



REPORT ON THE INSPECTION OF GHANA'S PRISONS.

PRISONS SETTLEMENT CAMPS AND POLICE CELLS

1996 - 1997

ORGANISED BY

COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND ADMINISTRATIVE JUSTICE

Report on the Inspection of Ghana's Prisons, Prison Settlement Camps and Police Cells (1996-1997)

INTRODUCTION

Article 15 (a) of Ghana's Fourth Republican Constitution (1992) provides that "the dignity of all persons shall be inviolable". Article 15 (b) also provides that "no person shall whether he is arrested, restricted or detained, be subject to torture or condition that detracts or is likely to detract from his dignity and worth as a human being". In pursuance of these values, Ghana's Commission On Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ) has, since 1995, been inspecting the country's prisons, prison settlement camps and police cells annually to ensure that the dignity and rights of persons in prison are not violated. Specifically, the objective of the inspections is to identify and highlight for redress any violations of the rights of persons incarcerated in the country's penal system.

This report covers the inspection exercises of 1996 and 1997. Even though issues covered during the inspections, as well as the observations and recommendations contained in this report may not differ significantly from those made after the 1995 exercise, it is important to highlight the observations, concerns and commitment shown by our officers at our Regional Directorates who conducted the exercise in the regions. For this reason, we have published the findings region by region. This will also facilitate reference to regional peculiarities. The CHRAJ has, during the inspection exercises of 1996 and 1997, been confronted with issues such as claims of wrongful imprisonment resulting from prisoners' inability to afford legal counsel in defense against wrongful accusations and charges and the improper burial of dead prisoners.

The 1996 and 1997 exercises also unearthed certain issues which indicate that attitudes held by some prison and police officers are highly negative towards the rights of prisoners and persons in police custody. These attitudes cannot be blamed fully on the officers in charge of the prisons and police cells visited. Rather, the magnitude of the problem may reflect the general apathy characteristic of the government bureaucracy and larger society concerning the rights of prisoners and accused persons.

For instance, many police officers at several police stations claimed ignorance of the recent increase in the feeding allowance of prison inmates and suspects in police cells. In addition, the office of the Attorney General was not aware of the 1995 Prisons Inspection Report though that office was one of the first institutions to be served with the report and extracts of the report were publicized widely in both the state and private media.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Under the terms of reference issued by the Commissioner, Regional Directors of the Commission were to lead their teams, as in the previous exercises, to the prisons within their jurisdiction and take note of the following:

- (a) particulars of inmates who have been remanded in prison custody for more than five years;
- (b) particulars of any juvenile in an adult prison ;
- (c) particulars of pregnant women and babies in prison;
- (d) particulars of any persons with mental disability held in prison instead of a psychiatric hospital;
- (e) the feeding situation in the prisons;
- (f) the health and medical situation of prisoners in relation to the "Cash and Carry" Policy of the Ministry of Health;
- (g) whether there have been any improvements in the conditions, which obtained in the prisons since the first exercise.

The report on conditions in Ghana's prisons, settlement camps and police cells is presented regionally as follows: General, Brong Ahafo, Upper East, Upper West, Northern, Volta, Greater Accra, Eastern, Ashanti and Western.

REGIONAL REPORTS

1. CENTRAL - 1996

The Central Region has three prisons and three settlement camps, all of which were inspected. They are:

1. *Anomabu Prison*
2. *Winneba Prison*
3. *Contagious Diseases Prison, Ankaful*
4. *Ankaful settlement camp*
5. *Osamkrom Camp Prison*
6. *Awutu Camp Prison*

All the above are male prisons

POPULATION OF INMATES

1. ANOMABU PRISON

➤ convicted prisoners	189
➤ remand prisoners	<u>43</u>
	<u>242</u>

There is an acute lack of accommodation; all 43 remand prisoners share one small cell. Eight of the remand prisoners were being tried regularly at the courts. There was one lodger prisoner and one debtor prisoner.

