

March 2025 | N°840a

# Thailand: Annual prison report 2025



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# List of acronyms

<b>ASEAN</b>	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
<b>CAT</b>	Committee against Torture
<b>CEDAW</b>	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
<b>CRC</b>	Convention on the Rights of the Child
<b>CRPD</b>	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
<b>DoC</b>	Department of Corrections
<b>FIDH</b>	International Federation for Human Rights
<b>HIV</b>	Human immunodeficiency virus
<b>ICRC</b>	International Committee of the Red Cross
<b>ICCPR</b>	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
<b>ICESCR</b>	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
<b>LGBTIQ</b>	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer/questioning
<b>NACC</b>	National Anti-Corruption Commission
<b>NC</b>	Narcotics Code
<b>NHRCT</b>	National Human Rights Commission of Thailand
<b>OPCAT</b>	Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
<b>PGH</b>	Police General Hospital
<b>UCL</b>	Union for Civil Liberty
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNGPs</b>	UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights
<b>UPR</b>	Universal Periodic Review
<b>WGAD</b>	Working Group on Arbitrary Detention

## Glossary of key terms

**Prisoners/inmates/detainees:** Individuals who are deprived of their liberty in a correctional facility/prison. All three terms are used interchangeably in the report, regardless of the status of the judicial proceedings.

**Pre-trial detainees:** Individuals who are deprived of their liberty in a correctional facility/prison after being arrested for an alleged violation of the law and pending judicial proceedings in which a verdict has yet to be made.

**Prisoners under death sentence:** Individuals who have been convicted of a capital crime and sentenced to death by a court, including those undergoing an appeal process.

**Official capacity:** The maximum number of inmates that can be accommodated in a correctional facility/prison, based on the minimum accommodation space of 1.6m<sup>2</sup> per person, as mandated by the DoC.

**Occupancy level:** The number of inmates that occupy a prison compared to the facility's official capacity.

**Prisoners with special needs:** Elderly prisoners (aged 60 years and above); prisoners with disabilities; mothers with children in prisons; and terminally ill prisoners, according to the DoC's categorization.

**International standards:** International guidelines and principles on detention conditions and prison management aimed to ensure the respect for basic human rights of prisoners, notably the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules) and the UN Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders (the Bangkok Rules).

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## Executive summary

In 2024, the issue of prison overcrowding came under renewed international scrutiny amid the authorities' slow and insufficient efforts to adopt and implement alternative measures to incarceration.

Thailand's total prison population increased for the second consecutive year and the overall number of prisoners exceeded the official maximum capacity of the country's prison system by 12%, with 102 (or 71%) of the 143 correctional facilities nationwide operating above their intended capacity. In addition, the number of prisoners under death sentence (364) increased for a second consecutive year and was the highest since 2020.

No progress was made concerning the implementation of a Department of Corrections (DoC) regulation that would allow certain inmates to serve their sentences outside prisons. In addition, the government failed to make progress in the adoption of measures that could allow a suspect or defendant to be detained in other locations besides prisons.

A royal amnesty, which was granted in August 2024 and resulted in the progressive release of around 31,000 convicted inmates, was the most effective measure to mitigate prison overcrowding.

In late 2024, two United Nations (UN) bodies, the Committee Against Torture and the Working Group on discrimination against women and girls, cited Thailand's prison overcrowding among the key issues of concern pertinent to their respective mandates.

Despite the decline in the number of prisoners convicted for drug-related offenses for the third consecutive year, the number of inmates incarcerated for drug-related offenses continued to account for the vast majority (73%) of the total prison population. The Thai government's move in June 2024 to lower the limits on possession of methamphetamines and amphetamines for personal use may reverse the decline in the number of convictions of drug-related offenses.

Meanwhile, according to testimonies by inmates and former inmates, prison conditions remained poor, with challenges reported in numerous areas.

Prisoners endured overcrowded conditions in cells. Male inmates were subjected to forms of punishment and disciplinary sanctions that could amount to ill treatment and, in some cases, torture. These included the excessive use of force and the prolonged use of instruments of restraint and solitary confinement – all practices that are inconsistent with international standards.

The differential treatment of inmates based on their socio-economic status continued to be reported. Wealthy or influential inmates and those who assisted prison staff were afforded a range of privileges, such as separate shower time, bigger food portions, less crowded cells, and immunity from disciplinary sanctions.

Restrictions on the supply of water and insufficient provision of basic hygiene products negatively affected sanitation conditions. In addition, meals were of poor quality and not sufficiently nutritious.

Prisons failed to provide quality physical and mental healthcare services, particularly in terms of access to timely and effective treatment and medication. The prisons' inadequate response to medical emergencies was also inadequate, sometimes resulting in fatal consequences, such as in the case of the death of detained woman human rights defender Netiporn Sanesangkhom (aka Bung) on 14 May 2024.

Inmates engaged in labor-intensive and repetitive work, which provided limited opportunities to develop skills that would be useful for employment upon release. In addition, some former prisoners reported unfair labor practices, including insufficient remuneration, and punishment for not meeting the stringent production targets. Particularly concerning were the reports of the ongoing use of prison labor to produce fishing nets - a practice the DoC claimed had ceased in 2022.

Inmates' access to news and external information was strictly controlled and opportunities to engage in recreational and rehabilitative activities to maintain and improve prisoners' physical and mental well-being were limited.

Inmates also lacked trust in the prisons' complaint mechanisms due to their perceived ineffectiveness and fear of retaliation.

Among the few positive developments in 2024 was the availability for female inmates of bras, underwear, and menstrual hygiene products, even if the frequency and quantity of the supply of sanitary pads varied greatly depending on the prison. The reported availability of preventive healthcare services, including gynecological checkups, for female inmates was another welcome development.

Now in its fourth edition, the annual prison report seeks to provide an independent assessment of conditions in Thai prisons, analyze significant stats, figures, and trends related to the Thai prison system, and present relevant key developments. The report also makes numerous practical recommendations for the improvement of prison conditions.

This report is dedicated to the memory of Danthong Breen (1933-2024).<sup>1</sup>

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1. FIDH, *Thailand: A tribute to Danthong Breen (1933-2024)*, 13 September 2024

### 2024 in a nutshell

#### Positive developments

- Availability of bras, underwear, and menstrual hygiene products for female inmates.
- Availability of preventive healthcare services for female inmates.
- Decline in the number of prisoners convicted of drug-related offenses.

#### Negative developments

- Increase in the total prison population.
- Increase in the number of prisoners under death sentence.
- Increase in the number of drug-related cases brought before courts of first instance.
- Exploitative labor practices.

### 2024 in numbers

**0.4%**

Increase in the total prison population

**71%**

Percentage of prisons operating above their maximum official capacity

**10%**

Percentage of pre-trial detainees

**73%**

Percentage of prisoners incarcerated for drug-related offenses

**11%**

Increase in the number of prisoners under death sentence

**44%**

Percentage of recidivist prisoners

**3.4%**

Percentage of foreign prisoners

**25%**

Increase in the total number of drug-related cases brought before courts of first instance

**5%**

Decrease in the number of admissions to voluntary drug rehabilitation as an alternative to prosecution

# INTRODUCTION

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The FIDH-UCL annual prison report is the only independent and comprehensive review of prison conditions in Thailand. The 2025 report covers developments, trends, facts, and figures from 1 January to 31 December 2024. It is based on the following information: 1) interviews with prisoners and former prisoners who were detained during the reporting period; 2) reliable news articles and reports; 3) reports from UN human rights monitoring mechanisms and non-governmental organizations; and 4) official documents published by Thai government agencies and other institutions.

In the preparation of this report, FIDH interviewed 16 former prisoners (12 men and 4 women) detained in 12 prisons and released at various times in 2024.<sup>2</sup> In addition, the report incorporates interviews conducted by lawyers from Freedom Bridge with four prisoners detained in two prisons.<sup>3</sup> All interviews were conducted between December 2024 and February 2025. It is likely that the information gathered through these interviews is reflective of similar trends and conditions that exist in other prisons in the country.

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2. The 12 men were detained at: 1) the Bangkok Remand Prison in Bangkok; 2) Minburi Remand Prison in Bangkok; 3) Fang District Prison in Chiang Mai Province; 4) Pattani Central Prison in Pattani Province; 5) Songkhla Central Prison in Songkhla Province; 6) the Songkhla Correctional Institution for Drug Addicts in Songkhla Province; 7) Yala Central Prison in Yala Province; 8) Narathiwat Provincial Prison in Narathiwat Province; and 9) Satun Provincial Prison in Satun Province. The four women were detained at: 1) the Department of Corrections Hospital in Bangkok; 2) the Chiang Mai Women's Correctional Institution in Chiang Mai Province; and 3) Trang Central Prison in Trang Province.

3. The four men were detained at 1) the Bangkok Remand Prison in Bangkok; and 2) Khong Prem Central Prison in Bangkok. Established in May 2024, Freedom Bridge is working towards supporting and advocating for Thai political prisoners. For more information: <https://freedombridge.network/>



# 1. STATS, FIGURES, AND KEY TRENDS

In 2024, Thailand observed an increase in its total prison population and the overall number of prisoners continued to exceed the official maximum capacity of the country’s prison system.

Below is an analysis of some key trends in Thailand’s prison system and its population between January and December 2024.

## 1.1. Total prison population increases

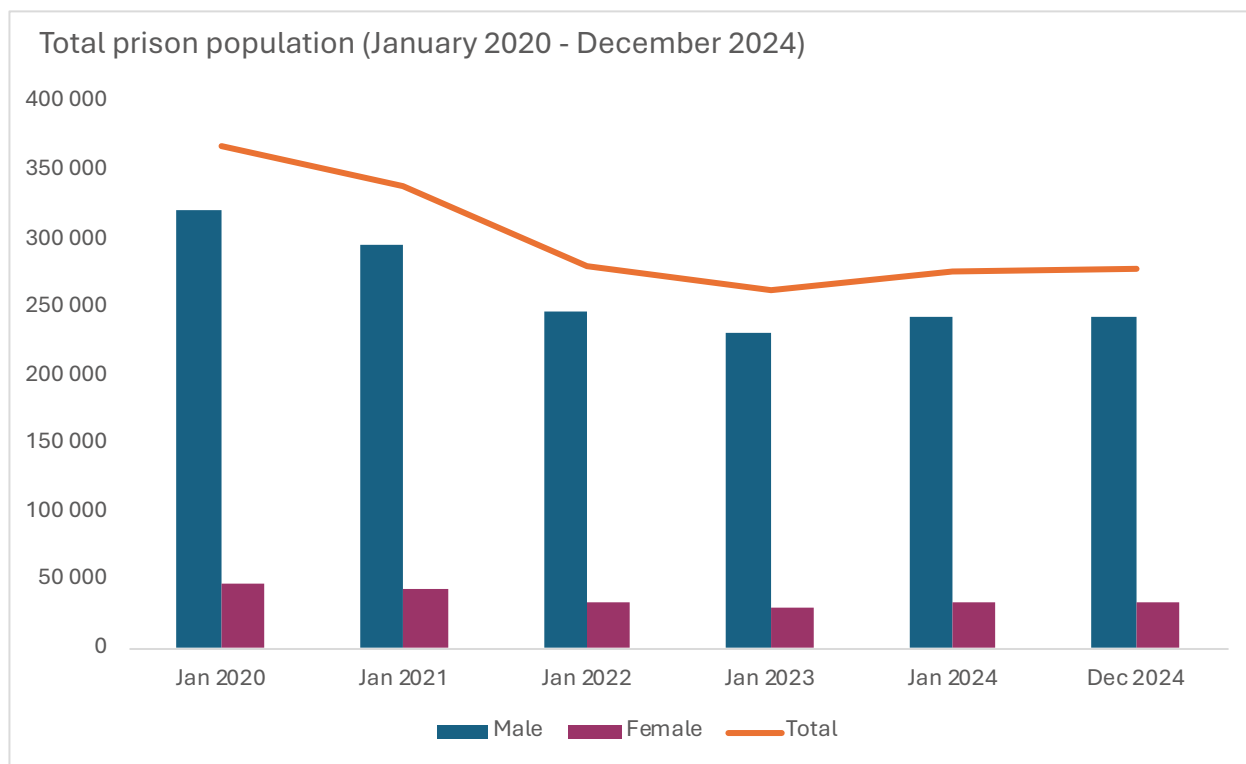
From January to December 2024, there was a slight increase in Thailand’s prison population. In January, there were 276,466 (243,122 men and 33,344 women) inmates. By December, the number had increased by 0.4% to 277,475 (243,329 men and 34,146 women). The number of female inmates increased by 2.4%, almost three times the 0.09% increase in the number of male inmates.

<b>Total prison population (January - December 2024)</b>			
<b>Month/Year</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>January 2024</b>	243,122	33,344	276,466
<b>February 2024</b>	244,324	33,489	277,813
<b>March 2024</b>	246,678	34,157	280,835
<b>April 2024</b>	249,857	34,703	284,560
<b>May 2024</b>	252,202	34,848	287,050
<b>June 2024</b>	254,525	35,467	289,992
<b>July 2024</b>	258,704	36,163	294,867
<b>August 2024</b>	261,568	36,632	298,200
<b>September 2024</b>	264,430	37,103	301,533
<b>October 2024</b>	244,724	33,600	278,324
<b>November 2024</b>	241,415	33,358	274,773
<b>December 2024</b>	243,329	34,146	277,475

<b>Convicted prisoners categorized by the length of finalized prison sentences (as of December 2024)</b>				
<b>Category</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Less than 3 months</b>	466	59	525	0.26
<b>More than 3 months to 6 months</b>	1,832	289	2,121	1.05
<b>More than 6 months to 1 year</b>	7,456	807	8,263	4.07
<b>More than 1 year to 2 years</b>	25,207	3,972	29,179	14.39
<b>More than 2 years to 5 years</b>	53,551	6,455	60,006	29.59
<b>More than 5 years to 10 years</b>	35,426	4,190	39,616	19.54
<b>More than 10 years to 15 years</b>	22,834	3,605	26,439	13.04
<b>More than 15 years to 20 years</b>	8,837	1,704	10,541	5.20
<b>More than 20 years to 50 years</b>	17,399	2,994	20,393	10.06
<b>More than 50 years</b>	1,086	158	1,244	0.61
<b>Life sentence</b>	3,771	466	4,237	2.09
<b>Death sentence</b>	42	1	43	0.02
<b>Unidentifiable</b>	166	9	175	0.09
<b>Total</b>	178,073	24,709	202,782	100

From 2020 to 2024, Thailand saw an overall decline in the prison population of 24% (-28% for female prisoners and -24% for male prisoners). However, in 2024 the total prison population increased for the second consecutive year, returning to roughly the same level it was in January 2022.

<b>Total prison population (January 2019 - December 2024)</b>			
<b>Month/ year</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>January 2020</b>	320,737	47,256	367,993
<b>January 2021</b>	296,429	42,377	338,806
<b>January 2022</b>	247,164	32,648	279,812
<b>January 2023</b>	231,813	30,506	262,319
<b>January 2024</b>	243,122	33,344	276,466
<b>December 2024</b>	243,329	34,146	277,475



## 1.2. Most prisons operate above capacity

The total occupancy level of the Thai prison system continued to exceed its official capacity.

According to the latest available figures from the DoC, as of December 2024, the Thai prison system comprised 143 prisons and correctional facilities, with the capacity to accommodate 248,330 inmates (213,252 men and 35,078 women).<sup>4</sup> The official capacity is based on an accommodation space of 1.6m<sup>2</sup> per person, mandated by the DoC.<sup>5</sup>

In December 2024, the total prison population of 277,475 exceeded by 12% the prison system’s overall capacity. The occupancy rate remained higher for male than female inmates throughout 2024. The number of male inmates stood at 243,329, or 14% above the official capacity, while the number of female inmates stood at 34,146, or 97% of the official capacity.

In addition, the latest statistics by the DoC showed that, as of December 2024, 102 prisons, or 71%, of the 143 prisons nationwide, operated above their intended capacity.<sup>6</sup> Buriram Provincial Prison in Buriram Province, which operated at 468% of its official capacity, had been the most overcrowded prison in Thailand for three consecutive years, followed by the Khon Kaen Correctional Institution for Drug Addicts in Khon Kaen Province and the Pathumthani Detention Center in Pathumthani Province, which operated at 203% and 199% above their official capacity, respectively.

As of December 2024, there were a total of 12,608 correctional officers, with an average staff-to-prisoner ratio of 1:23, compared to 1:24 in 2024, when there were 12,077 correctional officers.<sup>7</sup>

4. Department of Corrections, *Report of the overcrowding situation in prisons/correctional facilities* [in Thai], accessed on 5 December 2024, [http://www.correct.go.th/rt103pdf/crowded\\_pdf.php?filename=2024\\_2024-12-05](http://www.correct.go.th/rt103pdf/crowded_pdf.php?filename=2024_2024-12-05)

5. FIDH, *Thailand annual prison report 2023*, 9 March 2023

6. Department of Corrections, *Report of the overcrowding situation in prisons/correctional facilities* [in Thai], accessed on 5 December 2024, [http://www.correct.go.th/rt103pdf/crowded\\_pdf.php?filename=2024\\_2024-12-05](http://www.correct.go.th/rt103pdf/crowded_pdf.php?filename=2024_2024-12-05)

7. Department of Corrections, *Correspondence number Yor Tor 0710.3/27: Prisoner statistics for the preparation of Annual Prison Report 2025* [in Thai], 3 February 2025

### 1.3. Number of pre-trial detainees increases

Between January and December 2024, the rate of pre-trial detainees ranged between 7% and 10% of the total prison population. In December, 26,838 inmates in Thailand, or about 10% of total prison population, were held in pre-trial detention, up by nearly 30% from January, when the pre-trial population stood at 20,706 detainees.

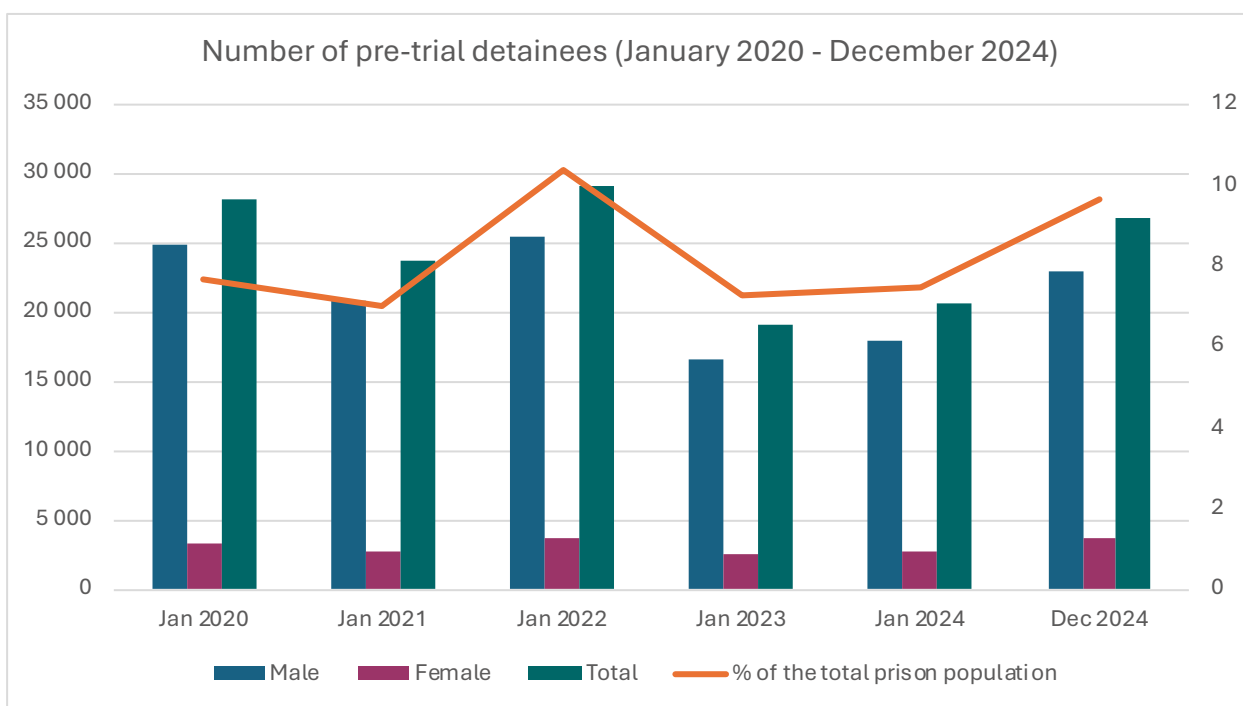
From January to December 2024, the proportion of men and women in pre-trial detention compared to overall prison population rose by 2% and 3%, respectively.

