

# Reintegration of convicts Class 8

## *Long-Term Prisoners*



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# *Long-Term Prisoners*

- ▶ Sentences for more serious crimes are longer than others
- ▶ The number of long-term prisoners in the world is growing
  
- ▶ This trend is confirmed by the US data (available on the website of the Bureau of Justice Statistics) as well as by European records (data sent by all member states for the Council of Europe Annual Penal Statistics SPACE I).
- ▶ The same tendency can be observed in Poland. Polish statistics (kept by the Central Board of Prison Service) show an increase in the number of long-term prisoners, especially those serving the longest sentences.

# *Long-Term Prisoners*

- ▶ Criminology literature rarely addresses long-term prisoners – they relate to very narrow issues such as their contacts with the outside world or work.
- ▶ There is little focus on the length of imprisonment itself, which comes up only as a secondary issue in various studies on murderers who typically serve long-term sentences
- ▶ In the US there are many articles dedicated to long-term prisoners and their specific problems, different from the problems of prisoners with shorter sentences.

Although all inmates suffer from restricted contact with family and friends outside the prison, long-term prisoners fear that such relationships will be completely lost.

- ▶ Long-term inmates are also concerned about their physical and mental condition while in prison as they sense that they have lost control over experiences that make life worth living.
- ▶ Another issue is possibility of continuing education or work - which is easier for short-term prisoners.
- ▶ Rehabilitation process of long-term inmates should:
  1. maximize their opportunities for choice within the prison environment,
  2. create opportunities for the inmate to cultivate meaningful experiences and activities while in prison,
  3. and provide opportunities for the inmate to maintain contact with life and relationships outside the prison

# *Adaptation to prison*

- ▶ Adaptation to prison isolation of long-term prisoners is an extremely individual matter
- ▶ It might be due to the fact that you can get a long-term sentence for committing a relatively wide range of crimes and the measure of such penalty is also very wide.
- ▶ For a prisoner good adaptation means he will serve his time in the most comfortable way and will try to abide the law and all rules.
- ▶ Polish long-term prisoners experience similar problems as inmates in the USA, Canada or Western Europe.
- ▶ They face same problems (e.g. lack of ideas from the Prison Service what to do with them, postponing their cases to „later”, prisoners becoming too familiar with prison conditions, resulting in fear of leaving prison after serving their sentences).



# *Definition of long-term penalty*

- ▶ There is no legal definition of long-term punishment and long-term prisoners
- ▶ Scientist can't agree on that
- ▶ Whilst there is no official definition of how long a person needs to spend in prison to be classified as a 'long-term' prisoner or „long-term” penalty, The Council of Europe decided that **all sentences over 5 years of imprisonment or more imprisonment should be considered as long-term penalties**



# *Long-term penalties in Poland*

▶ Penalties are enumerated in a Polish Criminal Code **in art. 32.**

1. Fine
2. Limitation of liberty
3. Imprisonment (from 1 month to 15 years)
4. 25 years of imprisonment
5. Life sentence

▶ So according to The Council of Europe, Long-term penalties in Poland are:

1. **Imprisonment (from 5 years and more)-** prisoners can apply for parole *after serving at least half of the penalty (recidivists after serving 2/3 of the penalty and multi-recidivists after serving 3/4 of the penalty)*
2. **25 years of imprisonment-** prisoners can apply for parole *after 15 years of imprisonment*
3. **Life sentence-** prisoners can apply for parole *after serving minimum 25 years of their sentence (or more- it depends on court but minimum is 25 years).*

# *The Prison Service statistics*

\* Primary data source - Central Board of Prison Service Statistics

The image shows a screenshot of the website for the Polish Prison Service (Służba Więzienna). The header features the logo on the left, the mission statement in the center, and a search bar on the right. A navigation menu is located below the header, with 'STATYSTYKA' highlighted. A breadcrumb trail shows 'Strona główna > Statystyka'. The main content area is titled 'Statystyka' and contains five dark blue buttons with white text and right-pointing arrows:

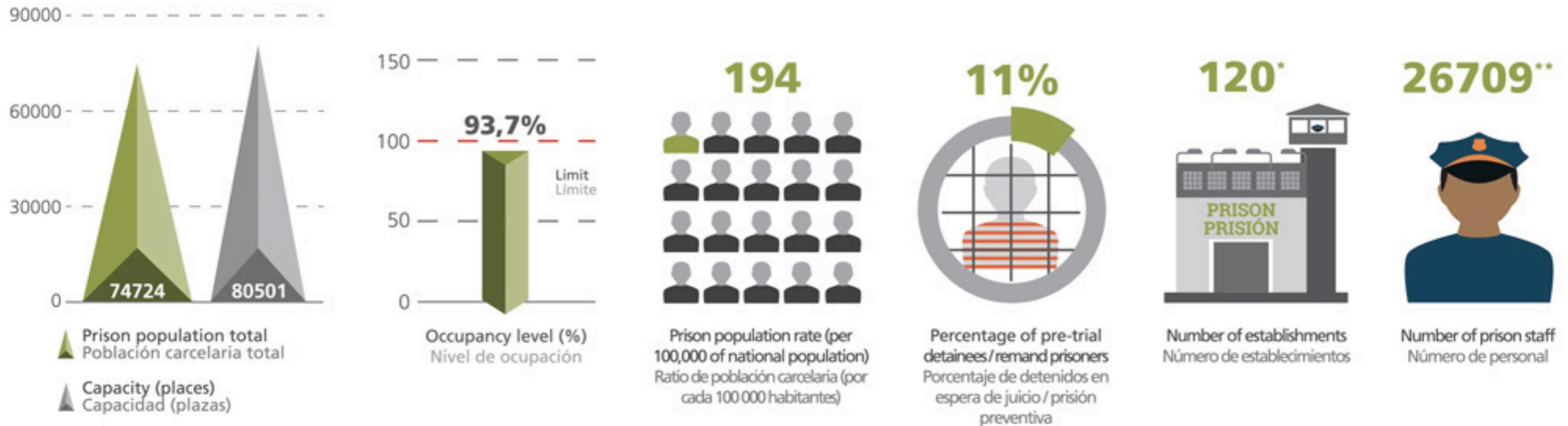
- Informacja o zaludnieniu aresztów śledczych i zakładów karnych
- Statystyka miesięczna
- Statystyka kwartalna
- Statystyka roczna
- Przeznaczenie aresztów śledczych i zakładów karnych

# *Prison population*

- \* The prison population and overall occupancy density are published every two weeks.
- \* The penitentiary administration has a computerized record keeping
  
- \* Currently, as of 31 May 2021, the number of prisoners in prisons and pre-trial detention centres is 74,724 for a capacity of 80,501 places.
- \* Prison population rate (per 100,000 of national population) 194  
Date : 2021  
Source : The World Prison Brief
- \* Average length of imprisonment (in months): 5.6
- \* Prisoners live in a single or multi-person cells, the majority being two and three-person cells. The conditions for serving a sentence vary depending on the type of prison: closed, semi-open, and open.
- \* In July 2018, the Council of Europe's Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT) published the report on their visit to Poland in May 2017.
- \* The Committee reiterates its call upon the Polish authorities to raise the minimum standard of living space per prisoner to at least 4 m<sup>2</sup>.
  
- The space for one prisoner should be [at least 3 square meters](#) (art. 110 § 2 Executive Penal Code). However, in certain circumstances, the Executive Penal Code allows putting a prisoner in a smaller cell, as long as there is [not less than two square meters per prisoner](#) (art. 110 § 2a Executive Penal Code).

# Prison population

## Poland: overview of the prison system Polonia: panorama del sistema penitenciario



\* Includes prisons and detention centers | Incluye cárceles y centros de detención

\*\* Number of prison officers. In addition, there are 1990 civilian employees. | Número de oficiales penitenciarios. Además, hay 1990 empleados civiles.

# *Long-term prisoners*

Number of long-term prisoners: 10,705 (14.5%)

Number of people condemned to life sentence: According to the data provided by Central Board of Prison Service as of 31 December 2021, 461 prisoners were serving life sentence (including 15 women).

Number of people condemned to 25 years of imprisonment: 1 708 prisoners were serving 25 years of imprisonment (including 64 women).

\* In the years 2009 – 2020 the number of prisoners serving 25 years of imprisonment has increased by over 200 prisoners, and at the same time the number of life sentenced prisoners has increased by almost a half

A long sentence is considered as such from 5 years.

Sentences can not be cumulated.  
According to Polish law, penalties cannot be cumulated. The court can apply absorption of penalties or combine them.

Life-sentenced prisoners are also allowed to work (inside the prison)

# *England and Wales*

Two types of life sentences:

Normal Life sentences & Mandatory life sentences

**Normal life sentence:** when a judge passes a life sentence, they must specify the minimum term an offender must spend in prison before becoming eligible to apply for parole (sometimes called the tariff).