2. WINNEBA PRISON

Date of Inspection - 23rd July 1996.

➤ Convicted Prisoners	-	129
➤ Remand	-	55

Here too, all the remand prisoners were accommodated in one small cell owing to lack of accommodation.

ANKAFUL CONTAGIOUS DISEASES PRISON

Date of Inspection: 12th July 1996

- Leprosy Patients - 2
- Tuberculosis - 47

3. ANKAFUL SETTLEMENT CAMP

Date of Inspection: 23rd July 1996

- Convicted Prisoners - 263

4. OSAMKROM SETTLEMENT CAMP

Date of Inspection: 12th July 1996

- Convicted Prisoners - 55

5. AWUTU SETTLEMENT CAMP

Date of Inspection: 23rd July 1996

- Convicted Prisoners - 61

PRISONERS WITH MENTAL DISABILITY

Apart from the Anomabu Prison, none of the other Prisons had any prisoners with mental disability.

REMAND PRISONERS

There were in all ten prisoners who had been remanded in custody for more than five years. The names and the dates on which these persons were first remanded are as follows:

1. Kwabena Osei - 1985
2. Korbla Attipoe - 1986

3. Dickson R. Ackah	-	8 th November, 1988
4. Simon Kofi Kumi	-	1988
5. Richard Ofori	-	1988
6. Kwesi Assan	-	1988
7. Kodwo Boakye	-	1988
8. Kodwo Manso	-	1990
9. Kofi Essan	-	1990

JUVENILE PRISONERS

At the Anomabu Prison one juvenile prisoner, Barnabas Asare aged 15, was found serving a three-month prison term for stealing. At the time of the inspection, he had served one month in prison.

At the Winneba Prison two juvenile prisoners aged 17 were in remand custody.

GENERAL CONDITIONS

Conditions in the prisons, particularly sanitation, improved after the first inspection exercise. At the time of the current inspection, all the prisons inspected in the region had received materials for the making of clothes for prisoners.

All prisons, except the Contagious Diseases Prison, now have at least one official vehicle. Most of these vehicles were supplied after the first inspection exercise.

CONCERNS OF PRISON OFFICERS

The prison officers made the following complaints:

- The CHRAJ does not seem adequately concerned about the rights of those responsible for ensuring the welfare of prisoners
- There is a need for better work conditions for prison officers

- In the case of those at the Contagious Disease Prison, there is a need for increased protective measures to ensure the health of prison officers.

2. BRONG AHAFO 1996-1997

POPULATION OF INMATES

SUNYANI CENTRAL PRISON - At the Sunyani Central Prison there were 400 prisoners at the time of our visit. Seven of them were females.

REMAND PRISONERS

There was no inmate remanded for more than five years. However, four remand prisoners had over-stayed their periods. Their over-stayed periods range between two and eight months. The Prisons Authorities claimed that it was the duty of the Police to come for the remand Prisoners and to produce them before the courts. They had been communicating with the police to remedy the situation without success.

JUVENILES

During the Commission's last visit to the Central Prison, 15 inmates claimed to be below the ages of 18 years. According to the Prison Authorities, after the inspection of 1995, the inmates were put before a medical Board of the Sunyani Government Hospital. Only three of them were certified to be below 18 years. These 3 were subsequently sent to the Borstal Home in Accra. The rest had gone on normal discharge.

PREGNANT WOMEN

There were no pregnant women or nursing mothers in the prison.