<b>Number of pre-trial detainees (January - December 2024)</b>				
<b>Month/Year</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>% of the total prison population</b>
<b>January 2024</b>	17,909	2,797	20,706	7.49
<b>February 2024</b>	19,093	3,004	22,097	7.95
<b>March 2024</b>	19,945	3,171	23,116	8.23
<b>April 2024</b>	20,260	3,168	23,428	8.23
<b>May 2024</b>	21,945	3,295	25,240	8.79
<b>June 2024</b>	21,828	3,427	25,255	8.71
<b>July 2024</b>	22,773	3,530	26,303	8.92
<b>August 2024</b>	24,595	3,711	28,306	9.49
<b>September 2024</b>	24,950	3,861	28,811	9.56
<b>October 2024</b>	23,884	3,812	27,696	9.95
<b>November 2024</b>	22,882	3,641	26,523	9.65
<b>December 2024</b>	23,070	3,768	26,838	9.67

From 2020 to 2024, the number of pre-trial detainees declined by 5% (from 28,247 in January 2020 to 26,838 in December 2024). The number of male pre-trial detainees dropped by 7% (from 24,833 in January 2020 to 23,070 in December 2024), while the number of female pre-trial detainees rose by 10% (from 3,414 in January 2019 to 3,768 in December 2024).

From January 2020 to December 2024, the proportion of pre-trial detainees to the overall prison population had increased by 2%, with the proportion of male and female pre-trial detainees rising by 1% and 4%, respectively.

Number of pre-trial detainees (January 2020 - December 2024)				
Month / year	Male	Female	Total	% of the total prison population
January 2020	24,833	3,414	28,247	7.676
January 2021	20,889	2,840	23,729	7.00
January 2022	25,506	3,642	29,148	10.42
January 2023	16,678	2,473	19,151	7.30
January 2024	17,909	2,797	20,706	7.49
December 2024	23,070	3,768	26,838	9.67



### 1.4. Rate of inmates incarcerated for drug-related offenses remains high

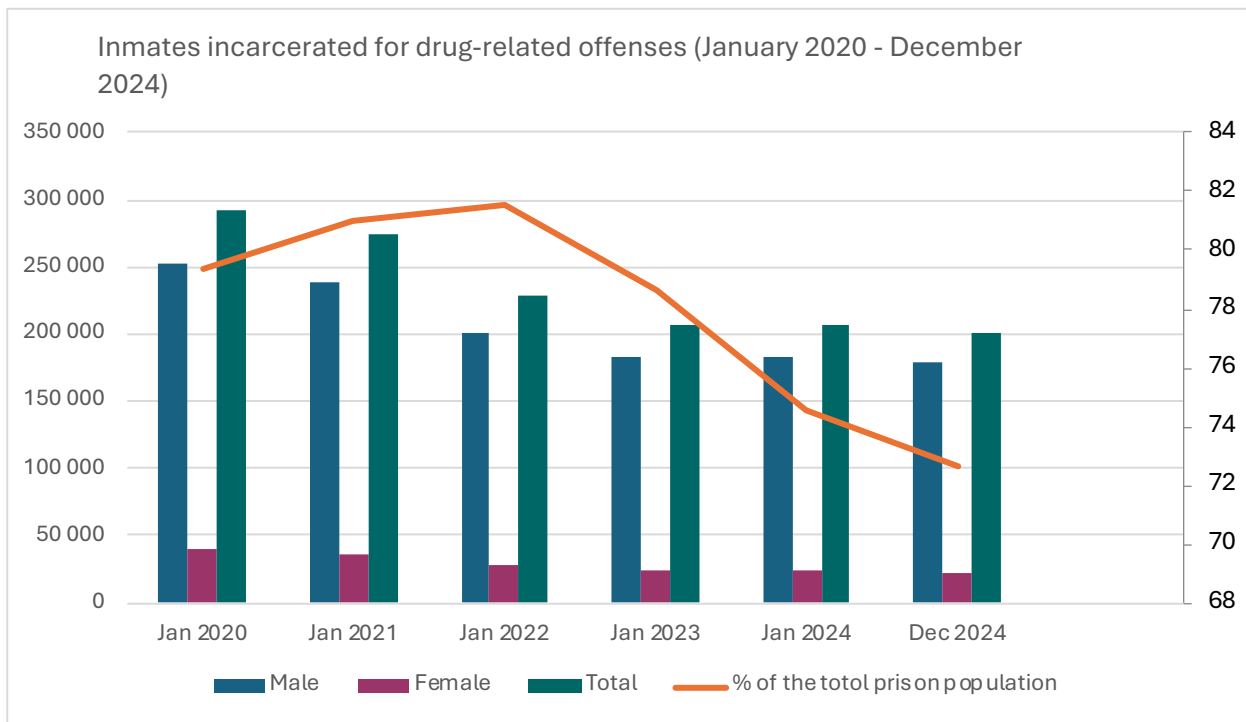
In 2024, the number of inmates incarcerated for drug-related offenses continued to account for the vast majority of the total prison population. As of December 2024, 201,621 inmates (178,777 men and 22,844 women, representing 73% and 67% of the total male and female prison population, respectively) were incarcerated for drug-related offenses, accounting for almost 73% of the total prison population. From January to December 2024, the proportion of inmates incarcerated for drug-related offenses decreased by 2%.

<b>Prisoners incarcerated for drug-related offenses (January - December 2024)</b>				
<b>Month/Year</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>% of the total prison population</b>
<b>January 2024</b>	182,604	23,476	206,080	74.54
<b>February 2024</b>	182,772	23,446	206,218	74.23
<b>March 2024</b>	184,014	23,682	207,696	73.96
<b>April 2024</b>	185,107	23,789	208,896	73.41
<b>May 2024</b>	186,927	23,924	210,851	73.46
<b>June 2024</b>	188,602	24,256	212,858	73.40
<b>July 2024</b>	191,562	24,622	216,184	73.32
<b>August 2024</b>	193,641	24,967	218,608	73.31
<b>September 2024</b>	195,426	25,148	220,574	73.15
<b>October 2024</b>	181,403	23,008	204,411	73.44
<b>November 2024</b>	178,044	22,636	200,680	73.03
<b>December 2024</b>	178,777	22,844	201,621	72.66

From 2020 to 2024, Thailand observed an overall decline in the number of inmates incarcerated for drug-related offenses. The number of inmates incarcerated for drug-related offenses in December 2024 was down by 31% from January 2020 - higher than the 24% drop observed in total prison population over the same period. During the same period, the number of women incarcerated for drug-related offenses decreased by about 42%, which was significantly higher than the 29% drop observed in the number of men incarcerated for drug-related offenses.

The proportion of prisoners incarcerated for drug-related offenses compared to the total prison population also declined by about 6%, from 79% in January 2020 to 73% in December 2024. The number of women incarcerated for drug-related offenses compared to the total female prison population decreased by 17%, from 84% in January 2020 to 67% in December 2024. The decrease in the proportion of men incarcerated for drug-related offense was less significant, going down by 6%, from 79% in January 2020 to 73% in December 2024.

<b>Inmates incarcerated for drug-related offenses (January 2020 - December 2024)</b>				
<b>Month/year</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>% of the total prison population</b>
<b>January 2020</b>	252,557	39,481	292,038	79.36
<b>January 2021</b>	238,516	35,771	274,287	80.96
<b>January 2022</b>	200,929	27,120	228,049	81.5
<b>January 2023</b>	182,821	23,541	206,362	78.67
<b>January 2024</b>	182,604	23,476	206,080	74.54
<b>December 2024</b>	178,777	22,844	201,621	72.66



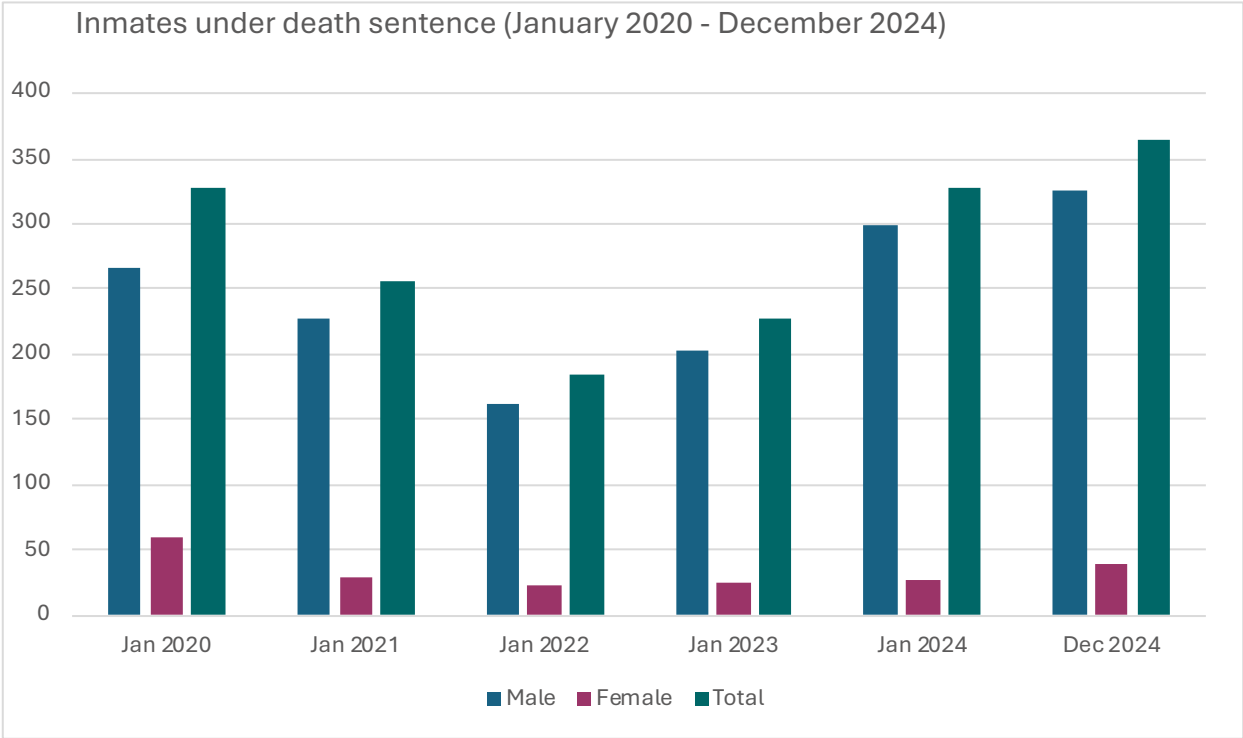
### 1.5. Inmates under death sentence

Official figures from the DoC showed an increase in the number of inmates under death sentence in 2024. In January, there were a total 327 inmates (299 men and 28 women) under death sentence. According to the latest statistics published by the DoC in December, the number had gone up by 11%, to 364 (325 men and 39 women). The number of female prisoners under death sentence increased by 39%, compared to the 9% increase observed in the number of male prisoners under death sentence.

Inmates under death sentence (January - December 2024)			
Month/Year	Male	Female	Total
January 2024	299	28	327
February 2024	318	28	346
March 2024	332	28	360
April 2024	346	27	373
May 2024	354	28	382
June 2024	362	28	390
July 2024	364	29	393
August 2024	365	33	398
September 2024	371	33	404
October 2024	313	35	348
November 2024	324	37	361
December 2024	325	39	364

The number of prisoners under death sentence increased for the second consecutive year and was the highest since 2020. As of December 2024, the number of such prisoners was 11% higher than that recorded in January 2020. Between 2020 and 2024, the number of male prisoners under death sentence rose by 22%, although the number of women prisoners under death sentence declined by 35%.

<b>Inmates under death sentence (January 2020 - December 2024)</b>			
<b>Month/ year</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>January 2020</b>	267	60	327
<b>January 2021</b>	228	29	257
<b>January 2022</b>	163	22	185
<b>January 2023</b>	203	24	227
<b>January 2024</b>	299	28	327
<b>December 2024</b>	325	39	364





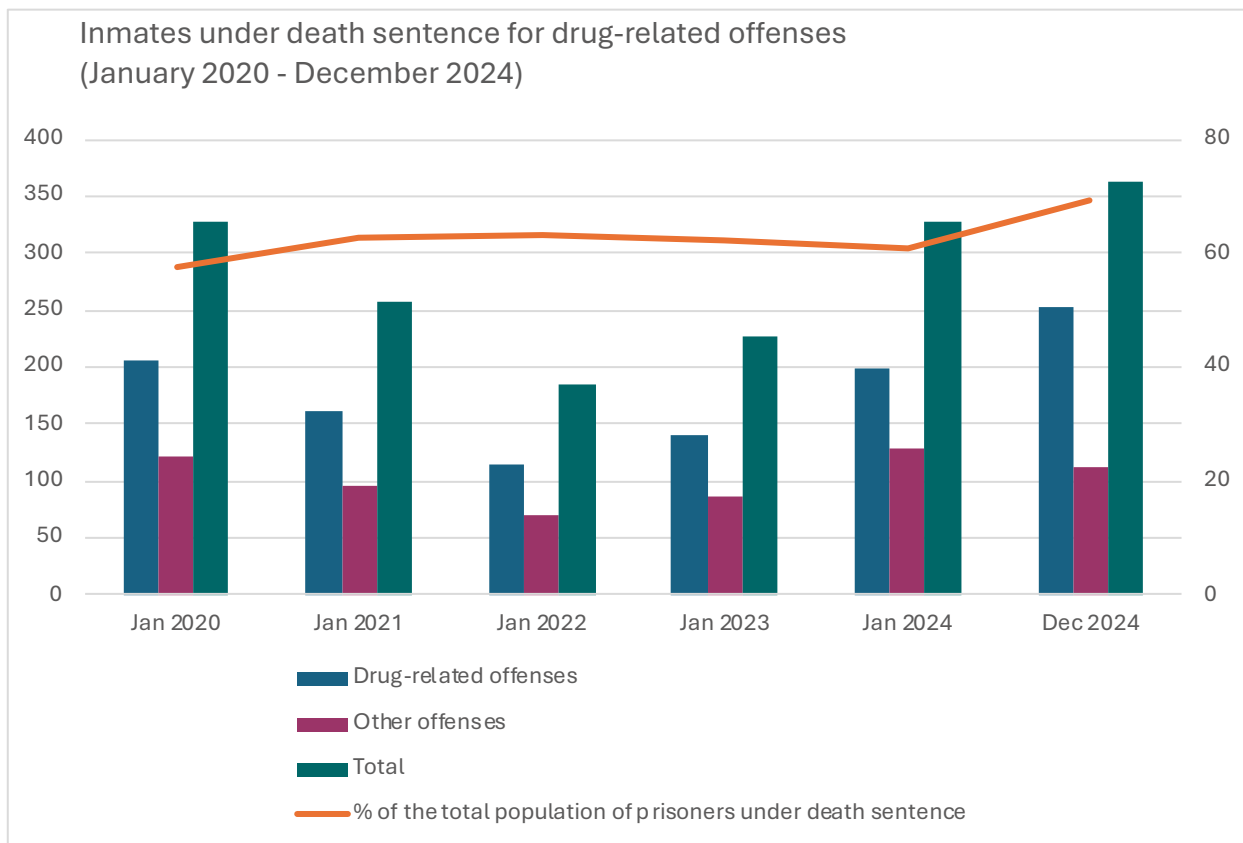
In 2024, drug-related offenses continued to account for the majority of the crimes for which a death sentence had been imposed. As of December, 252 (69%) of the 364 inmates under death sentence had been convicted of drug-related offenses. This proportion went up from the 60% recorded in January.

While women constituted a small minority of inmates under death sentence, nearly all of them were convicted of drug-related offenses. As of December 2024, nearly 95% had been sentenced to death for drug-related offenses, which was significantly higher than the 66% of male prisoners under death sentence for drug-related offenses.

<b>Inmates under death sentence for drug-related offenses (January - December 2024)</b>				
<b>Month / year</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>% of the total number of prisoners under death sentence</b>
<b>January 2024</b>	173	26	199	60.86
<b>February 2024</b>	177	26	203	58.67
<b>March 2024</b>	185	26	211	58.61
<b>April 2024</b>	196	25	221	59.25
<b>May 2024</b>	204	26	230	60.21
<b>June 2024</b>	209	26	235	60.26
<b>July 2024</b>	212	27	239	60.81
<b>August 2024</b>	210	31	241	60.55
<b>September 2024</b>	221	32	253	62.62
<b>October 2024</b>	198	34	232	66.60
<b>November 2024</b>	205	35	240	66.48
<b>December 2024</b>	215	37	252	69.23

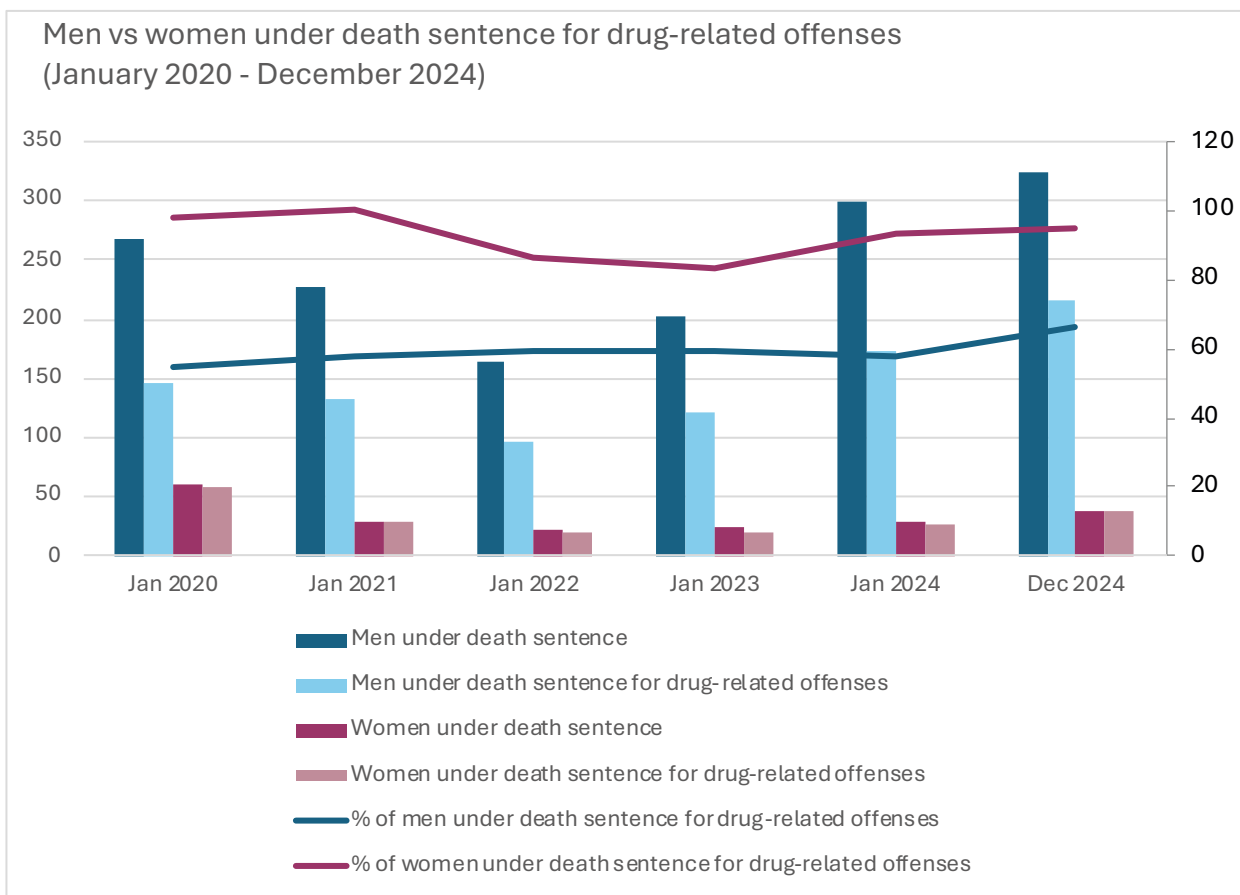
Between 2020 and 2024, the proportion of those who had been sentenced to death for drug-related offenses compared to the total number of inmates under death sentence went up from almost 58% to about 69%.

