



CONCLUSIONS FROM THE FIRST AFRICAN CONFERENCE ON HEALTH IN DETENTION

3–5 JULY 2024, NAIROBI, KENYA

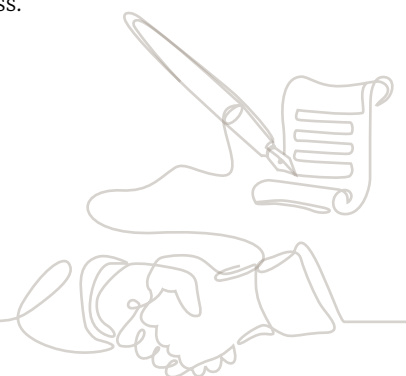
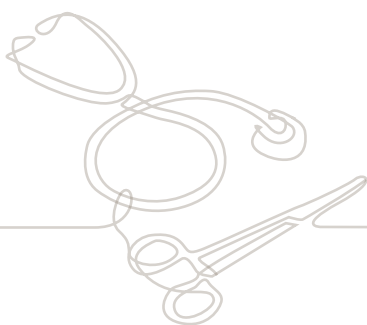


OUR WORK IN DETENTION

The aim of the ICRC's work in detention, notably our Health in Detention programme, is to ensure that the dignity and well-being of people deprived of their liberty are respected and that their conditions of detention are in line with the law and internationally recognized standards. We act to ensure that detaining authorities respect detainees' right to receive appropriate health care at all stages of their detention. As of 2024, the ICRC working in around 30 African countries and carrying out our detention-related activities in almost of the countries where we are present.

The First African Conference on Health in Detention was held in Nairobi, Kenya, from 3 to 5 July 2024 on the theme **"Making The Difference: African Solutions To Improving Health In Detention"**. The overall objective of the conference, organized by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and co-hosted by the Kenya Prisons Service, included:

- Fostering respect for international law – both international humanitarian law and international human rights law – and standards pertaining to health in detention.
- Promoting a whole-of-government approach to health in detention.
- Improving the health outcomes of people deprived of their liberty by strengthening health systems in detention.
- Building on existing good policies and practices, in and outside of Africa, to bolster responses to infectious and non-communicable diseases and to health emergencies in detention.
- Showcasing key achievements attained across the African continent since the First World Conference on Health in Detention in 2022, identifying gaps in the implementation of that conference's recommendations and adopting measures to make further progress.






The three-day conference was attended by more than 125 participants from 23 countries. The participants included senior management and health services staff from various national prison authorities, officials from the relevant ministries responsible for prisons and health, representatives from international organizations, academics and public health scientists across Africa as well as international experts.

The discussions and deliberations, held over the course of six plenary sessions and multiple symposium sessions, were shaped by the participants' distinctive expertise and a unified intent to make a difference towards improving health in detention in African countries. Guided by the international standards on the treatment of prisoners and relevant guidelines and statements from the United Nations, World Health Organization (WHO) and other world organizations, the conference offered the following conclusions:

1. Treat all staff working in places of detention and people deprived of liberty with dignity, humanity and respect.
2. Strong commitment in the consensus to comply with and promote international human rights law and international humanitarian law in relation to the protection of people deprived of liberty at all times and under all circumstances.
3. Establishment of a peer-to-peer network led by the African Correctional Services Association (ACSA) Health Network.
4. Strengthening regional and global partnerships with ACSA, Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, International Corrections and Prisons Association and WHO. At the national level, strengthening partnerships between national correctional and health services.
5. Reinforce the creation and implementation of independent interministerial health-care services, as first step towards stronger health systems.
6. Engage with key partners and organizations, including civil society, across the criminal justice and health systems, to raise awareness and seek sustainable solutions regarding the vulnerability of people deprived of liberty. In parallel, consider the generation of specific Key Performance Indicators to measure progress.
7. Consider the use of new and emerging technologies such as Artificial Intelligence, with clear safeguards, as a diagnostic tool to support health-care professionals in the early detection of disease in places of detention.
8. Consider the use of electronic data capture tools and patient management systems using digital applications, while ensuring sustainability and increasing connectivity for health professionals.
9. Support staff (custodial, health and partners) working in detention settings should have access to and understand the Nelson Mandela Rules, Bangkok Rules and Havana Rules for effective implementation.
10. Climate change and the environment must be considered in the development of new approaches and activities, mitigating negative impacts as much as possible.
11. Strengthen the assessment of patients' needs holistically while considering biopsychosocial aspects of their presentation.
12. Reassess where we are at with communicable and non-communicable diseases; evaluate and set targets that enable to move towards elimination.
13. Initiate conversation, among all relevant bodies and organizations, on ways to address the situation of food security and ensure appropriate preparedness towards the future.
14. To cascade the conclusions of the Health in Detention conference to all staff working in places of detention.



The ICRC helps people around the world affected by armed conflict and other violence, doing everything it can to protect their lives and dignity and to relieve their suffering, often with its Red Cross and Red Crescent partners. The organization also seeks to prevent hardship by promoting and strengthening humanitarian law and championing universal humanitarian principles.

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