3. UPPER EAST - 1996

POPULATION OF INMATES

NAVRONGO LOCAL PRISON

At the time of inspection there were a total of 119 prisoners. This comprised the following:

<i>Convicts</i>	-	92
<i>Remand</i>	-	20
<i>Trials</i>	-	3
<i>Condemned</i>	-	1
<i>Lifers</i>	-	1
<i>Deportees</i>	-	1

BAWKU LOCAL PRISON

<i>Convicts</i>	-	27
<i>Remand Prisoners</i>	-	1

REMAND PRISONERS

There was no prisoner who had been remanded for 5 years or more. The longest serving prisoner was one Afoluk who was admitted to the Navrongo Local Prison in 1992, released in 1993 and subsequently readmitted. He was granted ₵8 million bail by the High Court at Bolgatanga. The ₵8 million was so high that it amounted to a virtual refusal to grant bail in view of the man's means.

PRISONERS WITH MENTAL DISABILITY

The Officer in Charge of Navrongo Prison stated that he had not observed any prisoners with mental disability. Upon further investigation, the Commission

found that one prisoner had developed neurosis while in prison. One of his fellow prisoners who knew him well before their imprisonment insisted that the mental disability was present in the prisoner prior to his incarceration.

Shortly after our last inspection of the Bawku Prison on 17th August 1995, a remand prisoner, suspected to be mentally disabled, was taken by police, allegedly for treatment and brought back the same year. In a letter dated 7th October, 1995, we recommended that he should be transferred to a psychiatric hospital for treatment but he is still in prison with healthy inmates. He has been on remand since 1984 and has been at the Bawku Prison since 1992. The District Commander of Police at Bawku has ensured the Commission that he will investigate the pre-incarceration history of this prisoner and his current situation.

GENERAL CONDITIONS

There was no congestion or overcrowding. Bedding facilities had improved over the period. Paper cut outs from discarded paper boxes were no longer used by prisoners as beds and mattresses.

The turnout of prisoners was something to envy, for one could easily mistake them for artisan prison officers. Effort has been made to improve the health delivery system in the prison. A Health Superintendent has been attached to the prison and is being paid 20% of his monthly salary as risk allowance. The Bawku Presby Hospital has provided free medical treatment whenever possible, including the provision of available drugs.

POPULATION OF INMATES 1997

SUNYANI CENTRAL PRISONS (MALE)

<i>Condemned Prisoners</i>	-	2
<i>Life Imprisonment Prisoners</i>	-	1
<i>Deportee from Burkina Faso</i>	-	1
<i>Debtor Prisoners</i>	-	3
<i>Less than 3 months sentences</i>	-	2

3 months sentences	-	2
6 months sentences	-	11
1-3 years	-	78
3 years and above	-	211
Trial prisoners	-	9
Remand prisoners	-	<u>51</u>
Total		<u>371</u>

SUNYANI CENTRAL PRISONER (FEMALE)

No. of Prisoners	-	7
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GENERAL OBSERVATION

Conditions have generally improved since the last inspection in 1996. The prison inmates themselves attested to this fact.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Despite improvement in the quantity of food for the prisoners since the last visit, we recommend further improvement in the quantity of ration.
2. Training tools should be made available at all the workshops so as to enable the inmates to acquire some trade before their release from prison.

CONCLUSION

Prisoners at the two settlement camps in the region are put into productive agricultural ventures. They are physically stronger and look healthier than their counterparts at the Sunyani Central Prison. For these reasons, the CHRAJ recommends the establishment of more of such settlement camps at various centres in the region. This will help ease congestion in the main prisons as well as put these able-bodied men to productive use. The law restricting the number of

prisoners qualified to go out to the camps needs to be reviewed by the authorities.

UPPER EAST - 1997

POPULATION OF INMATES

NAVRONGO LOCAL PRISON

<i>Male convicts</i>	-	92
<i>Remand</i>	-	15
<i>Condemned</i>	-	1
<i>Lifers</i>	-	1
<i>Deportee</i>	-	1
<i>Total</i>		110

REMAND PRISONERS

Out of the fifteen remand prisoners, only four had served five months and above. Four of them are awaiting trial for murder.

The officer in-charge explained that the delay in dealing with the remand cases was caused either by the police or the Attorney General's Department. He appealed to the Commission to look into the matter so as to ensure a speedy trial and to help decongest the prison.