Inmates under death sentence for drug related offenses (January 2020 - December 2024)				
Month/ year	Drug-related offenses	Other offenses	Total	% of the total number of prisoners under death sentence
January 2020	206	121	327	57.79
January 2021	162	95	257	62.99
January 2022	115	70	185	63.03
January 2023	141	86	227	62.10
January 2024	199	128	327	60.85
December 2024	252	112	364	69.23



Since 2020, women convicted of drug-related offenses continued to disproportionately account for the number of those under death sentence. The female share of prisoners under death sentence for drug-related offenses has remained consistently high, at an average of about 92%, compared to the total number of female prisoners under death sentence. In contrast, the average proportion of male inmates under death sentence for drug-related offenses compared to the total number of male inmates under death sentence was 59%.

Men vs women under death sentence for drug-related offenses (January 2020 - December 2024)						
Month / year	Women under death sentence	Women under death sentence for drug-related offenses	%	Men under death sentence	Men under death sentence for drug-related offenses	%
January 2020	60	59	98	267	147	55
January 2021	29	29	100	228	133	58
January 2022	22	19	86	163	96	59
January 2023	24	20	83	203	121	59
January 2024	28	26	93	299	173	58
December 2024	39	37	95	325	215	66



## 1.6. High recidivism rates

According to the DoC, as of 1 December 2024, 89,436 of the 202,782 convicted inmates who were serving their finalized sentences, or about 44%, were reoffenders. The percentage remained virtually unchanged from 2023. Of the total 168,164 inmates released in 2024, 17,217, or about 10%, reoffended by the end of the year (as of 17 December 2024).

<b>Convicted inmates serving their finalized sentences, categorized by number of times in detention (as of December 2024)</b>				
<b>Time in detention</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>1st time in detention</b>	89,923	17,202	107,125	52.83
<b>2nd time in detention</b>	54,701	5,005	59,706	29.44
<b>3rd time in detention</b>	20,218	1,374	21,592	10.65
<b>4th time in detention</b>	5,457	308	5,765	2.84
<b>5th time in detention or more</b>	2,236	137	2,373	1.17
<b>Detained for two or more times</b>	82,612	6,824	89,436	44.1
<b>Uncategorizable</b>	5,538	683	6,221	3.07
<b>Total</b>	<b>178,073</b>	<b>24,709</b>	<b>202,782</b>	<b>100</b>

<b>Reoffending rates for inmates released in fiscal year 2024 by type of offenses (as of 17 December 2024)</b>	
<b>Type of offenses</b>	<b>%</b>
Drug-related offenses	46.3
Property-related offenses	9.0
Others (including petty crimes, immigration offenses, gambling)	42.8
Life and body-related offenses	0.7
Sex-related offenses	0.1
Administrative offenses	0.1
Public safety offenses	0.1

## 1.7. Deaths in prison

According to DoC statistics, in fiscal year 2024 (from 1 October 2023 to 30 September 2024), 613 prisoners died of “natural causes” and 21 prisoners died of “unnatural causes,” which included suicides.<sup>8</sup> The mortality rate stood at 210 deaths per 100,000 prisoners, down by 20% from the mortality rate of 266 deaths per 100,000 prisoners recorded in previous fiscal year (from 1 October 2022 to 30 September 2023). The number of deaths of prisoners by natural and unnatural cases declined by 15% and 36% respectively from the previous fiscal year, during which the natural deaths of 718 prisoners and the unnatural deaths of 33 prisoners, respectively, were recorded.

In November 2024, a UN Committee criticized the Thai authorities for their failure to provide information regarding the cause of deaths in custody that were deemed to be unnatural [See below, 5. *UN bodies concerned over prison conditions*].<sup>9</sup>

8. In addition to suicide, unnatural causes of death include: accidents; homicide; sudden death; and unknown causes.

9. CAT, *Concluding observations on the second periodic report of Thailand*, 9 December 2024, UN Doc. CAT/C/THA/CO/2, para. 28

## 1.8. Early release measures significantly drop

In 2024, the number of convicted prisoners benefiting from conditional release increased by 64% from 2023. The royal amnesty accounted for 66% of the early releases of inmates and disproportionately contributed to this practice, in comparison to other measures. The latest mass royal amnesty, which was granted in August 2024 on the occasion of King Rama X’s 72<sup>nd</sup> birthday, resulted in the progressive release about 31,000 convicted inmates and sentence reductions for more than 200,000.<sup>10</sup>

Conditional release of convicted prisoners (January - December 2024)				
Month / year	Good conduct time allowance	Parole	Royal amnesty	Total
January 2024	478	753	53	1,284
1 February 2024	496	618	44	1,158
28 February 2024	550	636	57	1,243
April 2024	610	648	71	1,329
May 2024	559	492	41	1,092
June 2024	568	473	78	1,119
July 2024	538	549	87	1,174
August 2024	559	798	101	1,458
September 2024	378	354	85	817
October 2024	47	117	10,819	10,983
November 2024	11	55	4,852	4,918
December 2024	58	143	3,975	4,176
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,852</b>	<b>5,636</b>	<b>20,263</b>	<b>30,751</b>

In 2024, the number of paroles granted to convicted inmates stood at 5,636, down by 50% from the number recorded in 2023, when 11,412 inmates benefitted from this measure.

Total numbers of conditional release of convicted prisoners (2020 - 2024)				
Year	Good conduct time allowance	Parole	Royal amnesty	Total
2020	14,664	13,379	32,864	60,907
2021	5,177	36,776	51,496	93,449
2022	2,477	8,110	35,667	46,254
2023	5,949	11,412	1,442	18,803
2024	4,852	5,636	20,263	30,751

10. Thai PBS, *Royal amnesty bestowed on the occasion of King Rama X’s birthday* [in Thai], 17 August 2024, <https://www.thaipbs.or.th/news/content/343186>; Nation, *Thaksin among beneficiaries of royal pardon*, 17 August 2024

## 1.9. Juvenile offenders in prisons decrease

Month / year	Number of juvenile offenders detained in prisons
January 2024	151
1 February 2024	120
29 February 2024	138
April 2024	150
May 2024	135
June 2024	148
July 2024	171
August 2024	175
September 2024	164
October 2024	134
November 2024	135
December 2024	139

As of December 2024, there were 139 inmates (127 men and 12 women) aged below 18 years detained in prisons.<sup>11</sup>

Thailand continued to observe a downward trend in the juvenile prison population. As of December 2024, the number of juvenile offenders detained in prisons had dropped by 76% from the number recorded in January 2020.

Month / year	Number of juvenile offenders detained in prisons
January 2020	591
January 2021	395
January 2022	170
January 2023	175
January 2024	151
December 2024	139

## 1.10. Prisoners with special needs

As of December 2024, the number of elderly prisoners (above the age of 60) stood at 8,556, an increase by 14%, from 7,516 prisoners in 2023.

In addition, there were 953 prisoners with disabilities nationwide, up by 3% from 921 prisoners recorded in 2023.<sup>12</sup> The most common types of disabilities were physical mobility impairments (69.9%), followed by vision impairments (10%).

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11. Department of Corrections, *Prison statistics report: Ror Tor 103* [in Thai], 1 December 2024, [http://www.correct.go.th/rt103pdf/report\\_result\\_rt103.php?date=01-12-2024](http://www.correct.go.th/rt103pdf/report_result_rt103.php?date=01-12-2024)

12. Department of Corrections, *Correspondence number Yor Tor 0710.3/27: Prisoner statistics for the preparation of Annual Prison Report 2025* [in Thai], 3 February 2025

## 1.11. Foreign prisoners

As of December 2024, there were 9,349 foreign nationals in Thai prisons, accounting for 3.4% of the total prison population.<sup>13</sup> The 10 countries with the highest number of incarcerated nationals included: Myanmar (52.9%); Laos (11.9%); Cambodia (9.7%); China (4.2%); Nigeria (1.8%); Malaysia (1.6%); Vietnam (1.5%); Bangladesh (0.9%); Taiwan (0.7%); and India (0.5%).

The most common offenses under which foreign nationals were incarcerated included: drug-related offenses (21.5%); violations of the Immigration Act 1979 (13.7%); theft (4.5%); offenses against life (3.3%); and violations of the Land Traffic Act 1979 (2.3%).

## 1.12. Annual budget increases

For fiscal year 2024 (from 1 October 2023 to 30 September 2024), the DoC received an annual budget of 14.88 billion baht (about US\$429.8 million), which accounted for 57% of the total amount allocated to the Ministry of Justice, up by 6% from 14.01 billion baht (about US\$404.6 million) in the previous fiscal year.<sup>14</sup>

Of its annual budget for fiscal year 2024, 4.70 billion baht (about US\$135.9 million), or 31%, was earmarked for food, the same proportion as in fiscal year 2023, resulting in roughly 45 baht spent on each prisoner per day, or 15 baht per meal – the same amount since 2022.<sup>15</sup>

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13. Department of Corrections, *Correspondence number Yor Tor 0710.3/27: Prisoner statistics for the preparation of Annual Prison Report 2025* [in Thai], 3 February 2025

14. 1 USD = 34.64 Thai baht (Bank of Thailand, Foreign Exchange Rates as of 2 December 2024); Budget Bureau, *Budget document (3rd issues) of Budget Expenditure for fiscal year 2024 (9)* [in Thai], <https://www.bb.go.th/topic-detail.php?id=16535&mid=545&catID=1448>

15. FIDH-UCL, *Thailand Annual Prison Report 2023*, 9 March 2023; Chapter 2.10

## 2. ALTERNATIVE MEASURES TO DETENTION STILL PENDING

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Efforts aimed at alleviating chronic overcrowding through the adoption of alternative measures to detention remained slow and insufficient.

No progress was made concerning the implementation of a DoC regulation that would allow certain inmates to serve their sentences outside prisons.

The implementation of this regulation, issued under Article 33 of the Penitentiary Act 1936 (amended in 2017), concerning the detention of certain inmates in locations other than prisons, has been pending since its publication by the DoC on 6 December 2023.<sup>16</sup> According to the DoC, for such regulation to be implemented, the operational guidelines identifying eligibility criteria and alternative places of detention must first be established. As of December 2024, the draft notification providing guidelines for detention outside prisons was undergoing the process of public consultation.<sup>17</sup>

During the review of Thailand by the UN CAT in November 2024 [See below, 5. *UN bodies concerned over prison conditions*], a representative from the DoC said the department planned to implement the regulation “by 2025.”<sup>18</sup> On 6 December 2024, a DoC official indicated that the process of finalizing the implementing guidelines was “nearly finished.”<sup>19</sup>

In addition, the government failed to make progress in the adoption of measures that could allow a suspect or defendant to be detained in other locations besides prisons.

The adoption of such measures necessitates the prior amendment of a ministerial regulation issued in September 2019 under Section 89/1 of the Thai Criminal Procedure Code.<sup>20</sup> In late May 2024, it was reported that the Ministry of Justice expected the amendment process to be finalized by the end of the year.<sup>21</sup>

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16. FIDH-UCL, *Thailand Annual Prison Report 2024*, 19 March 2024; Chapter 4.2.

17. Bangkok Post, ‘No special treatment’ for Yingluck, 7 December 2024; Thai PBS, *Tawee said Yingluck was ineligible for serving sentence outside prison* [in Thai], 7 January 2025, <https://www.thaipbs.or.th/news/content/347953>

18. UN Web TV, *2148th Meeting, 81st session, Committee Against Torture (CAT)*, 5 November 2024

19. Bangkok Post, ‘No special treatment’ for Yingluck, 7 December 2024

20. FIDH-UCL, *Thailand Annual Prison Report 2024*, 19 March 2024; Chapter 4.1.

21. Bangkok Post, *Move afoot to cut inmate numbers*, 29 May 2024



### 3. ACCESS TO PRISONS RESTRICTED

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In 2024, for the fourth consecutive year since the publication of the first FIDH-UCL Thailand annual prison report, the DoC refused to grant the two organizations access to prisons for documentation purposes.

On 15 August 2024, FIDH and UCL sent letters to the DoC and 19 prisons across the country to request access to those facilities to assess detention conditions and conduct interviews with inmates.<sup>22</sup> Each individual prison responded that accessing prisons for research purposes could be facilitated only with the DoC's approval. On 18 October 2024, the DoC issued a letter instructing FIDH and UCL to make requests directly to each prison's chief for consideration.<sup>23</sup> On 30 October 2024, FIDH and UCL sent request letters to all 19 prisons, in line with the DoC's instructions. As of 31 December 2024, one prison had rejected the FIDH-UCL request, while the other 18 had not replied.

A variety of other individuals and organizations did not face obstacles in accessing prisons across the country. Among those who visited prisons in 2024 were: journalists from Thai and foreign media;<sup>24</sup> ASEAN's Secretary-General;<sup>25</sup> Malaysia's Consul General;<sup>26</sup> a Thai Senate Committee;<sup>27</sup> and the UN Working Group on discrimination against women and girls.<sup>28</sup>

The UN Working Group on discrimination against women and girls [See below, 5. *UN bodies concerned over prison conditions*] was allowed to visit women's prisons in Bangkok and Songkhla Province in December 2024. However, it strongly regretted that its experts were prevented from "confidential and unsupervised contact" with detainees at the Songkhla Women's Correctional Institution, in violation of the terms of reference for UN special procedure country visits. The Working Group lamented that the lack of unrestricted independent monitoring and oversight of the correctional facilities raised "serious concerns" that human rights violations that may take place there could go unreported.<sup>29</sup>

Concerns over the undue restrictions on access to places of detention faced by external organizations, including the National Human Rights Commission of Thailand (NHRCT) and civil society organizations, were voiced by another UN human rights body in November 2024 [See below, 5. *UN bodies concerned over prison conditions*].

22. The 19 prisons were: Chiang Mai Women's Correctional Institution in Chiang Mai Province; Fang District Prison in Chiang Mai Province; Nakhon Si Thammarat Central Prison in Nakhon Si Thammarat Province; Songkhla Central Prison in Songkhla Province; Phuket Provincial Prison in Phuket Province; Narathiwat Provincial Prison in Narathiwat Province; Pattaya Remand Prison in Chonburi Province; Chanthaburi Provincial Prison in Chanthaburi Province, Chonburi Women's Correctional Institution in Chonburi Province; Tak Central Prison in Tak Province; Central Women's Correctional Institution in Bangkok; Thanayaburi District Prison in Pathumthani Province; Uthaitani Provincial Prison in Uthaitani Province; Bang Kwang Central Prison in Nonthaburi Province; Khlong Prem Central Prison in Bangkok; Bangkok Remand Prison; Khon Kaen Provincial Prison in Khon Kaen Province; Ubon Ratchathani Central Prison in Ubon Ratchathani Province; and Udonthani Central Prison in Udonthani Province.

23. Department of Corrections, *Correspondence Number Yor Tor 0704.3/61; Informing about channel to make a request to interview inmates for Annual Prison Report 2025*, 18 October 2024

24. Department of Corrections, *The New York Times reports visited Chaiya District Prison to do interview about Kita Muay Thai (Aerobic Thai Kickboxing)* [in Thai], 20 June 2024; Standard, *Opening Klong Prem Central Prison: Looking at the treatment of transgender prisoners* [in Thai], 1 August 2024, <https://thestandard.co/klong-prem-lgbtqia-prisoners/>

25. ASEAN, *Secretary-General of ASEAN visits the Central Women Correctional Institution and the Medical Correctional Hospital in Bangkok, Thailand*, 6 November 2024

26. Malay Mail, *Malaysian consul, Thai justice minister check conditions of prisoners, including Kelantan 'dikir barat' singer, at Narathiwat Prison*, 18 November 2024

27. Department of Corrections Facebook Page, *Director General of Department of Corrections welcomed Thai Senate Committee on Legal Affairs and Justice at Khlong Prem Central Prison* [in Thai], 11 December 2024, [https://www.facebook.com/story.php?story\\_fbid=987507786741611&id=100064471968941&\\_rdr](https://www.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=987507786741611&id=100064471968941&_rdr)

28. UN Working Group on discrimination against women and girls, *End of mission statement - Official visit to Thailand (2-13 December 2024)*, 13 December 2024

29. UN Working Group on discrimination against women and girls, *End of mission statement - Official visit to Thailand (2-13 December 2024)*, 13 December 2024

## 4. PRO-DEMOCRACY ACTIVIST DIES IN PRISON

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The consequences of the inadequate response to medical emergencies in prisons [See below, 7.7. *Inadequate healthcare*] was illustrated by the death of detained woman human rights defender Netiporn Sanesangkhom (aka Bung) on 14 May 2024.<sup>30</sup>

Netiporn was reported to have suffered a cardiac arrest while in custody of the DoC on the morning of 14 May 2024. She became unconscious at the DoC Hospital in Bangkok before being transferred to Thammasat University Hospital in Pathumthani Province, where she was later pronounced dead at 11:22am. Netiporn had been detained at the Central Women's Correctional Institution in Bangkok since 26 January 2024, after the Bangkok South Criminal Court had found her guilty of contempt of court and sentenced her to one month in prison in relation to a physical altercation with the court's security personnel on 19 October 2023. The incident occurred while she and other pro-democracy activists were attending the verdict hearing in a *lèse-majesté* trial against a fellow activist. Netiporn remained detained at the Central Women's Correctional Institution, following the Bangkok South Criminal Court's revocation on 26 January of her bail in connection with a *lèse-majesté* case against her. On 27 January 2024, Netiporn commenced a dry hunger strike to demand judicial reform and the cessation of imprisonment of individuals for expressing dissenting opinions. Due to her deteriorating health, she was transferred to medical facilities several times. She resumed drinking water in February 2024 and eating in April 2024. Prior to her death, on 4 April 2024, she had been receiving treatment at the DoC Hospital for her deteriorating health as a result of the hunger strike.<sup>31</sup>

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30. Netiporn was a prominent activist who advocated for LGBTIQ and youth rights in 2020-2021. She then joined the pro-democracy group *Thalu Wang* ["shattering the palace"], with which she actively engaged in conducting public opinion polls regarding the Thai monarchy. Her political activism was met with repeated prosecutions since 2021, including two cases under Article 112 of Thailand's Criminal Code (*lèse-majesté*).

31. FIDH, *Thailand: Death in detention of pro-democracy activist Netiporn "Bung" Sanesangkhom*, 16 May 2024

## The DoC Hospital

An FIDH interview with a former prisoner who had been admitted to the DoC Hospital<sup>32</sup> revealed living conditions and treatment of inmates at the facility.<sup>33</sup>

The former prisoner reported inmates slept in a bed that was equipped with a mattress and a blanket. Inmates at the facility were also allowed to shower in a private bathroom individually without time and water restrictions. In addition, the food served at the hospital tasted good, contained an adequate amount of protein from meat, and was described as “way better than the food served in prison [the Central Women’s Correctional Institution].”

While the daily routine of inmates admitted at the DoC Hospital was less regimented than for those detained in prisons, the former prisoner reported experiencing more restrictions on movement. “We had to stay on the second floor of the [hospital’s] building all the time,” she recalled.

Just like in prisons, access to information on current affairs, including through news broadcasts and newspapers, was seriously restricted at the DoC Hospital, and inmates were only allowed to watch certain types of entertainment programs, such as movies. “The [television’s] screen would be blacked out during news shows,” the former prisoner recalled.

With regard to the standards of care provided in the DoC Hospital, the interviewed former prisoner noted that inmates with some serious illnesses, such as cancer, were generally referred to other hospitals for more specialized care or treatment. Nonetheless, the former prisoner further noted that inmates with mental illnesses admitted to the DoC Hospital were forced to wear ankle shackles or be chained to their beds at night.

The former prisoner also noted the absence of a complaint box in the hospital building.

