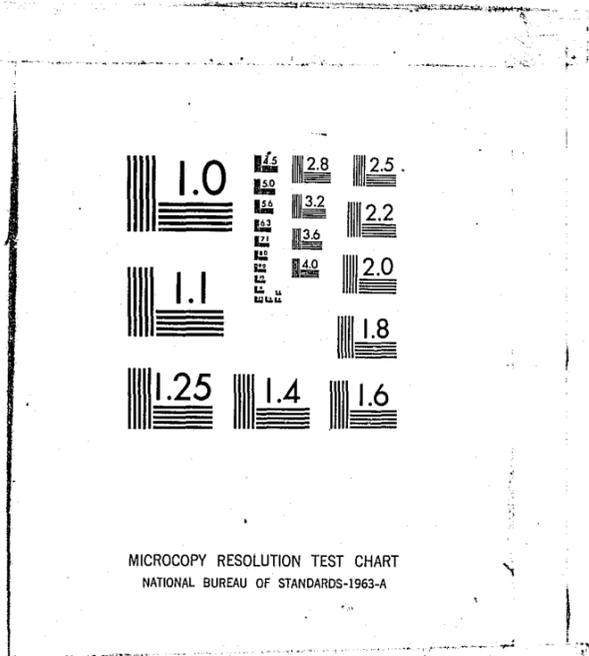


National Criminal Justice Reference Service



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NATIONAL COUNCIL ON CRIME AND DELINQUENCY  
Information Center

INTERNATIONAL RATES OF IMPRISONMENT

by

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1979

U.S. Department of Justice  
National Institute of Justice

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INTERNATIONAL RATES OF IMPRISONMENT

The statistical information in this listing has been derived from various sources, as no single document provides all the relevant data. For each country, all adult inmates are included in imprisonment figures, i.e., all jail and prison inmates, both sentenced and unsentenced.

The Republic of South Africa apparently has the world's highest rate of imprisonment. With 100,000 adult inmates in prisons and jails and a population of 25 million, the imprisonment rate is 400 per 100,000 population. However, many of the inmates are considered political prisoners.

Source: Midgley, James. "Two studies of the politics of penal change in South Africa." Howard Journal of Penology and Crime Prevention (Little London, England), 16(1):32-42, 1977.

The U.S.S.R. is variously estimated to have 1 million inmates. On the basis of a population of 255 million, this means an imprisonment rate of 391 per 100,000 population. The majority of inmates are regarded as political offenders.

Source: Juviler, Peter H. Revolutionary law and order: politics and social change in the USSR. New York, The Free Press, 1976. 274 p.

On December 31, 1977, the United States had 290,547 prison inmates and in February 1978, 158,394 inmates in jails, for a combined figure of 448,941 inmates, or a rate of 208 per 100,000 population. Few inmates can be regarded as political offenders and the U.S. thus has the world's highest rate of imprisonment for the

common criminal.

Source: Prison statistics--U.S. National Criminal Justice Information and Statistics Service. Prisoners in state and federal institutions on December 31, 1977: advance report. April, 1978.

Jail statistics--U.S. National Criminal Justice Information and Statistics Service. Census of jails and survey of jail inmates 1978. Washington, D.C., 1979. 3 p.

In 1976, the average prison population in Great Britain (England and Wales) was 41,443, or 84 per 100,000 population. Of the inmate population, 86 percent were criminal prisoners under sentence, 8 percent were untried prisoners, and 4 percent were convicted persons awaiting sentencing.

Source: Information received from Great Britain Home Office.

In 1976, West Germany had 37,000 inmates and a population of 62 million. The rate of imprisonment per 100,000 was 60.

Source: Kunert, Karl-Heinz. "Alternativen zum Freiheitsentzug nach deutschem Recht" (Alternatives to imprisonment in German law). Bewahrungshilfe (Bonn, West Germany), 25(1):23-36, 1978.

On January 1, 1976, France had a total of 29,482 persons in detention. Of the total, 18,463 were sentenced inmates and 11,019 were unsentenced. The combined incarceration rate per 100,000 population was 56.

Source: France. Direction de l'Administration Penitentiaire. Rapport general sur l'exercice: 1975. Paris, 1977. 240 p.

The 1977 rate of incarceration in Denmark, of sentenced and unsentenced inmates combined, was 54 per 100,000. Of the total, 23 percent were awaiting trial.

Source: Information received from Justitsministeriet, Direktoratet for Kriminalforsorgen.

On January 1, 1978, there were 3,335 inmates in institutions in Sweden, of which 2,737 were prison inmates and 598 were unsentenced ("jail") inmates. The number of sentenced inmates per 100,000 population was 34 and the number of sentenced and unsentenced inmates combined per 100,000 was 40.

Source: Information received from Kriminalvardsstyrelsen (National Prison and Probation Administration, Research and Development Unit).

On December 12, 1975, The Netherlands had 859 inmates in prisons and 1,497 in jails, for a combined incarceration rate of 22 per 100,000, the world's lowest rate of imprisonment.

Source: Netherlands Central Bureau of Statistics.

The following statistics represent prison populations and imprisonment rates for various countries per 100,000 population as of January 1, 1974.

<u>Country</u>	<u>Prison Population</u>	<u>Rate Per 100,000 Population</u>
Columbia	31,096	178
Venezuela	16,654	151
Israel	4,503	137
Thailand	48,209	133
Fiji	688	124
Jamaica	2,311	121
Morocco	16,335	108
Austria	7,784	104
Finland	4,706	101
Sri Lanka	12,825	98
Canada	20,712	95
Sierra Leone	2,324	88
Trinidad & Tobago	896	86
West Germany	50,519	81
United Kingdom	41,722	75
Australia	9,268	70
Syrian Arab Republic	4,574	69
Belgium	5,610	58
Dahomey	1,612	55
Denmark	2,709	54
Philippines	20,746	53
France	27,100	52
Portugal	3,772	44
Japan	46,083	43
Sweden	3,538	43
Nigeria	24,673	42
Norway	1,544	39
Malaysia	4,037	37
India	206,100	36
United States (no jail data available for 1974)		

Source: United Nations. Fifth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders. The treatment of offenders, in custody or in the community, with special reference to the implementation of the Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners adopted by the United Nations. New York, 1975. 77 p.

**END**