PRISONERS WITH MENTAL DISABILITIES

One prisoner, who has been on remand for several years, is mentally disabled. Reports on this prisoner were included in the 1995 and 1996 inspection findings.

The Prison Authorities complained that his continued detention in the prison poses a danger to the others prisoners and pleaded that the Commission takes steps to remedy the situation. The Commission has decided to bring this matter to the High Court and have the prisoner transferred to a psychiatric hospital for treatment.

BATH HOUSE

The open space provided as a bathhouse still remains the same. During the inspection of 1995, we observed that an open space besides the kitchen served as a bathroom for both male inmates and female prisoners on transit to female prisons elsewhere. Nothing has been done by way of raising boards to isolate the bath for females should they be brought to Navrongo on transit. The attention of the officer in charge was again drawn to this violation of the right to personal dignity and privacy of inmates.

GENERAL OBSERVATION

The prison environment was neatly kept and all appropriate areas disinfected.

4. UPPER WEST - 1996

The 1996 investigation findings show that conditions in the prisons had not improved, since 1995 aside from the increase in per head feeding allowance from ₵200.00 to ₵600.00.

The following recommendations were made in the 1996 report.

FEEDING

- i) *Even though there has been an increase in the prisoner's daily ration, the grants should be further increased to reflect the prisoner's real food needs, as well as the ever-increasing cost of living.*

- ii) Further to (i) above, the Prison Service (or government) should liberalize the mode of purchase of foodstuff for the prisoners, so that prison authorities may purchase foodstuff from the cheapest sources.

HEALTH

- i) Specific funds should be provided to the prisons for the purchase of drugs prescribed for sick prisoners. This will forestall instances of death of prisoners due to lack of medication.
- ii) There is also a need to provide an infirmary in the prison for the isolation and treatment of sick prisoners.

PRISON PREMISES

- i) There is a need to expand the present prison premises to ease congestion and to provide space for the establishment of learning facilities.
- ii) More facilities should be put in place for the vocational training of inmates of the Wa prison. This will enhance their chances of rehabilitation and re-integration upon completion of their terms of imprisonment.
- iii) With the increase in the number of law courts, population growth in general and crime rate in particular, the Upper West Region needs at least one additional prison in one of the outer districts of the Region. This will greatly ease the problem of congestion.

LEARNING /ENTERTAINMENT

- i) More books and reading materials should be supplied to the prison to enable literate inmates to stay mentally alive. In addition regular physical exercises should be encouraged.

It is recommended that less expensive Indoor games like table tennis and volleyball should be introduced into the daily lives of the prisoners.

- ii) Entertainment programs such as record dance and film shows should be provided for the prisoners, at least every third week. The current trend where record dances are rarely organized for the Wa prisoners is not good enough.

FARMING

- i) There is an urgent need to establish a permanent and reliable source of water on the farm. A hand-dug well or borehole would do be sufficient. A reliable water source would decrease the possibility of contracting water-borne diseases.
- ii) The current \$16,000.00 feeding grant a week is not adequate incentive for the six officers on duty at the farm. Better incentives should be offered.

UPPER WEST - 1997

Population of Inmates

<i>Convicts</i>	-	83
<i>Remands</i>	-	17
<i>Trials</i>	-	3
<i>Grand Total</i>	-	103

Among the remanded prisoners only four had been on remand for up to a year. There were no juveniles, females nor mentally disabled persons held at the prison at the time of this investigation.

CHANGES

In 1996 there were a total of 10 cells, with one being used as a store. They had an average size of between $\frac{1}{2}$ and $\frac{2}{3}$ of a modest bedroom. All were built of sandish brick.

This year saw significant changes. All the walls were changed to cement blocks. Some walls between previous small cells were broken up to make one larger cell resulting in six relatively larger cells. Three of the cells measure approximately 6x5 metres square, while two measure approximately 5x5 metres square. The largest cell measures about 7x5 metres square and contained 19 inmates. The rest of the five cells had an average of 13 inmates.