The death certificate and medical records issued by Thammasat University Hospital revealed that Netiporn died of acute heart failure, electrolyte imbalance, and an enlarged heart, and that she had no vital signs upon arriving at Thammasat University Hospital at 9:30am.<sup>34</sup> Despite the DoC’s claim that the DoC Hospital followed normal procedures when attempting to resuscitate Netiporn and that the DoC Hospital met professional standards of care, Netiporn’s family and lawyer noted several inconsistencies in the medical records and CCTV footage obtained from the DoC concerning the timing, modality, and length of the resuscitation efforts by personnel at the DoC Hospital.<sup>35</sup> In addition, they questioned the delays in the transfer of Netiporn from her bed to the DoC Hospital’s emergency room and from the ambulance to the emergency room at Thammasat University Hospital.<sup>36</sup>

On 18 June, Netiporn’s lawyer filed a petition with the Chief Justice of the Bangkok Criminal Court to seek an inquest into Netiporn’s death, arguing that her death occurred at the DoC Hospital, which is under the jurisdiction of the Bangkok Criminal Court.<sup>37</sup>

32. The Doc Hospital is located within the Klong Prem Central Prison in Bangkok. According to the DoC, the DoC Hospital is a correctional facility that receives sick prisoners transferred from seven prisons or correctional facilities in Bangkok, namely: the Bangkok Remand Prison; Thonburi Remand Prison; Minburi Remand Prison; the Central Women’s Correctional Institution; Thonburi Women’s Correctional Institution; Klong Prem Central Prison; and the Central Correctional Institution for Drug Addicts.

33. FIDH, *Interview with former prisoner at the Department of Corrections Hospital*, 16 December 2024

34. Prachatai, *Esophageal intubation contributed to activist’s death, says lawyer*, 21 May 2024

35. Prachatai, *Esophageal intubation contributed to activist’s death, says lawyer*, 21 May 2024; Prachatai, *Detained activist’s family questions credibility of medical records*, 26 May 2024; Prachatai, *Lawyer demands swift investigation into activist who died during hunger strike*, 1 August 2024

36. Prachatai, *Lawyer demands swift investigation into activist who died during hunger strike*, 1 August 2024

37. Prachatai, *Lawyer demands inquest into activist’s death*, 20 June 2024; under Article 150 of Thailand’s Criminal Procedure Code, in cases of death in custody, upon receiving the autopsy report from the police, the public prosecutor must initiate an inquest at the court within the jurisdiction of the location where the body was.

On 4 November 2024, the public prosecutor initiated a separate inquest at the Thanyaburi Provincial Court in Pathumthani Province.<sup>38</sup> The first hearing was scheduled for 13 January 2025.<sup>39</sup>

It remained unclear whether a parallel investigation into Netiporn's death, conducted by a DoC fact-finding committee, reached any conclusion.<sup>40</sup>

On 6 August 2024, four UN human rights experts sent a communication to the Thai government expressing their concern over Netiporn's death while in detention for her peaceful activism and advocacy for democracy and political reform.<sup>41</sup> The experts urged the Thai government to conduct a proper investigation, in accordance with international standards, including the Minnesota Protocol on the investigation of potentially unlawful death.

Concerns over deaths in custody and the Thai authorities' failure to adequately investigate and record such cases were also raised by a UN Committee [See below, 5. *UN bodies concerned over prison conditions*].

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38. Thai Lawyers for Human Rights, *Tomorrow! Let's observe the inquest into the death of 'Bung Netiporn' at the Thanyaburi Provincial Court* [in Thai], 12 January 2025, <https://tlhr2014.com/archives/72108>

39. Prachatai, *Court postpones inquest into activist's death in detention*, 14 January 2025

40. BBC Thai, *Department of Corrections insists 'Bung Thalu Wang' was treated according to human rights principles, despite no indication of AED use* [in Thai], 15 May 2024, <https://www.bbc.com/thai/articles/cd181n0y9ggg>; Thai Lawyers for Human Rights, *Statement on 100 days after the death of 'Bung' Netiporn – No truth, no justice* [in Thai], 25 August 2024, <https://tlhr2014.com/archives/69367>

41. OHCHR, *AL THA 8/2024*, 6 August 2024

## 5. UN BODIES CONCERNED OVER PRISON CONDITIONS

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In 2024, UN human rights monitoring mechanisms once again expressed concerns over prison conditions in Thailand.

On 22 November 2024, the UN Committee Against Torture (CAT) issued its findings (known as “Concluding Observations”) following the review of Thailand’s second periodic report under the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, which had taken place on 5 and 6 November 2024 in Geneva, Switzerland. The CAT monitors the implementation of the Convention’s provisions by state parties, including Thailand.

In its Concluding Observations, the CAT expressed its concern that prisons continued to face high levels of overcrowding and “deteriorating conditions of detention.” The CAT expressed further concern over the disproportionate effects suffered by women, who experienced high rates of incarceration due to Thailand’s strict drug laws and policies, and faced additional challenges in detention, including lack of access to specific hygienic needs.<sup>42</sup> The CAT called on Thai authorities to strengthen efforts to improve conditions of detention, guarantee inmates’ right to health, and alleviate overcrowding in prisons, including through greater use of non-custodial measures. It also recommended authorities ensure that the special needs of detained women are met.<sup>43</sup>

The CAT also raised concern over the undue restrictions on access to places of detention faced by external organizations, including the NHRCT and civil society organizations, to inspect and monitor detention conditions.<sup>44</sup> The CAT recommended the government “enhance” the role played by non-governmental organizations in monitoring places of detention, including by ensuring their representation in monitoring bodies and considering favorably their requests to conduct visits to places of detention and interview the persons held therein. It also recommended authorities ensure the NHRCT is able to carry out independent, unhindered, and unannounced inspections and visits to all places of detention and speak confidentially to all detainees.<sup>45</sup>

The CAT was further concerned that Thai courts continued to impose the death penalty, including for drug-related offenses, and that “a significant number of persons,” including women, remained under death sentence.<sup>46</sup> The CAT recommended the government consider a moratorium on the death penalty, the ratification of the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty, and a review of legislation and policy to abolish capital punishment. It also recommended the government ensure that prisoners under death sentence have access to drug rehabilitation programs.<sup>47</sup>

The CAT also remained “seriously concerned” over the “high number of deaths in custody” and the authorities’ failure to carry out credible investigations into most of those cases. The Committee regretted the absence of information regarding the cause of deaths in custody that were deemed to be unnatural.<sup>48</sup> The CAT urged the authorities to conduct prompt and impartial investigations into deaths in custody and prosecute those responsible.<sup>49</sup> It also recommended authorities maintain and publish up-to-date and disaggregated data on deaths in all places of detention, their causes, and the outcome of the investigations.<sup>50</sup>

In late 2024, another UN body, the UN Working Group on discrimination against women and girls, expressed concern over the conditions of women deprived of their liberty in Thailand.

On 29 November 2024, at the conclusion of its 12-day official visit to the country, the Working Group issued a statement that expressed serious concern over various issues, including the conditions of

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42. CAT, *Concluding observations on the second periodic report of Thailand*, 9 December 2024, UN Doc. CAT/C/THA/CO/2, para. 30

43. CAT, *Concluding observations on the second periodic report of Thailand*, 9 December 2024, UN Doc. CAT/C/THA/CO/2, para. 31

44. CAT, *Concluding observations on the second periodic report of Thailand*, 9 December 2024, UN Doc. CAT/C/THA/CO/2, para. 14

45. CAT, *Concluding observations on the second periodic report of Thailand*, 9 December 2024, UN Doc. CAT/C/THA/CO/2, para. 15

46. CAT, *Concluding observations on the second periodic report of Thailand*, 9 December 2024, UN Doc. CAT/C/THA/CO/2, para. 26

47. CAT, *Concluding observations on the second periodic report of Thailand*, 9 December 2024, UN Doc. CAT/C/THA/CO/2, para. 27

48. CAT, *Concluding observations on the second periodic report of Thailand*, 9 December 2024, UN Doc. CAT/C/THA/CO/2, para. 28

49. CAT, *Concluding observations on the second periodic report of Thailand*, 9 December 2024, UN Doc. CAT/C/THA/CO/2, para. 29

50. CAT, *Concluding observations on the second periodic report of Thailand*, 9 December 2024, UN Doc. CAT/C/THA/CO/2, para. 29

women deprived of their liberty.<sup>51</sup> The Working Group expressed concern that Thailand had one of the world's highest incarceration rates for women and underscored the "pattern of intersectional discrimination" that women convicted of drug offenses faced in the criminal justice system. The Working Group recommended the Thai government develop non-custodial alternatives to prison sentences, abolish the death penalty for drug-related offenses, and review its drug-related policies and penalties to "ensure alignment with a comprehensive, restorative and reintegrative justice approach."<sup>52</sup>

The Working Group is expected to present its final report on the visit to Thailand to the UN Human Rights Council in June 2025.<sup>53</sup>

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51. UN Working Group on discrimination against women and girls, *End of mission statement - Official visit to Thailand (2-13 December 2024)*, 13 December 2024

52. UN Working Group on discrimination against women and girls, *End of mission statement - Official visit to Thailand (2-13 December 2024)*, 13 December 2024

53. OHCHR, *Thailand: Time to step up efforts to be role model for gender equality in Asia, UN experts say*, 13 December 2024

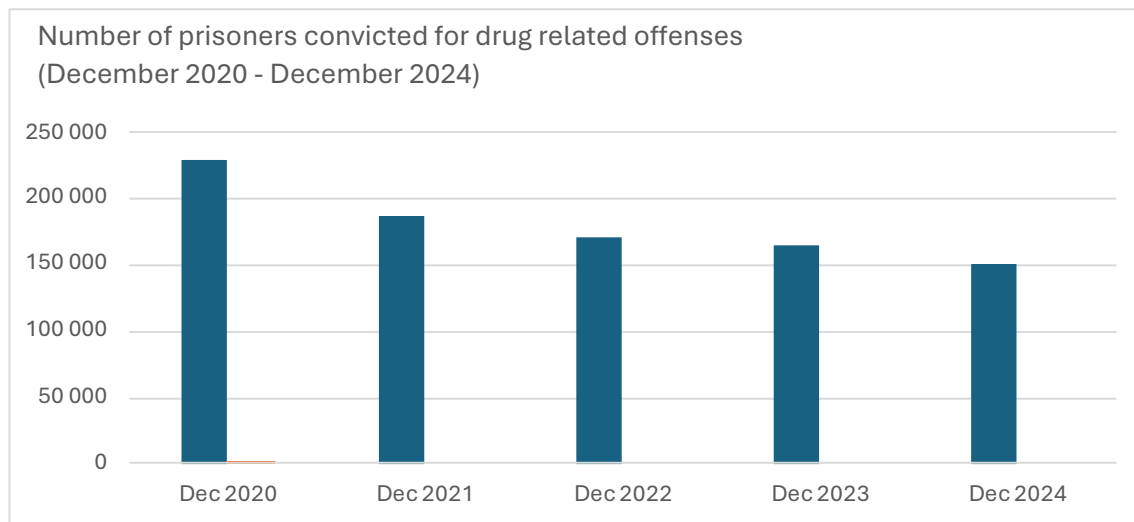
## 6. TOUGHER REGULATIONS MAY HAMPER DRUG REFORM EFFORTS

Three years after the reform of drug laws undertaken in 2021, Thailand observed a decline in the number of prisoners detained for drug-related offenses and the number of prisoners convicted for drug related offenses for the third consecutive year. Nonetheless, in 2024, the number of drug cases brought before courts of first instance increased significantly amid the decline in the number of voluntary drug rehabilitation as an alternative to prosecution.

### 6.1. Number of drug-related convictions declines, prosecutions go up

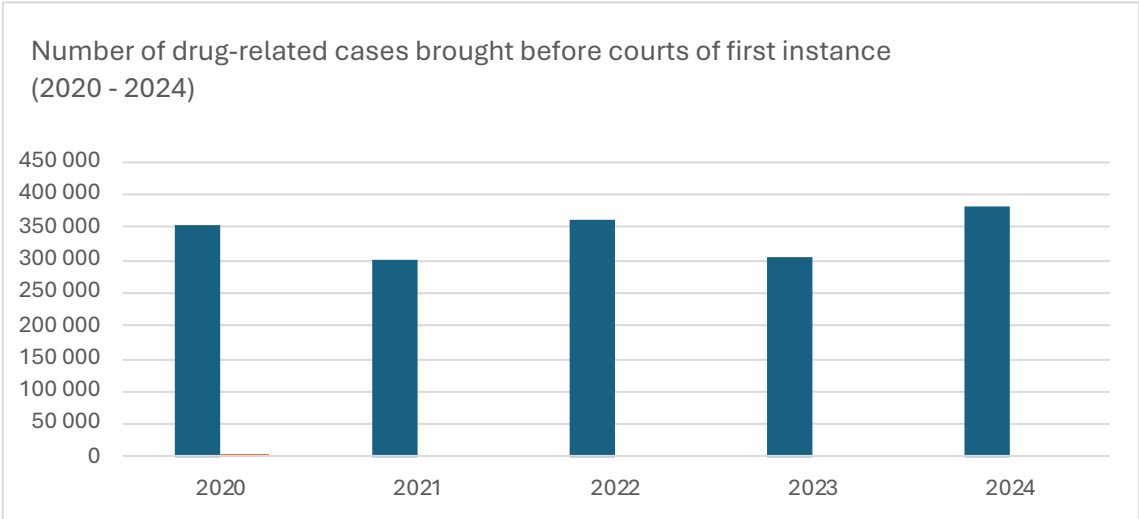
The number of prisoners convicted of drug-related offenses declined by 8%, from 165,576 in December 2023 to 150,863 in December 2024.

Year	Number of drug convictions
December 2020	228,982
December 2021	187,204
December 2022	171,018
December 2023	165,576
December 2024	150,863



The total number of drug-related cases brought before courts of first instance increased by 25%, from 303,884 in 2023 to 382,800 in 2024.<sup>54</sup> Methamphetamines-related cases accounted for 97% of all drug-related cases brought before courts of first instance.<sup>55</sup>

Year	Number of drug-related cases brought before courts of first instance
2020	352,538
2021	301,451
2022	360,872
2023	303,884
2024	382,800



54. Office of Planning and Budget of Court of Justice, *Court of Justice's performance report 2024* [in Thai], <https://oppb.coj.go.th/th/content/category/detail/id/8/cid/2087/iid/448124>

55. Office of Planning and Budget of Court of Justice, *Court of Justice's performance report 2024* [in Thai], <https://oppb.coj.go.th/th/content/category/detail/id/8/cid/2087/iid/448124>



## 6.2. Use of alternatives to imprisonment

In 2024, approximately 152,116 cases had been diverted to drug rehabilitation as an alternative to incarceration, overwhelmingly through the voluntary system. The number of voluntary admissions to rehabilitation in 2024 stood at 138,383 – a 5% decline from the number recorded in 2023, which stood at 146,310.<sup>56</sup>

Admission to drug rehabilitation by referral system <sup>57</sup>								
Year	Voluntary system <sup>58</sup>		By court verdict <sup>59</sup>			Penitentiary system	Mandatory system <sup>60</sup>	Overall
	Article 113 NC	Article 114 NC	Article 56 Criminal Code	Article 166 NC	Article 168 NC			
2019	41,353	58,975	1,162	0	0	26,926	131,275	259,691
2020	40,228	39,363	952	0	0	32,707	93,930	207,180
2021	39,610	24,038	945	8	11	19,567	92,317	176,496
2022	50,283	39,197	4,124	600	982	35,047	1,631	131,864
2023	77,735	68,575	4,225	470	1,011	23,688	19	175,723
2024	105,276	33,107	10,441	799	2,523	29,035	21	181,202

The judicial implementation of alternatives to imprisonment for drug users, under Articles 166 and 168 of the Narcotics Code and Article 56 of the Criminal Code, accounted for 13,763 cases, only 6% of the number of drug cases involving personal use and possession for personal use that were brought before courts of first instance in 2024, which stood at 231,987.<sup>61</sup>

## 6.3. Tighter rules for possession of methamphetamines and amphetamines

The Thai government’s move to lower the limits on possession of methamphetamines and amphetamines for personal use may reverse the recent decline in the number of convictions of drug-related offenses.

On 17 June 2024, the Ministry of Health published a new regulation determining the amounts of methamphetamines and amphetamines that are presumed to be for personal use. The new regulation stipulates that anyone who possesses more than one tablet of methamphetamine or amphetamine, or the equivalent of more than 100 milligrams, is presumed to be a drug dealer - an offense punishable by up to 20 years in prison under the Narcotics Act 2021.<sup>62</sup> Possession of one tablet, or the equivalent of no more than 100 milligrams, of methamphetamine or amphetamine, is presumed to be for personal

56. Ministry of Public Health, *Report on admission to drug rehabilitation (New Narcotics Code)*, accessed on 30 January 2025 [in Thai]. <https://antidrugnew.moph.go.th/Runtime/Runtime/Form/FrmReports/>

57. Ministry of Public Health, *Report on admission to drug rehabilitation (New Narcotics Code)*, accessed on 30 January 2025, <https://antidrugnew.moph.go.th/Runtime/Runtime/Form/FrmReports/>

58. According to the Narcotics Code (NC), enacted in 2021, drug users can be admitted to voluntary rehabilitation scheme as an alternative to prosecution by seeking treatment in drug rehabilitation centers before their arrest (Article 113) or after their arrest (Article 114).

59. Article 166 of the Narcotics Code (NC) stipulates that the court has the power to change the punishment from imprisonment to alternative measures, including drug rehabilitation, as prescribed under the Criminal Code within a period not exceeding two years. Article 168 of the NC stipulates that if the court consider that it is inappropriate to impose punishment on a defendant, it may ask the public prosecutor to order the admission of the defendant to a rehabilitation facility, with the defendant’s agreement. In addition, Article 56 of the Criminal Code stipulates that the court may suspend the sentence or order probation measures, including drug rehabilitation, if the individual convicted of a drug-related offense is a first-time offender or has been punished for petty offenses or negligence.

60. The mandatory drug rehabilitation system was abolished by the new Narcotics Code in 2021.

61. Office of Planning and Budget of Court of Justice, *Court of Justice’s performance report 2024* [in Thai], <https://oppb.coj.go.th/th/content/category/detail/id/8/cid/2087/iid/448124>; Ministry of Public Health, *Report on admission to drug rehabilitation (New Narcotics Code)*, accessed on 30 January 2025, <https://antidrugnew.moph.go.th/Runtime/Runtime/Form/FrmReports/>

62. Gazette, *Ministerial Regulations on Determining the Amount of Narcotics and Psychotropic Substances Presumed to be in Possession for Personal Consumption (No.2) B.E. 2567 (2024)* [in Thai], 17 June 2024, <https://ratchakittha.soc.go.th/documents/33924.pdf>

consumption. Under Article 114 of the Narcotics Act, persons charged with personal use of drugs can be exempted from prosecution if they agree to enter rehabilitation [See above, 7.2. *Use of alternatives to imprisonment*], unless evidence suggests an intent to sell. The government's move reversed a prior regulation, implemented in February 2024, which set the limit for lawful possession for personal use of amphetamine and methamphetamine at five pills.<sup>63</sup>

As of December 2024, the number of methamphetamines and amphetamine related cases accounted for 79% of all drug convictions.<sup>64</sup>

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63. Gazette, *Ministerial Regulations on Determining the Amount of Narcotics and Psychotropic Substances Presumed to be in Possession for Personal Consumption (No.1) B.E. 2567 (2024)* [in Thai], 9 February 2024, <https://ratchakitcha.soc.go.th/documents/20444.pdf>

64. Department of Corrections, *Prison statistics report: Ror Tor 103* [in Thai], 1 December 2024, [http://www.correct.go.th/rt103pdf/report\\_result\\_rt103.php?date=01-12-2024](http://www.correct.go.th/rt103pdf/report_result_rt103.php?date=01-12-2024)

## 7. PRISON CONDITIONS BELOW INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS

### 7.1. Cramped cells

The majority of interviewed former prisoners endured overcrowded conditions in cells. In addition, many prisons where the interviewed former prisoners had been detained failed to provide prisoners with proper bedding material.