**Mandatory life sentence:** Parliament has decided that judges must give a life sentence to all offenders found guilty of murder. The judge will set a minimum term an offender must serve before they can be considered for release by the [Parole Board](#).

**Whole life order:** for the most serious cases of murder, an offender may be sentenced to a life sentence with a 'whole life order.' This means that their crime was so serious that they will never be released from prison. As of 30 June 2020 there were 63 whole-life prisoners.

# *Life sentence - USA*

1. **LWP (Life with Parole)**- prisoners can apply for Parole
2. **LWOP (Life without Parole)**- prisoners must spend the rest of their life in prison.
3. **Virtual Life**- Virtual life sentences are sentences with a term of years that exceed an individual's natural life expectancy. Sentences of 50 years or more.

▶ The United States stands alone as the only nation that sentences people to life without parole for crimes committed before turning 18.

▶ Approximately 2,500 children have been sentenced to **juvenile life without parole (JLWOP)** in the United States.

# *LWOP/Death penalty*

1. LWOP is a sentencing alternative in all 27 states that practice the death penalty
2. A sentence of life without parole means exactly what it says—those convicted of crimes are locked away in prison until they die

- ▶ There is no death penalty in Poland. Abolition of the death penalty is now a requirement of EU membership. Poland abolished capital punishment in 1997, but the last execution was in 1988.
- ▶ For now, Polish criminal code doesn't permit life sentence without parole either- but the government is working on the amendment which will add that life sentence without parole. It will also remove 25-year prison sentence from the criminal code

# *Psychological Effects of Long Term Incarceration*

*Living in prison environment means that they must learn to conform to the rules not only of the prison itself, but also of the other prisoners that make up their whole world.*

1. As a result, nonviolent offenders may experience anxiety and changes in their personality as well as changes in their judgment making.
2. The length of the prison sentences in these situations is important because those with long sentences are “unable to avoid witnessing some traumatizing events”.
3. These events leave them psychologically damaged and change the way they view other human beings.

# ***Psychological Effects of Long Term Incarceration***

***Leaving prison for an environment that is so different outside of its walls can lead to overwhelming feelings of confusion and frustration that causes the former inmates to further distance themselves from society.***

1. The structure that they were forced to abide by in prison is no longer present and because they were not exposed to anything outside of this structure, they leave unprepared for the changes that have occurred in the world and the challenges that they will face upon their release.

# *Psychological Effects of Long Term Incarceration*

For prisoners with long term sentences, the possibility of seeing the world outside of their cells can be both exciting and discouraging at the same time.

1. The monotonous life they live in the strictly structured world of incarceration may sometimes feel to them like a nightmare that they are unable to wake up from.
2. The chaotic fast world they face when they finally leave their nightmare is often times more intimidating than anything they have ever had to deal with.
3. Observations of prisoners who were close to their release times revealed that they often experienced anxiety, restlessness, irritability, and inability to sleep; researchers found that these emotions were caused by the fear of being unprepared for the outside world

# *Psychological Effects of Long Term Incarceration*

Prisoners with long term sentences must change the way they socialize with others and the way they make decisions to survive.

1. Social skills that they learn in prison (with other inmates) are not acceptable when they re-enter society.
2. They must re-learn how to behave and even how to talk.
3. Something as simple as using less profanity or interacting with the opposite sex is difficult for them because they did not use these skills for so long that they forget them
4. For many of them, the problem is not that they have forgotten how to use their social skills; it is that they were never able to use them before and so they never learned how.

# *My study*

I also conducted study among long-term prisoners (in 2020 & 2021). I visited Strzelce Opolskie Prison, Wołów Prison and Rawicz Prison.

1. I did very detailed and extensive case studies of 189 long-term prisoners.
2. Each prisoner received the same set of questions and in addition I asked them about their future/ their plans for the first day after release.
3. The prisoners who participated in my research turned out to be in good physical and mental condition. Most of them stay in touch with families and have plans for the future (even lifers).
4. Life sentence prisoners gave the best, the most elaborate answers. They were the most cooperative and willing to help
5. The real problem is somewhere else – a lot of them are afraid of the life outside prison and thinking about the end of their sentence scares them instead of giving them wings.
6. The interviews revealed that a lot of the inmates have serious concerns about their future outside the prison walls.

# ***Task to complete***

Answer this question briefly (in a few words):

- Q1: Does it seem possible that some inmates may continue to commit criminal acts in prison just to avoid being released into an unknown and unfamiliar world??