On the whole, the cells were generally neat and adequately supplied with drinking water and electricity. Only five of the cells were adequately ventilated. Cell 2 and the isolation cells were poorly ventilated. The Prison Commander promised to address the situation.

ISOLATION CELL FOR SICK INMATES

For the first time, there was a small cell of about 1x5 metres square to serve both as an isolation cell for inmates with contagious diseases as well as solitary confinement for prisoners who violate prison regulations.

BEDDING

There were a total of 11 student size bunk beds shared among all the cells, except the remand and isolation cells. The Prison Commander explained that the remand cell was supplied with the barest minimum of facilities to forestall possible self-inflicted harm by remand prisoners.

The majority of inmates sleep on blankets or student-size mattresses on the floor. Each inmate had either a blanket or khaki-material cover cloth.

CONGESTION

It is worth noting that, apart from one cell, the congestion is greatly minimal, and constitutes a significant improvement from the previous year. The entire prison is now completely free from bedbugs and other pests.

SANITATION

There is a bucket in each cell, fitted with a wooden structure to cater for sanitation when the inmates retire at night. These are emptied, cleaned and left to dry in the sun during the day. The main prison yard is kept neat. Inmates are supplied with a cake of guardian soap every month. There is a two-seater KVIP and two W.C. toilet facilities in the yard for the inmates and officers, respectively. Water supply is adequate. Inmates bathe from two regularly flowing showers supported by a tap. A third water reservoir has been added to the two that were available in 1996. All the water facilities are at the disposal of the inmates.

KITCHEN

A new kitchen has now been constructed at a different location in the prison. The new kitchen is an open kitchen of about 10x7 metres square with only a roof supported by wooden poles. This is an improvement over the poorly ventilated structure it replaces. We noted, however, that in times of rainstorms the kitchen premises stand the risk of being flooded.

FEEDING

In 1995/96 maize and gari constituted the main foodstuff given to prisoners. This diet has been expanded to include beans and rice once a week, with yam supplied in like manner when it is yam season and therefore inexpensive.

An inspection of the store showed quantities of maize dough, rice, beans and gari in stock. Various ingredients were also in stock.

Meat is supplied to the inmates once every week which is a remarkable improvement from the previous year. Interviews with the inmates confirm that both quality and quantity of food have increased within the period under review. The Prison Commander explained that the feeding grant has been increased from ₦600,00 to ₦800.00 per day per inmate. Most important, the authorities are no longer bound to purchase foodstuff from only the GFDC with all the attendant problems, Foodstuffs are now purchased from the cheapest suppliers. This notwithstanding, inmates complained that feeding is still inadequate.

HEALTH AND MEDICAL CARE

Health facilities have improved. Basic painkillers, anti-malaria and antibiotics are supplied by Prisons Head Office on a quarterly basis. The quantity of each of these drugs never exceeds 1000 pills. There is a staff nurse in charge of prisoners' health. However medication is administered in the open due to lack of room.

We noted that there was some amount of improvement in the health of the inmates within the period under review. This finding was confirmed by the Prison Commander and the inmates. The reduction in hospital attendance from 7 inmates a week in 1996 to an average of 1 inmate a week in 1997 has been attributed to improved feeding. For the first time, ₦100,000.00 was allocated in the second quarterly imprest to cater for drugs prescribed for inmates.

NEW STORE ROOM AND OFFICE

Attached to the prison is a spacious area, demarcated by a wall. With the renovation of the cells, a corridor has been created leading from the main yard into this demarcation. This has eased congestion within the main yard. It is here that the new kitchen and new storerooms are located. The store measures

above 17 x 8 metres square and contains foodstuff and spare working utensils. Funds for this structure were partly supplied by the Catholic Church and partly by the Government. With the construction of the new storeroom, one of the cells which was being used as a storeroom was made available for occupancy. The structure which used to be the old kitchen has now been renovated with a new roof and divided into two rooms. Only louvre blades and doors are required to complete it. Once completed, this structure will serve as offices for some of the Senior Staff.