In the majority of prisons where the interviewed former prisoners had been detained, inmates were confined to the minimal space in the shared cells, which was below the international standard of 3.4m<sup>2</sup> per prisoner recommended by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), and the minimum accommodation space of 1.6m<sup>2</sup> (80cm x 2m) per prisoner, mandated by DoC.<sup>65</sup>

For instance, according to a former prisoner at Yala Central Prison, a cell of 24m<sup>2</sup> (4m x 6m) housed 60 prisoners and each prisoner had approximately 40cm of space in width.<sup>66</sup> A former prisoner at Narathiwat Provincial Prison said 60 inmates shared a cell of 40m<sup>2</sup> (5m x 8m).<sup>67</sup> According to former prisoners at Trang Central Prison and Songkhla Central Prison, each prisoner had a 50-60cm-wide space while sleeping.<sup>68</sup> A former prisoner at Satun Provincial Prison reported sharing a cell of 16m<sup>2</sup> (4m x 4m) with 17-18 inmates.<sup>69</sup> A former prisoner at Fang District Prison said he shared a cell of approximately 96m<sup>2</sup> with 80-90 prisoners and they slept without any space between them.<sup>70</sup> A former prisoner at Pattani Central Prison said a cell of 50m<sup>2</sup> (5m x 10m) accommodated 20-30 prisoners.<sup>71</sup>

Following its visit to the Central Women's Correctional Institution in Bangkok and the Songkhla Women's Correctional Institution in Songkhla Province in November 2024 [See above, 5. *UN bodies concerned over prison conditions*], the UN Working Group on discrimination against women and girls observed that both prisons "had serious issues with overcrowding," with detainees in both facilities having less than 1.5m<sup>2</sup> of personal space.<sup>72</sup>

In most prisons where the interviewed former prisoners had been detained, bedding material was insufficient and of poor quality.<sup>73</sup>

Prisoners at Fang District Prison, Satun Provincial Prison, Pattani Central Prison, Narathiwat Provincial Prison, and the Songkhla Correctional Institution for Drug Addicts were provided with three blankets – generally one to cover their body and the remaining ones as substitutes for a pillow and mattress.<sup>74</sup> Prisoners at Minburi Remand Prison and Yala Central Prison received only two blankets.<sup>75</sup> Prisoners at the Chiang Mai Women's Correctional Institution, Trang Central Prison, the Bangkok Remand Prison, and Songkhla Central Prison received rubber mattresses to sleep on. A former prisoner at Trang Central Prison said that a one-meter wide mattress was shared by two or three inmates.<sup>76</sup> Prisoners at Fang District Prison and the Chiang Mai Women's Correctional Institution received extra blankets

65. ICRC, *Water, sanitation, hygiene and habitat in prisons: Supplementary guidance*, 11 June 2020

66. FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at Yala Central Prison*, 13 January 2025

67. FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at Narathiwat Provincial Prison*, 13 January 2025

68. FIDH, *Interview with a former prisoner at Trang Central Prison*, 24 December 2024; FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at Songkhla Central Prison*, 13 January 2025

69. FIDH, *Interview with a former prisoner at Satun Provincial Prison*, 24 December 2024

70. FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at Fang District Prison*, 9 December 2024

71. FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at Pattani Central Prison*, 13 January 2025

72. UN Working Group on discrimination against women and girls, *End of mission statement - Official visit to Thailand (2-13 December 2024)*, 13 December 2024

73. Rule 13 of the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners states: "All accommodation provided for the use of prisoners and in particular all sleeping accommodation shall meet all requirements of health, due regard being paid to climatic conditions and particularly to cubic content of air, minimum floor space, lighting, heating and ventilation."

74. Rule 21 of the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners states: "Every prisoner shall, in accordance with local or national standards, be provided with a separate bed and with separate and sufficient bedding which shall be clean when issued, kept in good order and changed often enough to ensure its cleanliness.;" FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at Fang District Prison*, 9 December 2024; FIDH, *Interview with a former prisoner at Satun Provincial Prison*, 24 December 2024; FIDH, *Interview with a former prisoner at the Songkhla Correctional Institution for Drug Addicts*, 24 December 2024

75. FIDH, *Interview with a former prisoner at Minburi Remand Prison*, 19 December 2024; FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at Yala Central Prison*, 13 January 2025

76. FIDH, *Interview with a former prisoner at Trang Central Prison*, 24 December 2024

during the cold season.<sup>77</sup> According to former prisoners at the Bangkok Remand Prison, Trang Central Prison, and the Chiang Mai Women's Correctional Institution, the blankets were washed once a month, whereas the blanket laundering was arranged once every three months at Satun Provincial Prison.<sup>78</sup>

Most of the interviewed former prisoners said they had proper air ventilation in their cells.

However, a former prisoner at the Bangkok Remand Prison said that the three fans provided in the cell of 40 prisoners could not ensure adequate airflow.<sup>79</sup> In addition, a former prisoner at Pattani Central Prison reported there were only two wall fans in the cells, making the cells unbearably hot sometimes.<sup>80</sup>

Some interviewed former prisoners shared other concerns regarding cell conditions.

For example, a former prisoner at Narathiwat Provincial Prison reported there were regular water seepage through floor tiles in the cell.<sup>81</sup> A former prisoner at Yala Central Prison recalled that rain was usually blown into the cell through the window that had to be kept open at all times.<sup>82</sup> In addition, one former prisoner at Pattani Central Prison reported he had difficulty reading at night because there was no light bulb in the cell, so prisoners had to rely on the dim light coming from the hallway.<sup>83</sup>

## 7.2. Abusive treatment and punishment

All interviewed former male prisoners reported inmates were subjected to forms of punishment and disciplinary sanctions that could amount to ill treatment and, in some cases, torture.<sup>84</sup> Disciplinary offenses that warranted sanctions included fighting, gambling, smoking, and breach of other prison rules.

The majority of interviewed former male prisoners reported the use of excessive force by prison guards to punish inmates, usually involving kicking or the use of wooden batons against prisoners who were involved in a fight. Such practice is inconsistent with international standards, which only allow the use of force against prisoners as an exceptional response in three circumstances: legitimate self-defense; attempted escape; and active or passive resistance to a lawful order.<sup>85</sup>

A former prisoner at Narathiwat Provincial Prison noted that sometimes the prison staff arbitrarily kicked inmates for no apparent reason. The same former prisoner recalled witnessing inmates being kicked while getting water for prayer ablutions.<sup>86</sup>

In addition, all interviewed former male prisoners reported the use of disciplinary practices that were inconsistent with international standards, such as the use of ankle shackles, segregation, and solitary confinement.<sup>87</sup> Disciplinary infractions could result in solitary confinement and segregation in most

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77. FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at Fang District Prison*, 9 December 2024; FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at the Chiang Mai Women's Correctional Institution*, 10 December 2024

78. FIDH, *Interview with a former prisoner at Trang Central Prison*, 24 December 2024; FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at the Chiang Mai Women's Correctional Institution*, 10 December 2024; FIDH, *Interview with a former prisoner at the Bangkok Remand Prison*, 19 December 2024; FIDH, *Interview with a former prisoner at Satun Provincial Prison*, 24 December 2024

79. FIDH, *Interview with a former prisoner at the Bangkok Remand Prison*, 19 December 2024

80. FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at Pattani Central Prison*, 13 January 2025

81. FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at Narathiwat Provincial Prison*, 13 January 2025

82. FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at Yala Central Prison*, 13 January 2025

83. FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at Pattani Central Prison*, 13 January 2025

84. Rule 43 paragraph one of the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners states: "1. In no circumstances may restrictions or disciplinary sanctions amount to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. The following practices, in particular, shall be prohibited:

- (a) Indefinite solitary confinement;
- (b) Prolonged solitary confinement;
- (c) Placement of a prisoner in a dark or constantly lit cell;
- (d) Corporal punishment or the reduction of a prisoner's diet or drinking water;
- (e) Collective punishment."

85. Rule 82 of the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners states: "1. Prison staff shall not, in their relations with the prisoners, use force except in self-defense or in cases of attempted escape, or active or passive physical resistance to an order based on law or regulations. Prison staff who have recourse to force must use no more than is strictly necessary and must report the incident immediately to the prison director. 2. Prison staff shall be given special physical training to enable them to restrain aggressive prisoners. 3. Except in special circumstances, prison staff performing duties which bring them into direct contact with prisoners should not be armed. Furthermore, prison staff should in no circumstances be provided with arms unless they have been trained in their use."

86. FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at Narathiwat Provincial Prison*, 13 January 2025

87. Rule 45 of the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners states: "Solitary confinement shall be used only in exceptional cases as a last resort, for as short a time as possible and subject to independent review, and only pursuant to the authorization by a competent authority. It shall not be imposed by virtue of a prisoner's sentence."

facilities where interviewed former prisoners had been detained.<sup>88</sup>

A former prisoner at Songkhla Central Prison reported that inmates who were involved in fights were punished by being placed in segregation in a cell of 2m x 4m for one month.<sup>89</sup> Former prisoners at Pattani Central Prison said inmates who committed disciplinary offenses were collectively placed in a cell the size of 5m x 12m for 24 hours a day for a month.<sup>90</sup> A former prisoner at Yala Central Prison added that prisoners could be disciplined by being placed in a so-called “dark room,” which they were allowed to leave only once a week. “They [prison staff] covered the window with a metal sheet so no light could enter the room],” the same former prisoner recalled.<sup>91</sup> A former prisoner at the Songkhla Correctional Institution for Drug Addicts added that inmates who were involved in a fight could be put in the solitary or segregation cell for three months and forced to wear “three-kilograms ankle shackles” at all times.<sup>92</sup>



***Inmates who were involved in a fight could be put in the solitary or segregation cell for three months and forced to wear “three-kilograms ankle shackles” at all times.***

Many interviewed former prisoners reported a widespread use of instruments of restraint – a practice that is inconsistent with international standards.<sup>93</sup>

Former prisoners at Fang District Prison and Yala Central Prison reported that prisoners who were convicted of serious offenses had to routinely wear ankle shackles.<sup>94</sup> Former prisoners at Songkhla Central Prison and Pattani Central Prison described that new prisoners at the facilities were kept in ankle shackles for periods of time ranging from two weeks to two months.<sup>95</sup>

88. Disciplinary segregation occurs when multiple prisoners are punished by being placed together in a cell separate from other prisoners.

89. FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at Songkhla Central Prison*, 13 January 2025

90. FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at Pattani Central Prison*, 13 January 2025

91. FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at Yala Central Prison*, 13 January 2025

92. FIDH, *Interview with a former prisoner at the Songkhla Correctional Institution for Drug Addicts*, 24 December 2024

93. Rule 47 of the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners states: “The use of chains, irons or other instruments of restraint which are inherently degrading or painful shall be prohibited.” Rule 48 further prescribes: “1. When the imposition of instruments of restraint is authorized, the following principles shall apply (a) Instruments of restraint are to be imposed only when no lesser form of control would be effective to address the risks posed by unrestricted movement; (b) The method of restraint shall be the least intrusive method that is necessary and reasonably available to control the prisoner’s movement, based on the level and nature of the risks posed; (c) Instruments of restraint shall be imposed only for the time period required, and they are to be removed as soon as possible after the risks posed by unrestricted movement are no longer present. 2. Instruments of restraint shall never be used on women during labor, during childbirth and immediately after childbirth.”

94. FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at Fang District Prison*, 9 December 2024; FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at Yala Central Prison*, 13 January 2025

95. FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at Pattani Central Prison*, 13 January 2025; FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at Songkhla Central*

Such testimonies contradicted statements made by the DoC during Thailand's review by the UN CAT in November 2024 [See above, 5. *UN bodies concerned over prison conditions*] that instruments of restraints were used only under "very limited, urgent circumstances" and that they "must be immediately removed as soon as they are no longer required."<sup>96</sup>

Other disciplinary sanctions mentioned by interviewed former prisoners included the suspension of visitation rights, undergoing physical training, rolling or sitting under the sun, and prisoner class demotion.<sup>97</sup>

A former prisoner at Fang District Prison recalled he suffered from skin rashes and blisters due to sunburn after rolling on the ground under the scorching sun for one hour as punishment for getting involved in a fight among prisoners.<sup>98</sup> Interviewed prisoners at the Bangkok Remand Prison and Klong Prem Central Prison reported cases involving inmates who assisted prison guards in imposing disciplinary measures on other prisoners.<sup>99</sup> A prisoner at the Bangkok Remand Prison recalled he was ordered by another inmate who assisted prison guards to take off his shirt and lay on the concrete floor under the sun.<sup>100</sup>

With regard to women's prisons, all interviewed former prisoners reported practices that could amount to ill treatment - such as verbal abuse - or torture - such as solitary confinement and being forced to sit and roll under the sun.

For example, former prisoners at the Chiang Mai Women's Correctional Institution reported prisoners who committed offenses were placed in solitary confinement that usually lasted for five days.<sup>101</sup>

### 7.3. Unequal treatment and discrimination

Most interviewed former prisoners reported differential treatment of inmates based on their socio-economic status.<sup>102</sup> In addition, prisons failed to ensure that inmates could observe their religion practices.

According to most of the interviewed former prisoners, inmates who were wealthy or influential and those who assisted prison staff were afforded a range of privileges, such as separate shower time, bigger food portions, less crowded cells, and immunity from disciplinary sanctions.

One former prisoner at Fang District Prison said prisoners who assisted prison guards received bigger portions and better quality of food and were allowed to cook their own food.<sup>103</sup> According to a former prisoner at the Songkhla Correctional Institution for Drug Addicts, well connected prisoners were consistently spared from disciplinary sanctions.<sup>104</sup> A former prisoner at Narathiwat Provincial Prison reported wealthy prisoners had separate shower times, received bigger portions of meat, and did not have to line up for food.<sup>105</sup> In addition, a former prisoner at the Bangkok Remand Prison observed that the prison guards assumed a more respectful demeanor towards wealthy prisoners and talked to them more politely.<sup>106</sup>

Muslim prisoners faced discriminatory practices that did not allow them to follow their religious customs.

According to former prisoners at Songkhla Central Prison, Pattani Central Prison, Yala Central Prison,

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*Prison*, 13 January 2025

96. UN Web TV, *2148th Meeting, 81st session, Committee Against Torture (CAT) - Consideration of Thailand*, 5 November 2024

97. The Thai prison system categorizes prisoners into six classes, based on their behavior: 1) Excellent class; 2) Very good class; 3) Good class; 4) Moderate class; 5) Bad class; 6) Very bad class.

98. FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at Fang District Prison*, 9 December 2024

99. Freedom Bridge, *Interview with a prisoner at the Bangkok Remand Prison*, 3 January 2025; Freedom Bridge, *Interview with prisoners at Klong Prem Central Prison*, 23 December 2024 and 2 January 2025

100. Freedom Bridge, *Interview with a prisoner at the Bangkok Remand Prison*, 3 January 2025

101. FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at the Chiang Mai Women's Correctional Institution*, 10 December 2024

102. Rule 2.1 of the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners states: "The present rules shall be applied impartially. There shall be no discrimination on the grounds of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or any other status. The religious beliefs and moral precepts of prisoners shall be respected."

103. FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at Fang District Prison*, 9 December 2024

104. FIDH, *Interview with a former prisoner at the Songkhla Correctional Institution for Drug Addicts*, 24 December 2024

105. FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at Narathiwat Provincial Prison*, 13 January 2025

106. FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at the Bangkok Remand Prison*, 19 December 2024

and Narathiwat Provincial Prison, longer pants that could cover the knees of Muslim inmates, as requested by Muslim precepts, were not available. As a result, some Muslim prisoners generally lengthened the pants by themselves using extra fabric they bought from prison shops.<sup>107</sup> A former prisoner at Narathiwat Provincial Prison also said Muslim inmates faced restrictions on receiving religious books from outside the prison.<sup>108</sup>

## 7.4. Poor sanitary conditions

Restrictions on the supply of water and insufficient provision of basic hygiene products negatively affected the sanitation conditions in most prisons where interviewed former prisoners had been detained.

All interviewed former prisoners reported they had 24-hour access to toilets in the cells. However, the availability of toilets and the arrangement for water supply in the cells varied considerably across prisons. In some prisons, the number of toilets available in the cell were insufficient to meet the needs of inmates, resulting in long waiting time.<sup>109</sup>

An interviewed prisoner at the Bangkok Remand Prison said there was only one toilet in a cell that held 55 prisoners.<sup>110</sup>

In addition, some interviewed former prisoners raised concern about the lack of privacy while using the toilets.

In some prisons, including Yala Central Prison, Narathiwat Central Prison, and Songkhla Central Prison, there were no partitions to separate each toilet.<sup>111</sup> A former prisoner at Yala Central Prison reported inmates generally made makeshift partitions using cloth.<sup>112</sup>

The inadequate supply of water in the cells negatively affected the prisoners' ability to maintain proper personal hygiene. Most interviewed former prisoners reported that running water in the cells was available for a limited time during the day, which left inmates with small amounts of water collected in the tank.

For instance, a former prisoner at Narathiwat Provincial Prison said the running water was available for only one hour a day.<sup>113</sup> This situation was only slightly better in other facilities. A former prisoner at Trang Central Prison said the water in the cells was available for two hours a day, from 4pm to 6pm. As a result, prisoners had to limit the personal use of water to one bowl each when they used the toilet.<sup>114</sup> A former prisoner at Yala Central Prison reported that running water was available from 5pm to 8pm, limiting the use of around 200 liters of water for 60 prisoners at night.<sup>115</sup> A former prisoner at the Songkhla Correctional Institution for Drug Addicts reported prisoners usually did not have adequate water supply to use at night when the water supply stopped, resulting in prisoners bribing fellow inmates assigned to monitor the use of water to turn the water supply on for them.<sup>116</sup> According to a former prisoner at Minburi Remand Prison, inmates did not have enough water to flush the toilets in the morning due to high demand.<sup>117</sup>

In all of the prisons where interviewed former prisoners had been detained, inmates showered together twice a day in the communal bathing area without adequate partitions or privacy measures.

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107. FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at Narathiwat Provincial Prison*, 13 January 2025; FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at Yala Central Prison*, 13 January 2025; FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at Songkhla Central Prison*, 13 January 2025; FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at Pattani Central Prison*, 13 January 2025

108. FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at Narathiwat Provincial Prison*, 13 January 2025

109. Rule 15 of the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners states: "The sanitary installations shall be adequate to enable every prisoner to comply with the needs of nature when necessary and in a clean and decent manner."

110. Freedom Bridge, *Interview with a prisoner at the Bangkok Remand Prison*, 3 January 2025

111. FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at Yala Central Prison*, 13 January 2025; FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at Songkhla Central Prison*, 13 January 2025; FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at Narathiwat Provincial Prison*, 13 January 2025

112. FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at Yala Central Prison*, 13 January 2025

113. FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at Narathiwat Provincial Prison*, 13 January 2025

114. FIDH, *Interview with a former prisoner at Trang Central Prison*, 24 December 2024

115. FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at Yala Central Prison*, 13 January 2025

116. FIDH, *Interview with a former prisoner at the Songkhla Correctional Institution for Drug Addicts*, 24 December 2024

117. FIDH, *Interview with a former prisoner at Minburi Remand Prison*, 19 December 2024

In most prisons where interviewed former prisoners had been detained, restrictions on the available amount of water and the time allocated to shower negatively affected the prisoners' personal hygiene.<sup>118</sup>

A former prisoner at Trang Central Prison reported inmates were given three minutes to shower, which was barely sufficient for some prisoners to rinse their bodies.<sup>119</sup> According to a former prisoner at the Songkhla Correctional Institution for Drug Addicts, prisoners had only two minutes to shower, except for some privileged prisoners who could shower for half an hour.<sup>120</sup> A former prisoner at Satun Provincial Prison said each inmate was given 12 bowls of water to shower.<sup>121</sup> Prisoners at Narathiwat Provincial Prison received three to four bowls of water each to shower.<sup>122</sup>

In addition, female prisoners faced particular challenges to maintain personal and menstrual hygiene due to the limited availability of time and water to shower.<sup>123</sup>

A former female prisoner at Trang Provincial Prison said female prisoners were given three minutes to take a shower, which was not enough to properly wash, particularly for those who were having their period.<sup>124</sup> The same former prisoner also reported that prisoners who were having their period generally received one bowl of water to wash away their blood before joining other prisoners in the common shower area.<sup>125</sup>

Some former prisoners commented that the unclean water negatively affected their health.

For example, a former prisoner at Trang Central Prison said the water for showering was sometimes unclean and murky, which resulted in her and many other prisoners developing rashes on the face and body.<sup>126</sup>

Availability of personal hygiene products, such as soap, shampoo, toothbrushes, and toothpaste, was inconsistent among prisons.

