compared to convicted segregated by gender**



The pie chart above depicts remand and convicted inmates segregated by gender. Male convicts 50% (n=338) compared to male on remand 45.3% (n=306). Female convicts 1.3% (n=9) compared to female on remand 1.5% (n=10). Male juvenile convicts 0.6% (n=4) compared to male juvenile on remand 1.3% (n=9). The figures clearly illustrate the large number of remand prisoners in the Gambia.

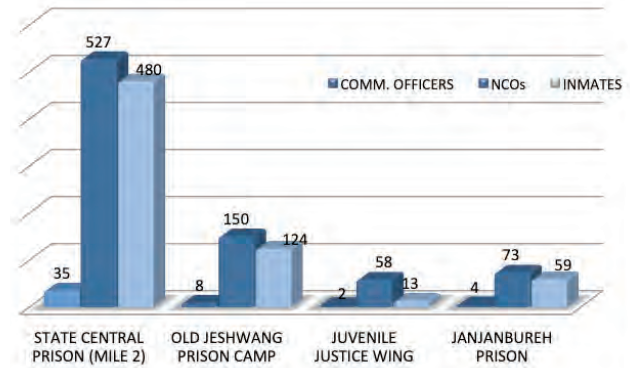
The chart below shows the prison personnel staff segregated by gender.

**Figure 6: Gender Population of Prison Personnel**



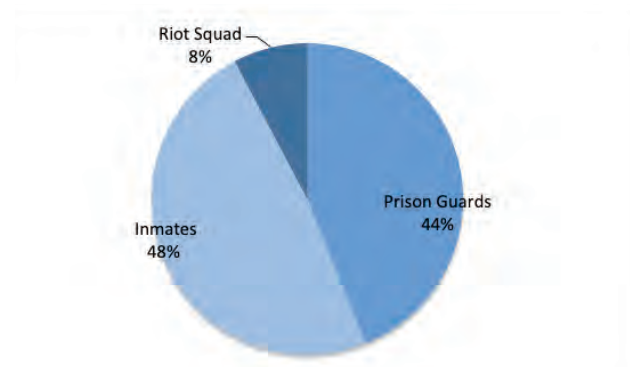
The chart below shows the total number of commissioned, non-commissioned staff and inmates in all three prisons. Across all prisons, there are more NCOs than inmates.

**Figure 7: Proportion of Inmates to Prison Staff**



The illustration below shows the percentage of Riot Squad personnel, (the riot squad are to guard the Prisons) perimeter, prison guards (ensure the safety of inmates and make sure they are in custody) as compared to the percentage of inmates. As shown below, the proportion of Riot Squad members is just 8% compared to the prison guards and inmates with 44% and 48% respectively.

**Figure 8: Proportion of Riot Squad/Prison Guards**









*Mile 2, Central Prison, Banjul: Member of the Riot Squad patrolling inside the prison compound.*



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