THE PIGGERY PROJECT

Situated outside the prison walls, this project was commenced in 1996 with the dual aim of supplementing prisoners' diet and raising income. The venture has now been abandoned due to lack of good market for the pigs. Plans to use the structures to raise other ruminants such as goats and sheep are being considered.

PRISON OFFICERS' CONDITIONS OF SERVICE

In our 1996 Report, we noted that officers on duty at the Bayiri Settlement Farm were not paid any night or other appropriate allowance, despite the inconveniences associated with the farm duties. This situation has not changed. Only ₦100,000.00 is voted quarterly for the feeding of the 12 officers that alternate duties on the farm. Also, there is congestion in the officers sleeping room on the Bayiri Settlement farm which should be remedied. It is as if they are also prisoners.

INMATES/PRISON OFFICER RELATIONSHIP

It is pertinent to state that, since the beginning of CHRAJ inspection of prisons in 1995, we have noticed that prison officers handle inmates humanely. This has been confirmed by the inmates. We have also noticed that the prison authorities have, between the first and third inspections, made significant efforts to improve the general conditions in the prison.

5. NORTHERN - 1996

In its 1996 Inspection Report, the Northern Regional Office of the CHRAJ made the following findings:

TAMALE CENTRAL PRISONS

Population of inmates has risen from 120 inmates in 1995 to 246 in 1996. Classification of the inmates was not reported.

REMAND PRISONERS

No remand prisoner has spent more than five years in remand.

JUVENILES

There were no juvenile inmates. The two juveniles found there in 1995 had been transferred to the Borstal Institute in Accra.

PREGNANT WOMAN: One pregnant woman was being held at the female section of the Tamale Central Prison. She was transferred from the Sunyani Prison a month earlier. She was attending antenatal clinic and preparations were being made for the safe delivery of her baby. She confirmed that she was receiving the necessary attention.

BABIES

There were no babies in the prison.

PRISONERS WITH MENTAL DISABILITY

In 1995 four prisoners with mental disability were being held at the Prison. Following the recommendations of the Commission, arrangements were made to transfer them to Psychiatric Hospitals.

On the occasion of this inspection, one of the prisoners was still being held in the prison cells. His particulars are as follows:

Name:	Abubakari Fuseini
Offence:	Murder
Date:	Not given
Sentence:	5/11/96
Remand Duration:	9 years, 8 months, 5 days

The Prisons Authorities explained that, when a prisoner is being sent to a Psychiatric Hospital, he/she must be accompanied by a family member. All attempts to get the family of the mentally disabled prisoner to accompany him to the Psychiatric Hospital had proved futile. They therefore had kept him in the prison. Efforts are still being made with the co-operation of the Department of Social Welfare to transfer him to the Psychiatric Hospital.

FEEDING

The Assistant Director of Prisons in charge of the Northern Region briefed the team about the food situation. He confirmed that following the first inspection of the prisons by the Commission, the feeding subsidy per inmate had been increased from ₦200.00 to ₦600.00. He added, however, that the procedure of food supply to the prisons, coupled with inflation, had completely eroded the value of the money and left the situation virtually unchanged.

HEALTH

An amount of money has been lodged with the various medical directorates to cater for the medical treatment of prisoners. They now receive free medical care. At the time of this inspection, two inmates had already benefited from this facility, an indication that the government directive should be effective.

In addition to the infirmary, which is run by a nurse in the prison, medical supplements come from two philanthropists, one Dr. Abdulai and Rev. Sister Constance of the Catholic Church.

GENERAL CONDITIONS

The Prison has maintained a commendable standard in its general environment and conditions. The prison yard and cells are clean. The cells are spacious and not over-crowded.