Former prisoners at the Chiang Mai Women's Correctional Institution, Songkhla Central Prison, Trang Central Prison, and the Bangkok Remand Prison said they received personal hygiene products for free upon admission, but only indigent prisoners and those who did not receive any family visits could regularly receive new toiletries.<sup>127</sup> A former prisoner at Fang District Prison said the free toiletries were exclusively distributed to elderly and indigent prisoners.<sup>128</sup> Former prisoners at the Chiang Mai Women's Correctional Institution reported they received free toothpaste every month.<sup>129</sup> However, former prisoners at Satun Provincial Prison, Minburi Remand Prison, Narathiwat Provincial Prison, and the Songkhla Correctional Institution for Drug Addicts did not receive free toiletries upon admission and had to pay for them.<sup>130</sup>

In all women's prisons where interviewed former prisoners had been detained, inmates were supplied with menstrual hygiene products. However, the frequency and quantity of their supply varied greatly depending on the prison.

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118. Rule 16 of the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners states: "Adequate bathing and shower installations shall be provided so that every prisoner can, and may be required to, have a bath or shower, at a temperature suitable to the climate, as frequently as necessary for general hygiene according to season and geographical region, but at least once a week in a temperate climate."

119. FIDH, *Interview with a former prisoner at Trang Central Prison*, 24 December 2024

120. FIDH, *Interview with a former prisoner at the Songkhla Correctional Institution for Drug Addicts*, 24 December 2024

121. FIDH, *Interview with a former prisoner at Satun Provincial Prison*, 24 December 2024

122. FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at Narathiwat Provincial Prison*, 13 January 2025

123. Rule 5 of the United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders states: "The accommodation of women prisoners shall have facilities and materials required to meet women's specific hygiene needs, including sanitary towels provided free of charge and a regular supply of water to be made available for the personal care of children and women, in particular women involved in cooking and those who are pregnant, breastfeeding or menstruating."

124. FIDH, *Interview with a former prisoner at Trang Central Prison*, 24 December 2024

125. FIDH, *Interview with a former prisoner at Trang Central Prison*, 24 December 2024

126. FIDH, *Interview with a former prisoner at Trang Central Prison*, 24 December 2024

127. FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at Chiang Mai Women's Correctional Institution*, 10 December 2024; FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at Songkhla Central Prison*, 13 January 2025; FIDH, *Interview with a former prisoner at the Trang Central Prison*, 24 December 2024; FIDH, *Interview with a former prisoner at the Bangkok Remand Prison*, 19 December 2024

128. FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at Fang District Prison*, 9 December 2024

129. FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at the Chiang Mai Women's Correctional Institution*, 10 December 2024

130. FIDH, *Interview with a former prisoner at Minburi Remand Prison*, 19 December 2024



A former prisoner at Trang Central Prison received sanitary pads every two or three months.<sup>131</sup> Former prisoners at the Chiang Mai Women's Correctional Institution reported they received around 20 pieces of sanitary pads per month, which was not sufficient and so they had to buy extra sanitary pads at the prison shop. However, the same former prisoners added that only indigent prisoners could request free extra sanitary pads.<sup>132</sup>

All interviewed former female prisoners also reported being provided with bras and underwear upon admission. For example, former prisoners at the Chiang Mai Women's Correctional Institution reported receiving five pairs of underwear and five bras.<sup>133</sup> A former prisoner at Trang Central Prison received only one pair of underwear and one bra and had to buy extra ones at the prison shop.<sup>134</sup>

The majority of interviewed former male prisoners reported they were not provided with underwear but were able to purchase it from the prison shop, except at Fang District Prison.<sup>135</sup> Nonetheless, former male prisoners at Pattani Central Prison and Songkhla Central Prison reported they were provided with one size of underwear that was too tight for them.<sup>136</sup> A former prisoner at the Bangkok Remand Prison noted that male prisoners were not allowed to wear underwear when receiving visits or attending court hearings.<sup>137</sup>

## 7.5. Gay men, transgender women not protected

Many of the interviewed former male prisoners reported witnessing a range of challenges, including mistreatment, discrimination, and harassment, encountered by gay men and transgender women in the prisons where they had been detained.

These former prisoners reported transgender women were held in the male section of the prisons and housed in the same cells with male inmates. Only former prisoners at Fang District Prison, Satun Provincial Prison, Yala Central Prison, and Narathiwat Provincial Prison said the facilities had separate sleeping space for transgender women.<sup>138</sup>

Most prisons where the interviewed former prisoners had been detained failed to provide specific arrangements to ensure the safety and privacy of transgender women when showering.

Former prisoners at Fang District Prison, Yala Central Prison, Songkhla Central Prison, and the Bangkok Remand Prison noted that transgender women were not given the option to shower separately from other male prisoners.<sup>139</sup> Former prisoners at Fang District Prison, Yala Central Prison, and Songkhla Central Prison recalled transgender women wore clothes to cover their breasts when showering with other male inmates.<sup>140</sup> Former prisoners at Satun Provincial Prison, Narathiwat Provincial Prison, and Pattani Central Prison said transgender women in these facilities showered at different times than male prisoners.<sup>141</sup>

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131. FIDH, *Interview with a former prisoner at Trang Central Prison*, 24 December 2024

132. FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at the Chiang Mai Women's Correctional Institution*, 10 December 2024

133. FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at Chiang Mai Women's Correctional Institution*, 10 December 2024

134. FIDH, *Interview with a former prisoner at Trang Central Prison*, 24 December 2024

135. FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at Fang District Prison*, 9 December 2024

136. FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at Pattani Central Prison*, 13 January 2025; FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at Songkhla Central Prison*, 13 January 2025

137. FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at the Bangkok Remand Prison*, 19 December 2024

138. FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at Fang District Prison*, 9 December 2024; FIDH, *Interview with a former prisoner at Satun Provincial Prison*, 24 December 2024; FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at Yala Central Prison*, 13 January 2025; FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at Narathiwat Provincial Prison*, 13 January 2025

139. FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at Fang District Prison*, 9 December 2024; FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at the Bangkok Remand Prison*, 19 December 2024

140. FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at Fang District Prison*, 9 December 2024; FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at Yala Central Prison*, 13 January 2025; FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at Songkhla Central Prison*, 13 January 2025

141. FIDH, *Interview with a former prisoner at Satun Provincial Prison*, 24 December 2024



**Former prisoners recalled transgender women wore clothes to cover their breasts when showering with other male inmates.**

Furthermore, according to some interviewed former prisoners, gay men and transgender women encountered various forms of harassment and stigmatization.

Former prisoners at the Bangkok Remand Prison and Yala Central Prison recalled incidents in which gay men and transgender women were physically harassed by other prisoners.<sup>142</sup> In addition, a prisoner at the Bangkok Remand Prison, who identified himself as gay, reported being bullied, forced to expose his private parts, and being sexually assaulted by other prisoners.<sup>143</sup>

The same prisoner raised additional concerns about the treatment of transgender women at the facility, including the failure to provide bras and transgender hormone therapy.<sup>144</sup>

## 7.6. Poor quality, unpalatable food

The majority of interviewed former prisoners reported that the meals served in prisons were of poor quality and not sufficiently nutritious.<sup>145</sup>

In all prisons where the interviewed former prisoners had been detained, inmates were given three meals per day. The majority of interviewed former prisoners described the meals as “high in carbs,” “unappetizing,” “bland,” and containing insufficient animal protein.

Former prisoners at Fang District Prison recalled being served soup that consisted of fish bones and heads.<sup>146</sup> Former prisoners at the Bangkok Remand Prison, Minburi Remand Prison, and Narathiwat Provincial Prison said inmates usually received rice and a bland soup with a few pieces of meat.<sup>147</sup> Besides the insufficient protein intake, a former prisoner at Yala Central Prison noted that too often the meal provided was bland, so prisoners had to add fish sauce.<sup>148</sup> A former prisoner

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142. FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at the Bangkok Remand Prison*, 19 December 2024

143. Freedom Bridge, *Interview with a prisoner at the Bangkok Remand Prison*, 10 January 2025

144. Freedom Bridge, *Interview with a prisoner at the Bangkok Remand Prison*, 10 February 2025

145. Rule 22 of the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners states: “1. Every prisoner shall be provided by the prison administration at the usual hours with food of nutritional value adequate for health and strength, of wholesome quality and well prepared and served. 2. Drinking water shall be available to every prisoner whenever he or she needs it.”

146. FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at Fang District Prison*, 9 December 2024; FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at Pattani Central Prison*, 13 January 2025

147. FIDH, *Interview with a former prisoner at Minburi Remand Prison*, 19 December 2024; FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at Narathiwat Provincial Prison*, 13 January 2025

148. FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at Yala Central Prison*, 13 January 2025

at Trang Central Prison said meals tasted “terrible” and described the rice as “soggy and mushy.”<sup>149</sup> “There was no meat. It was a vegetable soup where they threw all kinds of vegetables they had in it,” a former prisoner at Fang District Prison recalled.<sup>150</sup> Former prisoners at Fang District Prison and Pattani Central Prison reported that insufficient portions were served. In addition, a former prisoner at the Bangkok Remand Prison said the meal distribution was unequal, as prisoners who worked on meal preparations usually secured big portions of meat for themselves, leaving others with only broth and vegetable.<sup>151</sup>



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**Former prisoners at Fang District Prison recalled being served soup that consisted of fish bones and heads.**

A few interviewed former prisoners, including those at the Chiang Mai Women’s Correctional Institution, reported being served tasty food that was of adequate quality and quantity. Former prisoners at Satun Provincial Prison and the Bangkok Remand Prison said they received meals consisting of reasonable portions of meat, although they typically tasted bland.<sup>152</sup> However, a former prisoner at Satun Provincial Prison commented that sometimes the food seemed contaminated.<sup>153</sup>

In all prisons where the interviewed former prisoners had been detained, the filtrated drinking water was available from water taps. Some interviewed former prisoners raised concerns about the quality of the drinking water.

For example, former prisoners at Fang District Prison and Songkhla Central Prison complained that the drinking water smelled of chlorine.<sup>154</sup> Other former prisoners said drinking water contained dust,<sup>155</sup> appeared red,<sup>156</sup> or smelled fishy.<sup>157</sup>

Interviewed Muslim former prisoners reported that the prisons in which they had been detained made special arrangement to accommodate Muslim prisoners’ fasting during the Ramadan by adjusting

149. FIDH, *Interview with a former prisoner at Trang Central Prison*, 24 December 2024

150. FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at Fang District Prison*, 9 December 2024

151. FIDH, *Interview with a former prisoner at the Bangkok Remand Prison*, 19 December 2024

152. FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at the Bangkok Remand Prison*, 19 December 2024; FIDH, *Interview with a former prisoner at Satun Provincial Prison*, 24 December 2024

153. FIDH, *Interview with a former prisoner at Satun Provincial Prison*, 24 December 2024

154. FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at Fang District Prison*, 9 December 2024; FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at the Songkhla Central Prison*, 13 January 2025

155. FIDH, *Interview with a former prisoner at the Songkhla Correctional Institution for Drug Addicts*, 24 December 2024

156. FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at Yala Central Prison*, 13 January 2025;

157. FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at Pattani Central Prison*, 13 January 2025

meal times and allowing them to have food, snacks, or instant noodles inside the cell. However, some of those former prisoners reported food safety concerns.

In Songkhla Central Prison, Yala Central Prison, Narathiwat Provincial Prison, and Pattani Central Prison, Muslim inmates observing Ramadan would receive two pre-packaged meals before the evening, one for an after-sunset meal, and another one for a pre-dawn meal. As a result, a former prisoner at Songkhla Central Prison complained that food was usually cold or nearly spoiled by the time it was eaten.<sup>158</sup>

According to all interviewed former prisoners, a greater choice of food of better quality and bottled drinks could be purchased at the prison shops.

Former prisoners at the Songkhla Correctional Institution for Drug Addicts, Songkhla Central Prison, and Trang Central Prison reported they regularly bought additional food in the prison shops to supplement the meals served in the prisons.<sup>159</sup> Former prisoners at the Bangkok Remand Prison and Fang District Prison bought their own bottled water for drinking.<sup>160</sup>

## 7.7. Inadequate healthcare

The majority of interviewed former prisoners reported that the prisons where they had been detained failed to provide effective physical and mental healthcare services, citing in particular the delayed and inadequate access to treatment and medication.<sup>161</sup>

In those prisons, medical doctors from hospital outside the prisons provided services at the prison healthcare facilities on a regular schedule and prisoners who wished to be visited had to make an appointment in advance, except in cases of emergencies. Waiting time for a doctor's visit varied greatly, depending on the prison. In some prisons, the inadequate capacity of medical services compared to the needs of the prison population resulted in long waiting time.

Former prisoners at the Bangkok Remand Prison said inmates waited an average of one week to see the doctor.<sup>162</sup> Former prisoners at the Chiang Mai Women's Correctional Institution reported the doctors visited the inmates at the prison's healthcare facility once a week or once every two weeks, and the waiting time depended on the severity of the symptoms.<sup>163</sup> According to a former prisoner at the Songkhla Correctional Institution for Drug Addicts, inmates who had booked an appointment waited around two or three weeks to receive consultation or treatment from the doctor.<sup>164</sup> A former prisoner at Narathiwat Provincial Prison said inmates waited around one day to see the doctor, but further noted: "Prisoners generally received medicines a week after [seeing the doctor]. By that time, they already felt better."<sup>165</sup> Former prisoners at Fang District Prison, Yala Central Prison, and Songkhla Central Prison reported that prisoners could receive treatment at the prison's healthcare facility either on the same day or the next day after booking.<sup>166</sup>

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158. FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at Songkhla Central Prison*, 13 January 2025

159. FIDH, *Interview with a former prisoner at the Songkhla Correctional Institution for Drug Addicts*, 24 December 2024; FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at Songkhla Central Prison*, 13 January 2025; FIDH, *Interview with a former prisoner at Trang Central Prison*, 24 December 2024

160. FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at Fang District Prison*, 9 December 2024; FIDH, *Interview with a former prisoner at the Bangkok Remand Prison*, 19 December 2024

161. Rule 24 of the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners states: "1. The provision of health care for prisoners is a state responsibility. Prisoners should enjoy the same standards of health care that are available in the community, and should have access to necessary health-care services free of charge without discrimination on the grounds of their legal status. 2. Health-care services should be organized in close relationship to the general public health administration and in a way that ensures continuity of treatment and care, including for HIV, tuberculosis and other infectious diseases, as well as for drug dependence." Rule 25 of the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners states: "1. Every prison shall have in place a healthcare service tasked with evaluating, promoting, protecting and improving the physical and mental health of prisoners, paying particular attention to prisoners with special health-care needs or with health issues that hamper their rehabilitation. 2. The health-care service shall consist of an interdisciplinary team with sufficient qualified personnel acting in full clinical independence and shall encompass sufficient expertise in psychology and psychiatry. The services of a qualified dentist shall be available to every prisoner."

162. FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at the Bangkok Remand Prison*, 19 December 2024

163. FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at the Chiang Mai Women's Correctional Institution*, 10 December 2024

164. FIDH, *Interview with a former prisoner at the Songkhla Correctional Institution for Drug Addicts*, 24 December 2024

165. FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at Narathiwat Provincial Prison*, 13 January 2025

166. FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at Fang District Prison*, 9 December 2024; FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at Yala Central Prison*, 13 January 2025; FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at Songkhla Central Prison*, 13 January 2025

According to the majority of interviewed former prisoners, basic over-the-counter medicines needed to be prescribed by the doctors, which resulted in prisoners having to wait to see a doctor to receive medication even for minor ailments.<sup>167</sup>

Former prisoners at the Chiang Mai Women's Correctional Institution and Satun Central Prison further noted that access to medicines in prison was overly restricted. "You would not be prescribed paracetamol [for a fever], if your body temperature was below 38°C," a former prisoner at Satun Central Prison recounted.<sup>168</sup> A former prisoner at Narathiwat Provincial Prison also raised concerns about inmates often being arbitrarily denied access to medicines. The same former prisoner recalled seeing prisoners being beaten or punished by prison guards merely for requesting pain killers from them.<sup>169</sup>

In some prisons where the interviewed former prisoners had been detained, including the Chiang Mai Women's Correctional Institution, Fang District Prison, and Pattani Central Prison, inmates could request basic over-the-counter medicines, such as paracetamol or other pain killers, from prison guards or prisoners who assisted them.<sup>170</sup>

Some interviewed former prisoners noted that prisoners with chronic illnesses received treatment and medication provided or facilitated by the prison authorities.

For example, a former prisoner at Fang District Prison, who was diagnosed with hypertension, regularly received medication for his condition.<sup>171</sup> In addition, former prisoners at the Chiang Mai Women's Correctional Institution reported that prisoners who were diagnosed with serious diseases, such as cancer, were treated in a hospital outside the prison.<sup>172</sup>

While dental services were available in all prisons where interviewed former prisoners had been detained, most former prisoners commented on the inability to meet inmates' needs and the long waiting time. In the majority of prisons where interviewed former prisoners had been detained, dentists visited once a month and required advanced booking.

A former prisoner at Fang District Prison was able to see a dentist for tooth extraction one month after booking.<sup>173</sup> A former prisoner at the Songkhla Correctional Institution for Drug Addicts reported he waited for over a year for tooth extraction, which eventually was not carried out.<sup>174</sup> According to the same former prisoner, the long waiting time was due to the low number of prisoners that could be examined and privileges among prisoners. He explained: "They [the dentists] saw only 10 people per prison quarter per month and prisoners who assisted the guard usually received treatment before the others."<sup>175</sup> A former prisoner at Narathiwat Provincial Prison also reported that the dentist visiting the facility could only accept five prisoners per prison quarter per month and prisoners who assisted prison guard could skip the waiting lists.<sup>176</sup>

All interviewed former female prisoners reported a positive development regarding the availability of preventive healthcare services, including gynecological checkups, for female inmates.<sup>177</sup>

A former prisoner at Trang Central Prison reported female prisoners received regular health checkups, which included screening for HIV, diabetes, and cervical cancer.<sup>178</sup> According to former prisoners at the Chiang Mai Women's Correctional Institution, the prison arranged a chest X-ray every three months and a cervical cancer screening twice a year.<sup>179</sup>

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167. FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at the Bangkok Remand Prison*, 19 December 2024; FIDH, *Interview with a former prisoner at Trang Central Prison*, 24 December 2024

168. FIDH, *Interview with a former prisoner at Satun Provincial Prison*, 24 December 2024

169. FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at Narathiwat Provincial Prison*, 13 January 2025

170. FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at the Chiang Mai Women's Correctional Institution*, 10 December 2024; FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at Fang District Prison*, 9 December 2024; FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at Pattani Central Prison*, 13 January 2025

171. FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at Fang District Prison*, 9 December 2024

172. FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at Chiang Mai Women's Correctional Institution*, 10 December 2024

173. FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at Fang District Prison*, 9 December 2024

174. FIDH, *Interview with a former prisoner at the Songkhla Correctional Institution for Drug Addicts*, 24 December 2024

175. FIDH, *Interview with a former prisoner at the Songkhla Correctional Institution for Drug Addicts*, 24 December 2024

176. FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at Narathiwat Provincial Prison*, 13 January 2025

177. Rule 18 of the United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders states: "Preventive health-care measures of particular relevance to women, such as Papanicolaou tests and screening for breast and gynaecological cancer, shall be offered to women prisoners on an equal basis with women of the same age in the community."

178. FIDH, *Interview with a former prisoner at Trang Central Prison*, 24 December 2024

179. FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at the Chiang Mai Women's Correctional Institution*, 10 December 2024

The majority of interviewed former prisoners reported that mental health services were available at the prisons where they had been detained, although none of them had direct experience of seeing the psychologist. Some former prisoners noted the limited accessibility of mental healthcare in prisons.

