



**SOS CARE**

SPORTS ORGANIZATION FOR  
SUSTAINABLE CARE AND ASSISTANCE  
TO RESOCIALIZATION ENGINEERING

## **PRISONS IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA**



*The House of Arrest and Correction of Abidjan (MACA) in Côte d'Ivoire*

Prisons or penitentiary institutions, or commonly known as the prison worlds in sub-saharan Africa, harbour in their premises persons who are either in pre-trial detention or have been sentenced for various crimes.

### **The injustice of pre-trial detention**

Also, the one who is in preventive detention, although potentially not guilty (in application of the presumption of innocence) is in the same universe that the condemned and often for a long period. They are called the forgotten ones of the system.

### **Children born from prisoners in prison**

We also have the phenomenon of children born in prison. The neither prisoners nor are they free. Because they were born in prison to imprisoned mothers, they are bound to remain there until the end of the sentences of their female genitors.



**OPADD**

ORGANISATION FOR THE PROGRESS OF AFRICA'S DURABLE DEVELOPMENT  
ORGANISATION POUR LE PROGRES DE L'AFRIQUE ET SON DEVELOPPEMENT DURABLE

### **Example: The House of Arrest and Correction of Abidjan (MACA) in Côte d'Ivoire**

Very young children live with their mother at the house of Arrest and Correction of Abidjan (MACA), where some are born. Neither prisoners nor free, they are not referenced under any title of incarceration because they have obviously committed no crime or offense. Administratively, they have no status. *(Reportage)*

Maëlis, 7 months, born in detention; Samaké, 2, entered detention at the age of 6 months. Marie-Yvonne, 1 year, born in detention ... While going through the prison records, we found prisoners in the situation to say the least disconcerting.

In fact, in Côte d'Ivoire, sixteen children who do not possess any title of detention live in the thirty-four prisons in the country.

This is a paradox of the Ivorian Penal Code. The Article 48 states that "a pregnant woman sentenced to deprivation of liberty shall be sentenced to a minimum of eight weeks after confinement". But sadly, at the Ministry of Justice, it is difficult to justify the presence of these women and their newborns in detention in prison. "An article unknown to the magistrates", "a law little applied", "the judge has the last word" ... Officially nonexistent, these children are thus the forgotten when the budgets allocated to food or health.

### **Illegal detention for children over two years**

Yelling, crying ... The first time he saw a chicken on the way to school, Emmanuel ran away. What about his schooling? Every morning, a volunteer from an association comes to pick up one of the children at MACA to drive him to school and bring him back at night.



*Overcrowded prison in sub-Saharan Africa*

A complex scenario in term of logistics since the prison opens at 10am when the school starts at 8am. Technically, they are not prisoners, but they remain subject to prison time," laments Christelle. Today, the program has stopped due to lack of funding. Asked about the presence of these children in prison, the director of MACA, assumes the situation ... illegal. "Based on the law, children over two years cannot stay in detention. But in practice, many women want to stay with their child, so we leave them. "



*Women incarcerated with newborns in sub-Saharan prisons*

What about article 48 which prohibits the presence of pregnant women in prison?  
The speech is the same as the ministry

*Jeune Afrique Survey, November 16, 2016*

### **The overpopulation**

Planned to house a specific number of individuals, prisons in Africa are facing the fact of exponential overpopulation.

The case of the House of Arrest and Correction of Abidjan (MACA) is the prototype. Built in 1980 to accommodate 1,500 inmates, MACA now has more than 5,000. Based on the ICRC's report, most African prisons are facing an overcrowding of about 300%, a situation that has huge consequences for detainees.

### **Precariousness and health**

These ever-growing numbers require full support in terms of food, social, safety and medical care.

The medical aspect deserves special attention, especially as idleness could lead to health risks for this prison population.

However, in general, almost all prisons and correction houses receive a state subsidy for the care of prisoners. A large part is devoted to the following components: Food, Safety, medical care.

## The call for Solidarity

Abidjan, January 16, 2019

[ICRC](#) President Peter Maurer called on political authorities in Africa and other continents, civil society and the international community to be more engaged and involved in improving prison conditions.



ICRC President Peter Maurer

*"I call on political authorities, civil society and the community international community to more commitment and involvement in improving the system of detention in prisons in Africa and other continents. We need political will and reform of the prison system," wished Mr. Peter Maurer.*

*He mentioned some difficulties in prison. In particular, prison overcrowding is a source of deterioration in the health and malnutrition of prisoners and the stigmatization of the prisoner by society.*

*Mr. P. Maurer also made proposals to alleviate prison overcrowding, reform the criminal justice system, ensure pre-trial detention, provide vocational training to detainees during their detention. It also aims to encourage civil society to become involved in the reintegration of prisoners, diversify the sources of funding for donors and train prison officers in international detention standards. "*

## **The contribution of OPADD**

We have heard the call and we refuse to remain indifferent.

### **Legal Aid**

In agreement with the communes and prefectures and sub-prefecture, OPADD shall set up judicial cells to record the cases of abusive, illegal detentions in order to seek justice. It will involve students and professionals from the judiciary field. The objective remains the improvement of the judicial system.

### **Establishment of preventive detention centers**

To restore the dignity to those who are in preventive detention by putting him in a special compartment. OPADD will build this less coercive detention area within prisons.

### **Bring assistance to children of prisoners born in prison**

OPADD will find families for the children born in prisons.

It is a civic operation of African solidarity. OPADD will give a grant and will take care of the child's social and educational follow-up.

Good health in prisons. A wise man said, "To smile is healthy for the body."

### **Medical Health Care**

The goal here is to create the conditions for prevention and to improve the medical health care system. Improvement of the technical platform and athletic conditioning.

### **Prevention**

Yet with the prevention and especially the practice of sport on all its components, some pathologies could decrease or disappear within this prison population. (Hypertension, diabetes, obesity, depression etc.)

On the basis of this general observation, the program of the OPADD called SOS CARE, which aims to humanize the prison life and the well-being of the prisoner through the practice of sport and other resocialization activities, has decided to lead actions to improve the well-being of prisoners and thus prepare their future social reintegration.

### **From preparation to insertion**

The non-preparation of the insertion of the prisoners is the ferment of a return to crime.

OPADD will set up educational and professional workshops in prisons:

- ⇒ Carpentry
- ⇒ Welding
- ⇒ Masonry
- ⇒ Agriculture
- ⇒ Landscapist
- ⇒ Mechanics etc.

So many professions for a true insertion.

OPADD will finance insertions in the form of SMEs - SMIs, agricultural companies, formation centers for the prevention of minor offenses.

**In conclusion**

The call of the ICRC President is a responsibility for all; we will not wait for the state to bend under the weight of common responsibilities. We will act with its blessing, together with you and us.

Let’s get to work, long live human dignity.

