

## Recommendations on Prisoners Rights

- Proper monitoring mechanisms to ensure that guidelines and judicial decisions relating to prisoners are implemented.
- While prisoners serve their terms their inner creativity should be developed so that when they are released they can be more easily integrated into society. It was stressed that with a view to affording greater access and interaction with the family the criteria for giving parole should be relaxed.
- Urgent steps should be initiated to reduce the delays in bringing prisoners to trial.
- Comprehensive measures should be adopted to reduce overcrowding in jails.
- Long-serving jail officials should be posted to other departments.
- Legal aid should be given to an accused at the first point of contact with the police.
- The right of a prisoner to see a lawyer of his/her choice should be ensured. Meetings with the lawyer may be subject to reasonable regulation as to time and place but not held within the hearing of prison officials.
- Human rights education should be compulsory for the police and other law enforcement officers.
- The old concepts of prison should no longer be seen as central to the criminal justice system. Alternatives to custodial sentences should be adopted - for instance, community service such as in Canada, Britain and some other countries.
- Change in the attitude and culture of the police is imperative.
- Measures should be adopted to ensure freedom of communication between the prisoner and members of his/her family who should be permitted periodic visits under conditions which while safeguarding security do not impair privacy of communication.
- Provisions should be made for effective informal mechanisms for redress of human rights violations of prisoners, as for example, the Independent Complaints commission set up in South Africa to investigate serious complaints against the police.
- Stringent penalties should be imposed for the practice of torture and custodial violence. Such offences should be tried by a senior judicial officer.
- Provisions should be enacted for the award of compensation to prisoners who have been victims of human rights violations by police and jail officials.
- Provision should be made for examination and treatment of prisoners by independent doctors.

- Provisions should be enacted for co-ordination between NGOs, human rights organisations, jail officials and legal aid committees.
- UN Minimum Standard Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners should be incorporated into the domestic criminal justice system.