According to a former prisoner at the Songkhla Correctional Institution for Drug Addicts, only inmates who had been diagnosed with mental disorders or were on medication could receive treatment. As a result, prisoners who did not have a specific diagnosis or those with mild mental health symptoms had difficulties accessing psychological counselling.<sup>180</sup> The same former prisoner explained: "You could not simply [be allowed to] see the psychologist just for stress. It had to be prisoners with a record [of mental illnesses]."<sup>181</sup>

Interviewed former prisoners at Yala Central Prison, Narathiwat Provincial Prison, and Songkhla Central Prison reported that mental health services were not available at those facilities.<sup>182</sup>

Most interviewed former prisoners reported the prisons' response to medical emergencies at night was inadequate, sometimes resulting in fatal consequences.<sup>183</sup>



***"My friend died inside the cell because the prison guard did not come to check on him even after we pressed the buzzer multiple times. His dead body stayed in the room until the morning."***

According to former prisoners at Yala Central Prison and the Songkhla Correctional Institution for Drug Addicts, only prisoners with "life-threatening" medical situations, such as loss of consciousness and seizure, would receive treatment at night instead of having to wait until the following morning to see a doctor.<sup>184</sup> "My friend died inside the cell because the prison guard did not come to check on him even after we pressed the buzzer multiple times. His dead body stayed in the room until the morning," an interviewed former prisoner at the Songkhla Correctional Institution for Drug Addicts

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180. FIDH, *Interview with a former prisoner at the Songkhla Correctional Institution for Drug Addicts*, 24 December 2024

181. FIDH, *Interview with a former prisoner at the Songkhla Correctional Institution for Drug Addicts*, 24 December 2024

182. FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at Yala Central Prison*, 13 January 2025; FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at Narathiwat Provincial Prison*, 13 January 2025; FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at Songkhla Central Prison*, 13 January 2025

183. Rule 27 of the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners states: "1. All prisons shall ensure prompt access to medical attention in urgent cases. Prisoners who require specialized treatment or surgery shall be transferred to specialized institutions or to civil hospitals. Where a prison service has its own hospital facilities, they shall be adequately staffed and equipped to provide prisoners referred to them with appropriate treatment and care. 2. Clinical decisions may only be taken by the responsible health-care professionals and may not be overruled or ignored by non-medical prison staff."

184. FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at Yala Central Prison*, 13 January 2025

recalled.<sup>185</sup> The same former prisoner further noted that the handling of medical emergencies at night was largely complicated by the complex security protocol at the facility. For example, in order to open the cell, prison guards had to retrieve the key to the cell from another building.<sup>186</sup> A former prisoner at Narathiwat Provincial Prison noted that prison guards took 1.5-2 hours to arrive at the cell to give an initial assessment.<sup>187</sup> A former prisoner at Songkhla Central Prison recalled that an inmate who was suffering from a hernia pain at night had to wait around 30 minutes for the authorities to arrive to check on him.<sup>188</sup>

## 7.8. Hard work, low pay

Inmates engaged in labor-intensive and repetitive work, which provided limited opportunities for them to develop skills that would be useful for employment upon release.<sup>189</sup> In addition, some former prisoners reported unfair labor practices, including insufficient remuneration, and punishment for not meeting the stringent production targets.<sup>190</sup>

These testimonies contradict claims made by the DoC during Thailand's UN CAT review in November 2024 [See above, 5. *UN bodies concerned over prison conditions*] that "inmates are offered the opportunity to engage in work that is both financially beneficial and conducive to skill development, thereby aiding their rehabilitation and preparation for reintegration into society."<sup>191</sup> Particularly misleading was the DoC's statement that "low-skilled work, including fishing net production, was discontinued in 2022" – an assertion contradicted by two former prisoners [See below in this section].

The two types of prison work reported by the interviewed former prisoners included the jobs within the facility's vocational training program, so-called "work unit," and the support roles within the facilities. The work available in the prisons' vocational training programs primarily entailed the production of goods for private contractors, such as fishing nets, door latches, hinges, embroidered logo shirts, and hand-stitched doormats.

According to most of the interviewed former prisoners, inmates working for the production of goods received low wages for their work, which was typically done from 9am to 2pm from Monday to Friday. Remuneration for this type of work was significantly below Thailand's daily minimum wage in 2024, which stood between 330 and 370 baht (about US\$9.50-10.70).

For instance, a former prisoner at the Songkhla Correctional Institution for Drug Addicts who produced fishing nets reported being paid 1,000 baht (about US\$28.90) per month, or 33 baht (about US\$1) per day, which was already higher than the 100 baht (about US\$2.90) per month, or 3 baht (about US\$0.08) per day, he earned in previous years for the same work.<sup>192</sup> The same former prisoner further recalled: "I sometimes paid [bribes to] the prisoner who was the leader of the work unit, so I could skip working."<sup>193</sup> Another former prisoner at the Chiang Mai Women's Correctional Institution earned 1,000 baht (about US\$28.90) per month, or 33 baht (about US\$1.00) per day, for producing embroidered logo shirts.<sup>194</sup> Another former prisoner at Trang Central Prison said he was paid only 40-60 baht (about US\$1.10-1.70) per month, or 1.30-2.00 baht (about US\$0.04-0.06) per day, for the same kind of work.<sup>195</sup>

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185. FIDH, *Interview with a former prisoner at the Songkhla Correctional Institution for Drug Addicts*, 24 December 2024

186. FIDH, *Interview with a former prisoner at the Songkhla Correctional Institution for Drug Addicts*, 24 December 2024

187. FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at Narathiwat Provincial Prison*, 13 January 2025

188. FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at Songkhla Central Prison*, 13 January 2025

189. Rule 96 of the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners states: "1. Sentenced prisoners shall have the opportunity to work and/or to actively participate in their rehabilitation, subject to a determination of physical and mental fitness by a physician or other qualified health-care professionals. 2. Sufficient work of a useful nature shall be provided to keep prisoners actively employed for a normal working day."

190. Rule 103 of the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners states: "1. There shall be a system of equitable remuneration of the work of prisoners. 2. Under the system, prisoners shall be allowed to spend at least a part of their earnings on approved articles for their own use and to send a part of their earnings to their family. 3. The system should also provide that a part of the earnings should be set aside by the prison administration so as to constitute a savings fund to be handed over to the prisoner on his or her release."

191. UN Web TV, *2151st Meeting, 81st session, Committee Against Torture (CAT) - Consideration of Thailand (continued)*, 6 November 2024

192. FIDH, *Interview with a former prisoner at the Songkhla Correctional Institution for Drug Addicts*, 24 December 2024

193. FIDH, *Interview with a former prisoner at the Songkhla Correctional Institution for Drug Addicts*, 24 December 2024

194. FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at the Chiang Mai Women's Correctional Institution*, 10 December 2024

195. FIDH, *Interview with a former prisoner at Trang Central Prison*, 24 December 2024

A former prisoner at the Songkhla Correctional Institution for Drug Addicts reported that the failure to meet the daily production target orders often resulted in punishment by prison guards.<sup>196</sup>

The other type of work mentioned by interviewed former inmates concerned the functioning and maintenance of the prison, where prisoners were assigned with support roles, such as guarding the prison gates, cleaning the prison building, doing laundry, cooking, and administrative work.

According to interviewed former prisoners at the Bangkok Remand Prison and Fang District Prison, inmates with short sentences would generally be tasked with prison support jobs instead of participating in vocational training programs.<sup>197</sup> Prisoners reportedly did not receive financial remuneration for this type of work.

Only an interviewed former prisoner at the Chiang Mai Women's Correctional Institution reported that inmates working in prison support roles were given monthly "support bags," which contained personal hygiene items as compensation for their work.<sup>198</sup>

A former prisoner at the Chiang Mai Women's Correctional Institution, who worked as a masseuse at a massage shop outside the prison as part of the vocational training program, reported the work contributed to the successful employment after her release.<sup>199</sup> The same former prisoner also reported being paid 15,000 baht (about US\$288) per month, or 500 baht (about US\$14) per day, for working in the massage shop every day from 8am to 4pm as part of the prison's pre-release program.<sup>200</sup> An interviewed former prisoner at Trang Central Prison reported the prison occasionally provided workshops on baking and beverages for prisoners.<sup>201</sup>

## 7.9. Isolation from the outside world

According to all interviewed former prisoners, the avenues for inmates to maintain contact with the outside world were limited to visitation and correspondence.<sup>202</sup> Access to news and external information was strictly controlled.<sup>203</sup>

In all prisons where the interviewed former prisoners had been detained, family visits could be conducted in person or online via the LINE messaging application. Most prisoners reported being allowed 10-20 minutes for both types of visits. Nonetheless, the frequency of visits and time allowed for each visit were different across the prisons where interviewed former prisoners had been detained.

For example, former prisoners at Yala Central Prison, the Bangkok Remand Prison, and Satun Provincial Prison could receive visits every day.<sup>204</sup> At the Chiang Mai Women's Correctional Institution, Narathiwat Provincial Prison, and Songkhla Central Prison, the visits were allowed once a month.<sup>205</sup> Former prisoners at Pattani Central Prison and the Songkhla Correctional Institution for Drug Addicts reported inmates were allowed to have online or in-person visits twice a month.<sup>206</sup> A former prisoner at Pattani Central Prison noted the long waiting time for visits that were limited to 10 minutes.<sup>207</sup>

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196. FIDH, *Interview with a former prisoner at the Songkhla Correctional Institution for Drug Addicts*, 24 December 2024

197. FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at the Bangkok Remand Prison*, 19 December 2024; FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at Fang District Prison*, 9 December 2024

198. FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at the Chiang Mai Women's Correctional Institution*, 10 December 2024

199. FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at the Chiang Mai Women's Correctional Institution*, 10 December 2024

200. FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at the Chiang Mai Women's Correctional Institution*, 10 December 2024

201. FIDH, *Interview with a former prisoner at Trang Central Prison*, 24 December 2024

202. Rule 58 of the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners states: "1. Prisoners shall be allowed, under necessary supervision, to communicate with their family and friends at regular intervals: (a) By corresponding in writing and using, where available, telecommunication, electronic, digital and other means; and (b) By receiving visits. 2. Where conjugal visits are allowed, this right shall be applied without discrimination, and women prisoners shall be able to exercise this right on an equal basis with men. Procedures shall be in place and premises shall be made available to ensure fair and equal access with due regard to safety and dignity."

203. Rule 63 of the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners states: "Prisoners shall be kept informed regularly of the more important items of news by the reading of newspapers, periodicals or special institutional publications, by hearing wireless transmissions, by lectures or by any similar means as authorized or controlled by the prison administration."

204. FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at Yala Central Prison*, 13 January 2025; FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at the Bangkok Remand Prison*, 19 December 2024; FIDH, *Interview with a former prisoner at Satun Provincial Prison*, 24 December 2024

205. FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at the Chiang Mai Women's Correctional Institution*, 10 December 2024; FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at Narathiwat Provincial Prison*, 13 January 2025; FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at Songkhla Central Prison*, 13 January 2025

206. FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at Pattani Central Prison*, 13 January 2025; FIDH, *Interview with a former prisoner at the Songkhla Correctional Institution for Drug Addicts*, 24 December 2024

207. FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at Pattani Central Prison*, 13 January 2025



According to the majority of interviewed former prisoners, lawyer visits were less restrictive, both in terms of duration and frequency. However, according to interviewed former prisoners at Minburi Remand Prison and Trang Central Prison, convicted prisoners were denied visits by their lawyers.<sup>208</sup>

According to the majority of interviewed former prisoners, inmates could also write letters with certain limitations on their frequency, content, and length. Most of the interviewed former prisoners reported the prisoners were allowed to send one letter per week with different length limitations.

For example, a former prisoner at Trang Central Prison and the Songkhla Correctional Institution for Drug Addicts reported that prisoners were allowed to write 15 and 18 lines per letter, respectively.<sup>209</sup> In addition, according to a former prisoner at Songkhla Central Prison, prisoners belonging to the “Good” class were allowed to send one letter per week, while those belonging to the “Excellent” class were allowed to send a letter every day.<sup>210</sup>

In addition to the regular mail, an electronic letter service through the “Domimail” application was available in 10 prisons in Bangkok, Pathumthani Province, Songkhla Province, and Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, which allowed prisoners to send and receive letters as well as photos.<sup>211</sup> The electronic letter service worked on a pre-paid credit basis, which cost 100 baht (about US\$2.90) for 10 credits.<sup>212</sup> However, a former prisoner at the Bangkok Remand Prison reported that almost all of his electronic letters were not delivered by the prison authorities and he was unable to claim the refund.<sup>213</sup>

Prisoners at the Bangkok Remand Prison reported facing challenges in corresponding with their family through letters because they had not been able to buy pens at the prison shop for a month, reportedly due to a stock shortage.<sup>214</sup>

All interviewed former prisoners reported that inmates lacked meaningful access to information on current affairs, such as through newspaper and television news broadcasts. According to all interviewed former prisoners, they could watch television in the cell and the common area. Content on television was strictly screened by prison guards, who allowed only certain types of content to be shown, such as movies, music, cartoons, documentaries, and gameshows.

According to former prisoners at Yala Central Prison, the television in the cell was on from 5pm to 9pm, during which prisoners were only allowed to watch movies or dramas.<sup>215</sup>

Similarly, newspapers were unavailable in all prisons where the interviewed former prisoners had been detained, except at Fang District Prison, where a former prisoner reported there were old newspapers available at the facility.<sup>216</sup>

The majority of the interviewed former prisoners said that inmates could access books at the prison’s library, despite the limited selection of books available, or received them from their families.

According to former prisoners at the Chiang Mai Women’s Correctional Institution, the most common type of books available in the library was fiction.<sup>217</sup> A former prisoner at Yala Central Prison reported that the prison’s library had a limited availability of Islamic religious books.<sup>218</sup> A former prisoner at Pattani

208. FIDH, *Interview with a former prisoner at Trang Central Prison*, 24 December 2024; FIDH, *Interview with a former prisoner at Minburi Remand Prison*, 19 December 2024

209. FIDH, *Interview with a former prisoner at Trang Central Prison*, 24 December 2024; FIDH, *Interview with a former prisoner at the Songkhla Correctional Institution for Drug Addicts*, 24 December 2024

210. FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at Songkhla Central Prison*, 13 January 2025; the Thai prison system categorizes prisoners into six classes based on their behavior: 1) Excellent class; 2) Very good class; 3) Good class; 4) Moderate class; 5) Bad class; 6) Very bad class.

211. As of October 2023, the express e-letter service or Domimail was accessible in the following 10 prisons: Klong Prem Central Prison, the Bangkok Remand Prison, Minburi Remand Prison, and the Central Women’s Correctional Institution in Bangkok; the Central Correctional Institute for Young Prisoners in Pathumthani Province; the Nakhon Si Thammarat Central Prison in Nakhon Si Thammarat Province; the Songkhla Correctional Institution for Drug Addicts, the Songkhla Central Prison, the Songkhla Provincial Prison, and the Na Thawi District Prison in Songkhla Province; TLHR, *Imprisoned far from home: Getting to know Narathivat Provincial Prison - a place where two individuals detained under Article 112* [in Thai], 31 October 2023, <https://tlhr2014.com/archives/61077>

212. Prachatai, *Political prisoners face obstacles staying connected following new letter regulations*, 12 September 2024

213. FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at the Bangkok Remand Prison*, 19 December 2024

214. Prachatai, *Political prisoners face obstacles staying connected following new letter regulations*, 12 September 2024

215. FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at Yala Central Prison*, 13 January 2025

216. FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at Fang District Prison*, 9 December 2024

217. FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at the Chiang Mai Women’s Correctional Institution*, 10 December 2024

218. FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at Yala Central Prison*, 13 January 2025

Central Prison reported there was no library at the facility, and inmates faced certain restrictions on receiving books from their families.<sup>219</sup>

## 7.10. Limited recreational and rehabilitative activities

Opportunities to engage in recreational and rehabilitative activities to maintain and improve prisoners' physical and mental well-being were limited.<sup>220</sup>

Most interviewed former prisoners said access to recreational activities of their choice in prisons, such as sports, arts, or other cultural activities, was limited due to the regimented schedule. According to the majority of interviewed former prisoners, all inmates were required to join the prisons' compulsory workouts, including aerobic exercise and stretching, in the morning before working under the vocational training programs or performing prison support duties assigned to them.

A former prisoner at the Bangkok Remand Prison reported inmates could participate in sport activities, such as football and kick volleyball (takraw) in the morning before breakfast and in the evening before going back to their cell.<sup>221</sup> According to a former prisoner at the Songkhla Correctional Institution for Drug Addicts, inmates could do sports, such as jogging or weightlifting, when they were free from duty assignments or vocational training.<sup>222</sup> Former prisoners at Fang District Prison reported that prisoners at the facility could play basketball and football during the one-hour afternoon break on weekdays and for a longer time on weekends.<sup>223</sup>

In some prisons where the interviewed former prisoners had been detained, inmates' access to physical activities was more restricted in terms of time and space.

For example, a former prisoner at Trang Central Prison described the outdoor space in prison as so small and cramped that prisoners could barely use it for any sport activity, except for jogging.<sup>224</sup> A former prisoner at Yala Central Prison reported that prisoners at the facility were allowed to do sport activities only on weekends.<sup>225</sup> According to a former prisoner at Trang Central Prison, sport activities were arranged only during the Songkran holiday (Thailand's national holiday from 13 to 15 April).<sup>226</sup> In addition, a former prisoner at the Chiang Mai Women's Correctional Institution reported that prisoners could participate in sport activities, such as badminton, volleyball, and kick volleyball (takraw), exclusively on the prison's sport day.<sup>227</sup>

In some prisons where interviewed former prisoners had been detained, drug rehabilitation programs were available for inmates who were drug users. However, such programs focused solely on promoting drug abstinence, instead of providing drug education or professional help in addressing individual substance use problems.

A former prisoner at Fang District Prison reported the facility had neither drug rehabilitation programs to guide prisoners through quitting drugs, nor other types of support for those coping with substance withdrawal.<sup>228</sup>

During Thailand's UN CAT review in November 2024, the DoC said it had established narcotic treatment facilities and rehabilitation centers for drug addicts in 89 prisons to provide treatment to inmates who were categorized as drug users, addicts, and consumers.<sup>229</sup>

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219. FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at Pattani Central Prison*, 13 January 2025

220. Rule 105 of the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners states: "Recreational and cultural activities shall be provided in all prisons for the benefit of the mental and physical health of prisoners."

221. FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at the Bangkok Remand Prison*, 19 December 2024

222. FIDH, *Interview with a former prisoner at the Songkhla Correctional Institution for Drug Addicts*, 24 December 2024

223. FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at Fang District Prison*, 9 December 2024

224. FIDH, *Interview with a former prisoner at Trang Central Prison*, 24 December 2024

225. FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at Yala Central Prison*, 13 January 2025

226. FIDH, *Interview with a former prisoner at Trang Central Prison*, 24 December 2024

227. FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at the Chiang Mai Women's Correctional Institution*, 10 December 2024

228. FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at Fang District Prison*, 9 December 2024

229. UN Web TV, 2151st Meeting, 81st session, Committee Against Torture (CAT) – Consideration of Thailand (continued), 6 November 2024

## 7.11. Weak and ineffective complaint mechanisms

The majority of interviewed former prisoners reported that inmates lacked trust in the prisons' complaint mechanisms due to their perceived ineffectiveness and fear of retaliation.<sup>230</sup>

The majority of the interviewed former prisoners also reported they were not fully aware of their rights in prison, including the right to make a complaint to the prison administration or external independent bodies, such as the NHRCT and the Ombudsman.<sup>231</sup>

A former prisoner at Yala Central Prison said he was never informed of the rights and avenues to lodge a complaint.<sup>232</sup> Former prisoners at the Songkhla Correctional Institution for Drug Addicts and Satun Provincial Prison reported that although they were informed of their right to submit a complaint to independent oversight bodies, they did not know how to engage in the process.<sup>233</sup>

According to interviewed former prisoners, the common procedure to file complaints was to put a letter into the complaint box or to speak directly to the prison officials. The majority of the interviewed former prisoners believed that the complaints would be dismissed by the prison guards before they could reach the higher levels of the prison hierarchy or the independent bodies outside prison.

A former prisoner at the Bangkok Remand Prison alleged that the complaints were routinely blocked by the prison staff, particularly when they concerned allegations of misconduct made against specific prison officers.<sup>234</sup> A former prisoner at Narathiwat Provincial Prison said the complaints submitted by prisoners would be screened by prison guards and could be "torn up."<sup>235</sup> An interviewed former prisoner at the Chiang Mai Women's Correctional Institution believed that it would be impossible to submit complaints to external independent bodies because they would be strictly reviewed and dismissed by the prison authorities.<sup>236</sup> Former prisoners at Pattani Central Prison noted that there was no complaint box available in their quarter of that facility.<sup>237</sup>

On a positive note, some interviewed former prisoners reported that the complaints submitted by other inmates were resolved, particularly those concerning prison sanitation.

