

# Prisons Around the World

At the beginning of the module, we saw that justice is a social construction. Each society is different. Prisons are the result of how each society chooses to punish people who do not comply with the established social contract. For this reason, prisons around the world are so different.

In some countries, prisons are horrible places. **Inmates** live in **overcrowded** cells like in Haiti's Civil Prison, *El Buen Pastor* Women's prison in Bogota, where each cell is filled up with 20 inmates, or The Maula prison in Lilongwe, Malawi, in Africa where almost 200 prisoners can be crammed into a cell suitable for 60 people. In other countries, especially in northern Europe, prisons want the inmates to rejoin society when they finish their sentence.

For this reason, prisons are places where criminals rehabilitate. The cells in prisons of countries like Norway, Germany, Denmark, or Sweden, are comfortable single or double bedrooms with TV, private toilet, musical instruments, some even have video games.

Prisons around the world differ in their conditions and treatment of inmates. Some countries, have prisons with overcrowded cells, providing harsh living conditions for inmates. Certain northern European countries such as Norway, Germany, Denmark, and Sweden, focus on rehabilitation, offering more comfortable and humane conditions for prisoners.

Horrible place

The "social contract" is the established agreement within a society that outlines the expectations and obligations of its members.

## After Reading

1. According to the text how are prisons around the world different?

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2. What does the "social contract" have to do with the amount of people in a cell?

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3. In which of the two categories of the text are prisons in your country?

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