

RECOMMENDATIONS EMERGING FROM THE CASE-STUDY ON PRISONERS' CONTACT WITH THE OUTSIDE WORLD IN MYANMAR¹

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1. The principle of equality before the law should be respected to ensure that visiting opportunities for prisoners are provided equally.
2. Attending to the experiences and concerns of prisoners, families, lawyers and prison officers involved in contact situations is crucial for sensible and sustainable policy-making.
3. Prisoners should never be held incommunicado, and policies should be implemented that ensure family members are informed of arrest, detention and transfers as quickly as possible.
4. Prisoners should be held in locations as close to their families as possible. Transfers to far off locations should never be used as a disciplinary sanction or punishment.
5. It is important to better understand the reasons some prisoners do not get visits.
6. Myanmar Prisons Department should develop interventions to reduce the vulnerability of prisoners who do not get visits with focus on the poorest prisoners.
7. A minimum of 30 minutes per visit should be permitted regularly and, where possible, longer. Visits should always be a right and not a privilege and never be withheld for punitive or disciplinary reasons.
8. It is important to differentiate between prisoners. Most prisoners are not high risk and are not a threat to security. Visiting procedures should reflect this – e.g. by allowing contact visits, family days, telephone conversations etc.
9. The physical space for visits matters and the right infrastructure can make a significant contribution to meaningful contact. Investment in visiting rooms, waiting areas etc, therefore, is to be encouraged. New investment should not be limited to urban centres. Additionally, it is important to document the intended and unintended consequences of new facilities.
10. Exploitative practices in labour camps should be discontinued, but progressive policies that facilitate good quality access to family members should be further developed and implemented in other places of detention.
11. Outdated laws and procedures concerning prisoners' contact with the outside world should be reviewed and reformed.
12. Serious consideration should be given to wider questions about the politics and practice of punishment that impact on contact rights, e.g. the development of decarceration strategies.

¹ Conducted by Justice For All law Firm with DIGNITY, as part of the *Legacies of Detention in Myanmar* research and capacity building project (supported by the Consultative Research Committee on Development Research of the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs). For more information on the research project and full report see <https://legacies-of-detention.org/>