Former prisoners at the Chiang Mai Women's Correctional Institution said the prison was responsive to the internal complaints, which were mostly about the sanitation conditions. A former prisoner at Fang District Prison recalled prisoners being encouraged by prison guards to use the complaint box to raise issues about sanitation.<sup>238</sup> By contrast, a former prisoner at Trang Central Prison reported witnessing complainants being warned by prison officers and advised to speak directly to the staff instead of lodging formal complaints.<sup>239</sup>

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230. Rule 56 of the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners states: "1. Every prisoner shall have the opportunity each day to make requests or complaints to the prison director or the prison staff member authorized to represent him or her. 2. It shall be possible to make requests or complaints to the inspector of prisons during his or her inspections. The prisoner shall have the opportunity to talk to the inspector or any other inspecting officer freely and in full confidentiality, without the director or other members of the staff being present. 3. Every prisoner shall be allowed to make a request or complaint regarding his or her treatment, without censorship as to substance, to the central prison administration and to the judicial or other competent authorities, including those vested with reviewing or remedial power. 4. The rights under paragraphs 1 to 3 of this rule shall extend to the legal adviser of the prisoner. In those cases where neither the prisoner nor his or her legal adviser has the possibility of exercising such rights, a member of the prisoner's family or any other person who has knowledge of the case may do so."

231. Rule 54(b) of the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners states: "Upon admission, every prisoner shall be promptly provided with written information about: His or her rights, including authorized methods of seeking information, access to legal advice, including through legal aid schemes, and procedures for making requests or complaints."

232. FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at Yala Central Prison*, 13 January 2025

233. FIDH, *Interview with a former prisoner at the Songkhla Correctional Institution for Drug Addicts*, 24 December 2024; FIDH, *Interview with a former prisoner at Satun Provincial Prison*, 24 December 2024

234. Rule 57 of the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners states: "1. Every request or complaint shall be promptly dealt with and replied to without delay. If the request or complaint is rejected, or in the event of undue delay, the complainant shall be entitled to bring it before a judicial or other authority. 2. Safeguards shall be in place to ensure that prisoners can make requests or complaints safely and, if so requested by the complainant, in a confidential manner. A prisoner or other person mentioned in paragraph 4 of rule 56 must not be exposed to any risk of retaliation, intimidation or other negative consequences as a result of having submitted a request or complaint. 3. Allegations of torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment of prisoners shall be dealt with immediately and shall result in a prompt and impartial investigation conducted by an independent national authority." FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at the Bangkok Remand Prison*, 19 December 2024

235. FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at Narathiwat Provincial Prison*, 13 January 2025

236. FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at the Chiang Mai Women's Correctional Institution*, 10 December 2024

237. FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at Pattani Central Prison*, 13 January 2025

238. FIDH, *Interview with former prisoners at Fang District Prison*, 9 December 2024

239. FIDH, *Interview with a former prisoner at Trang Central Prison*, 24 December 2024

Despite claims by the DoC that “all grievances are confidential,”<sup>240</sup> some interviewed former prisoners described the chilling effect and fear of reprisals caused by the prison guards’ interference in the complaint process.



***“The prison staff came to check and monitor the complaint box regularly, so that prisoners were intimidated and would not lodge a complaint.”***

According to a former prisoner at the Songkhla Correctional Institution for Drug Addicts, even though prisoners could submit anonymous complaints, the complaint box was generally under surveillance of prisoners who assisted prison guards, leaving the complainants fearful that their identity could be exposed.<sup>241</sup> A former prisoner at Trang Central Prison recalled: “The prison staff came to check and monitor the complaint box regularly, so that prisoners were intimidated and would not lodge a complaint.”<sup>242</sup>

In November 2024, the DoC stated that, since 2022, 68 complaints had been filed against prison officers for assaulting inmates, and disciplinary measures had been imposed on 14 of the officers for “using excessive force on inmates.”<sup>243</sup>

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240. UN Web TV, 2151st Meeting, 81st session, Committee Against Torture (CAT) - Consideration of Thailand (continued), 6 November 2024

241. FIDH, Interview with a former prisoner at the Songkhla Correctional Institution for Drug Addicts, 24 December 2024

242. FIDH, Interview with a former prisoner at Trang Central Prison, 24 December 2024

243. UN Web TV, 2148th Meeting, 81st session, Committee Against Torture (CAT) - Consideration of Thailand, 5 November 2024

## 8. PRISON NEWS IN BRIEF

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### 8.1. Mixed bag of international commitments

The treatment of prisoners was included among the Thai government’s pledges made ahead of the election of Thailand as a member of the UN Human Rights Council for the 2025-2027 term. The government pledged to “continue its efforts to reach out to those who might be furthest behind, such as persons with disabilities, prisoners, stateless persons and migrants.”<sup>244</sup>

However, progress towards the abolition of the death penalty was not among the pledges made by the Thai government. Such omission stood in stark contrast with the previous bid by the Thai government to win a UN Human Rights Council seat in 2014, which included a pledge to “study the possibility of abolishing the death penalty.”<sup>245</sup>

### 8.2. Thaksin’s hospital detention scrutinized

The controversy over the case of former Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, which had sparked criticism of preferential treatment in 2023, continued in 2024.<sup>246</sup>

The former Prime Minister remained detained in the Police General Hospital (PGH) for six months until 18 February 2024, when he was released on parole after serving six months of his prison term, which had been reduced to one year in a royal pardon granted to him by King Rama X on 31 August 2023.<sup>247</sup> Thaksin formally completed his one-year prison term on 31 August 2024, after being included in a royal pardon for prisoners on the occasion of the King’s 72<sup>nd</sup> birthday.<sup>248</sup>

On 30 July 2024, the NHRCT released a report that raised concerns about preferential treatment for inmates, specifically former Prime Minister Thaksin. The NHRCT report highlighted vague regulations regarding the transfer of inmates who required medical treatment, which allowed them to stay outside prison without proper checks. The report found this loophole enabled Thaksin to extend his stay outside prison for medical treatment for more than 120 days.<sup>249</sup>

On 7 November 2024, a parliamentary committee on state security, border affairs, national strategy, and reform began hearings to investigate claims that Thaksin had been given privileged treatment during his detention at the PGH.<sup>250</sup>

Thaksin’s extended stay at the PGH was also being probed by the National Anti-Corruption Commission (NACC).<sup>251</sup> On 16 December 2024, the NACC said it had found enough facts, witnesses, and evidence to investigate 12 DoC and PGH officials who had been allegedly responsible for allowing Thaksin to stay at the PGH for 180 days, although he was not seriously ill.<sup>252</sup>

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244. UN General Assembly, 79<sup>th</sup> session, *Note verbale dated 10 May 2024 from the Permanent Mission of Thailand to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly*, 13 May 2024; UN Doc. A/79/82, para. 1

245. UN General Assembly, 69<sup>th</sup> session, *Letter dated 22 July 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Thailand to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly*, 22 July 2014; UN Doc. A/69/175, para. 13

246. FIDH-UCL, *Thailand Annual Prison Report 2024*, 19 March 2024; Chapter 5.

247. AP, *Former Thai PM Thaksin released on parole after serving 6 months in hospital*, 18 February 2024; Public Relations Department, *Royal Pardon Reducing Thaksin Shinawatra’s Jail Term to One Year*, 1 September 2023

248. Bangkok Post, *Panel to look into Thaksin’s hospital stay*, 4 November 2024; Bangkok Post, *Thaksin gets royal pardon, parole ends Sunday*, 17 August 2024

249. Bangkok Post, *Panel to look into Thaksin’s hospital stay*, 4 November 2024

250. Bangkok Post, *Panel to look into Thaksin’s hospital stay*, 4 November 2024

251. Bangkok Post, *Panel to look into Thaksin’s hospital stay*, 4 November 2024

252. Bangkok Post, *Graft busters probe Thaksin’s stay in hospital instead of jail*, 17 December 2024

# Recommendations

## Recommendations to the Thai government

### General recommendations

- Ensure prison conditions comply with Thailand's obligations under international human rights treaties to which it is a state party, including: the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR); the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR); the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW); the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC); and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).
- Comply with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs), with regard to the duty to protect prisoners from human rights abuses committed by business enterprises.
- Improve conditions in prisons to be in line with the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules) and the UN Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders (the Bangkok Rules).
- Ensure that all prisoners are treated equally, without discrimination on the grounds of race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth, or any other status, while taking into account the individual needs of those in situations of vulnerability, including women, children, LGBTIQ, persons with physical or mental disabilities, and the elderly.
- Ensure that staff in all prisons receive adequate training on international standards, notably the Nelson Mandela Rules and the Bangkok Rules.
- Allow independent inspection bodies, including the National Human Rights Commission of Thailand (NHRCT) and the Ombudsman, unfettered access to all prisons in line with commitments made by Thailand during its second Universal Periodic Review (UPR).
- Allow non-governmental organizations with a relevant mandate to conduct visits to places of detention, interview inmates, and assess conditions without undue hindrance.
- Review and amend domestic legislation to guarantee the right to vote for prisoners in accordance with international human rights law and standards.
- Conduct thorough, impartial, and independent investigations into all cases of deaths in prisons and publicly release the findings of such investigations.
- Continue to publish regular and comprehensive statistical information on deaths in prisons, their causes, and the outcome of the investigations into such occurrences.
- Publish regular and comprehensive figures about foreign prisoners detained in correctional facilities, disaggregated by gender, nationality, and type of offense.
- Ensure pre-trial detainees are held separately from convicted prisoners and their treatment is based on their status as non-convicted persons.
- Ensure that incarcerated minors are held separately from adult prisoners.
- Complete the amendment process of the 2019 Ministry of Justice regulation, issued under Article 89/1 of the Criminal Procedure Code, to specify the alternative places of detention for suspects or defendants.
- Implement the Department of Corrections' regulation concerning the detention of certain

inmates in locations other than prisons, issued under the under Article 33 of the Penitentiary Act 1936 (amended in 2017).

- Continue the process of decriminalization of certain drug-related offenses, such as personal use and possession for personal use.
- Ensure that the voluntary rehabilitation schemes under the Narcotics Code 2021 comply with universal harm reduction and human rights principles.
- Ratify the Optional Protocol to the ICCPR (OP-ICCPR).
- Ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (OPCAT).
- Take concrete steps towards the abolition of the death penalty for all crimes, including by:
  - Establishing an official moratorium on executions.
  - Significantly reducing the number of criminal offenses that can be punished by death.
  - Removing the provision of capital punishment from all drug-related offenses.
  - Ratifying the Second Optional Protocol to the ICCPR (OP2-ICCPR).
- Implement recommendations made by all relevant UN bodies with regard to prison conditions.
- Extend an invitation for a country visit to relevant special procedures of the UN Human Rights Council, including: the Special Rapporteur on Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention (WGAD); the Special Rapporteur on the right to food; the Special Rapporteur on the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation; the Special Rapporteur on the right to adequate housing; the Independent Expert on sexual orientation and gender identity; the Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons; and the Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities.

### **Specific recommendations**

#### Overcrowding

- Increase efforts to address and resolve the issue of overcrowding in prisons by adopting and implementing sustainable and effective measures to reduce the prison population.
- Increase the use of alternatives to prison sentences and detention, by developing non-custodial measures within the legal system, in line with the UN Standard Minimum Rules for Non-custodial Measures (the Tokyo Rules). Such measures could include:
  - The imposition of fines for first-time offenders, when there is discretion in imposing fines and/or prison time.
  - The imposition of fines or community service for minor offenses.
  - The avoidance of pre-trial detention for defendants awaiting trial for certain categories of offenses.
  - The use of home detention coupled with electronic monitoring devices to prevent the risk of flight.
  - The use of early release procedures, such as parole and conditional release.
  - Post-sentencing alternatives that facilitate prisoners' reintegration into society.
  - Repatriation of foreign prisoners.
- Ensure that when pre-trial or remand detention is used, it is for as short a period as possible, and that bail bonds are not unduly onerous and are proportionate to the offense.

### Accommodation conditions

- Ensure sleeping cells have sufficient natural light, adequate ventilation supplied by fresh air, and cooling systems.
- Ensure prisoners are provided with clean and sufficient bedding suitable for the climate.

### Punishment and ill-treatment

- Ensure that all prisoners are treated with dignity and humanely and are not subject to any forms or acts of discrimination.
- Ensure that no disciplinary sanction or other penalty for violations of prison rules and conduct amounts to torture or other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment.
- Refrain from using force against prisoners, unless as an exceptional response to the three situations permitted by international standards: legitimate self-defense; attempted escape; and active or passive resistance to a lawful order.
- Ensure that prison guards use conflict prevention, mediation, or other alternative dispute resolution mechanisms to prevent or resolve conflicts with and among inmates.
- Refrain from imposing collective punishment, such as disciplinary segregation and the placement of prisoners in cells with no natural light ("dark cells").
- Refrain from using instruments of restraint, except in cases and with modalities permitted under international standards.
- Refrain from placing prisoners in solitary confinement, except as a last resort and only for as short a time as possible and subject to independent review.
- Conduct thorough, impartial, and independent investigations into all allegations of torture and ill-treatment, ensure that perpetrators are punished in accordance with existing laws, rules, and regulations, and that victims receive adequate redress and compensation.
- Establish a mechanism tasked with investigating allegations of gender-based violence in prisons, and providing protection, support, and counselling to the victims.

### Respect of religious practices

- Ensure that prisoners can observe their religious precepts and customs, including those related to food, clothing, and hygiene.

### Water and sanitation

- Ensure a sufficient water supply for personal hygiene and provide an adequate flow of water to showers and toilets throughout the day, particularly at times of heavy demand.
- Ensure that prisoners have unrestricted access to toilets at all times with the maximum possible level of privacy.
- Increase overall access to showers and allocate an adequate period of time for each prisoner to shower.
- Ensure that prisoners who are assigned cleaning duties are provided with sufficient and adequate equipment and materials.

### Food and drinking water

- Improve the overall quality and nutritional value of food served to prisoners.
- Ensure that food is provided to all prisoners in accordance with their medical needs and religious and cultural principles.
- Ensure prisoners are provided with clean eating utensils that are similar to those used outside prisons.
- Ensure clean drinking water is available from a tap or a container continuously, 24 hours a day.



### Healthcare services

- Continue to conduct regular inspections with the assistance of physicians or competent public health officials to examine and address issues that may impact the health of prisoners, including: the quantity, quality, preparation and service of food; the hygiene and cleanliness of the facilities and the prisoners; and the sanitation, temperature, lighting, ventilation, and bedding arrangements of the facilities.
- Ensure that prisoners have immediate access to medical attention in urgent cases, and that prisoners who require specialized treatment are transferred to institutions or hospitals outside prisons.
- Ensure the provision of adequate specialized medical services, including dental, psychological, and psychiatric care, for prisoners.
- Ensure that the provision of mental healthcare entails the treatment of mental illness, the promotion of mental well-being of prisoners, and the prevention of violence, self-harm, and suicide.
- Ensure that prisoners have access to preventive healthcare, including periodic screening for communicable and non-communicable diseases and health promotion activities.

### Women and LGBTIQ prisoners

- Ensure that female prisoners continue to be provided with the necessary items to meet their specific hygiene needs, particularly an adequate provision of sanitary pads that are of decent quality and free of charge.
- Ensure that female prisoners continue to receive specific healthcare services, including gynecological checkups and pre- and post-natal care.
- Ensure that LGBTIQ prisoners are treated with respect for their sexual orientation or gender identity and are protected from any abuse or harassment.

### Prison labor and education

- Assess whether the ongoing production of fishing nets in certain prisons complies with the Department of Corrections' order issued on 2 May 2022 to ban the signing of new contracts to produce fishing nets.
- Ensure that prison work programs are voluntary and aim to equip them with skills, experience, and self-esteem necessary for their successful reintegration into society upon release.
- Ensure that working conditions and hours for prisoners resemble as closely as possible those of similar work outside of prisons and are under no circumstances exploitative or afflictive.
- Ensure that prisoners receive decent and equitable compensation for their work, with a clearly defined and transparent process for calculating and establishing rates of remuneration.
- Enforce the 2020 Ministry of Justice regulation that prescribes that prisoners receive 70% of the profits from the work they are assigned.
- Conduct regular inspections of prisons, investigate all allegations of human rights violations related to prison labor, publicly report on the findings, and adequately compensate victims of abuses.
- Ensure that prisoners have access to meaningful programs of education and vocational training that are in line with their individual needs, take into account their social and economic backgrounds, and are best suited to their reintegration into society.

### Access to the outside world

- Ensure prisoners are able to effectively communicate with their families, friends, and lawyers at regular intervals through visits, correspondence, and telecommunications.
- Ensure there is no unlawful or arbitrary interference in prisoners' privacy during both in-person and remote visits from their family members.

- Ensure the privacy and confidentiality of all communications between prisoners and their lawyers.
- Ensure that prisoners have regular access to daily newspapers, magazines, books, and other cultural, recreational, or educational material.
- Ensure that no undue restrictions are imposed on the type of available books and other publications that prisoners wish to read and/or consult.

#### Opportunities for recreation

- Ensure that adequate recreational and cultural activities, including sports and arts, are provided for prisoners to maintain and improve their well-being and promote their social reintegration.

#### Prison complaints procedures

- Ensure that, upon admission, prisoners are provided with information about their rights, prison rules, and complaint procedures.
- Ensure that the prison complaint system entails both internal and external mechanisms.
- Ensure that prisoners can file complaints anonymously and that all complaints are examined, thoroughly investigated, and adequately resolved.
- Ensure that prisoners are not subjected to any acts of reprisals from prison authorities or fellow prisoners in connection with complaints they have filed.
- Ensure that complaint procedures are accessible to prisoners with disabilities, and language and literacy challenges.
- Publish regular and comprehensive statistical information concerning the number of complaints filed against prison authorities, investigations conducted, and disciplinary or other measures taken against wrongdoers.

## **Recommendations to the National Human Rights Commission of Thailand (NHRCT)**

- Request and perform regular visits to all prisons and correctional facilities to assess conditions and make recommendation to relevant authorities to bring conditions of detention in line with international standards.
- Publish findings related to visits to prison facilities in a timely manner and provide public regular updates on issues raised during such visits.
- Ensure that all complaints made to the NHRCT about the prison system are investigated and resolved promptly and with appropriate remedies.
- Provide technical assistance in the training of prison staff on international standards on prison conditions.

## Recommendations to the international community

- Urge the Thai government to increase efforts to address and resolve the issue of overcrowding in prisons by finding sustainable and effective measures to reduce the prison population.
- Urge the Thai government to improve conditions in prisons to be in line with the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners and the UN Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders, particularly with regard to the amount of space allocated per prisoner, sanitation facilities, the availability of adequate health-care, and prison labor.
- Urge the Thai government to honor commitments made during its second and third UPR, including by granting the NHRCT and the Ombudsman unfettered access to all prisons.
- Provide the necessary technical assistance and training to prison staff on Thailand's international human rights obligations and relevant international standards relating to prison conditions and the treatment of prisoners.

## Report partner

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**Union for Civil Liberty (UCL)** is the first human rights organization in Thailand. It was founded in 1973 to advocate for, promote, and protect human rights and democracy. It has been working to: monitor human rights violations, government policies, laws, and actions; study and disseminate human rights knowledge and information; provide legal aid to disadvantaged and marginalized people through a nationwide network of human rights lawyers; and conduct campaigns for human rights and democracy, together with other human rights groups, organizations, and networks.

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IN COLLABORATION WITH



March 2025 | N°840a

## Thailand.

### Annual prison report 2025

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FIDH

**DESIGN:**

FIDH/CB

**COVER PHOTO:**

Inmates exercise on the grounds of the Central Correctional Institution for Drug Addicts in Bangkok on 5 July 2022.

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**Dépôt légal** mars 2025 - FIDH (English ed.) = ISSN 2225-1804 -  
Fichier informatique conforme à la loi du 6 janvier 1978  
(Déclaration N°330 675)

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SUPPORTED BY



This publication is supported by Agence Française de Développement (AFD) and the European Union. Nevertheless, the ideas and opinions presented should not be construed as representing the views of AFD and the EU.

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