At the time of the last inspection, there were surplus beds, blankets and mattresses in the prison. However, the recent increase in the population of the prison from inmates 120 to 240 has outstretched the bedding facilities. Some prisoners do not have mattresses and others have no blankets.

The team was authoritatively assured that a requisition had been made for items in short supply and was due to arrive on the afternoon that the team was there.

PRISONERS' PERSONAL COMPLAINTS

During the investigation, a cross section of inmates were interviewed. Their response were articulated by one prisoner who seemed to command majority following. He has been in prison on six other occasions and appears to be versed with the conditions that are supposed to prevail in the prisons. The crux of his complaints included the following:

1. *The double ration at lunchtime is not acceptable, because some people eat all at lunch and have nothing for supper.*
2. *The quantity of food is quite reasonable but the quality is poor. He described the soup as "crocodile tears". The maize meant for inmate feeding is ground outside and he believes it is pilfered.*
3. *The cells are infested with bugs and there are no chamber pots for use at night.*

4. *There are no entertainment or recreational facilities e.g. Television.*
5. *Sundays are supposed to be days of rest for all inmates, yet prison officers take some of them out to work on their private farms.*
6. *The workshops that are meant to teach them some skills are not functioning. The proceeds from the few creative works they produce and sell are taken away from them by prison officers.*
7. *Items meant for prisoners are taken by prison officers.*

There were no complaints from the female section during interaction with them. They are as comfortable as can be in a prison and are only hoping to complete their sentences.

VIEWS FROM THE PRISON AUTHORITIES

In a short brief, the prison authorities expressed appreciation for the exercise. They acknowledged that slight changes had taken place since the last inspection and saw that as a sign of hope. In their view, government is fully aware of the conditions in the prisons, but the dilemma is whether or not to use scarce resources for the maintenance of convicts or for developmental projects.

They strongly advocated a return to the weighing of food ration for each prisoner in order to improve the food situation.

INSPECTION AT THE YENDI POLICE STATION

During a visit to the Yendi Police Station, the Northern Regional team discovered that a teenage suspect, fourteen years of age, smallish and frail in structure, has been held in the cells for seven months. He was suspected of stealing five hundred thousand cedis (¢500,000.00).

When our officers queried the Station Officer, he explained that the boy was arrested with two other suspects and was granted a court bail. No one had

come to post bail for this suspect. The station had been in touch with his family, but they blatantly refused to come forward. The police expected the magistrate to expedite action on this case and possibly order that the juvenile be sent to a Borstal Institute. Regrettably, the Station Officer said the irregular and far in-between visits of the magistrate has left them with no other alternative than to keep him in the police cells.

NORTHERN - 1997

The Northern Region currently has four prisons which, as at the period of inspection had 330 prisoners both in remand and condemned serving varying periods of sentences. The four prisons retain similar conditions of congestion, under-nourishment, inadequate health delivery, lack of recreational facilities, poor personal hygiene, lack of adequate water supply, etc. with only slight variations from one prison to another.

GENERAL CONDITIONS

The following table illustrates the total number of prisoners and their general bedding and clothing situation.

PRISON	INMATE	BED	MATTRESS	BLANKET	COVER CLOTH
Tamale	177	150	120	128	88
Salaga	35	7	21	35	35
Yendi	82	45	34	82	44
Gambaga	36	18	19	27	18
Total	330	220	194	272	185

The table above shows that out of 330 prisoners, 110 do not have beds. 136 inmates do not have mattresses. Some 58 prisoners do not have blankets, while another 145 do not have cover cloths.

CONGESTION: All the cell rooms in the prisons were congested and there were no unoccupied spaces. The average number of prisoners living in the cell rooms was worked out to about 14 prisoners per a room. The target cell room measurements are in the approximate ranges of 5'x9' to 5'x10'.

The above describes the general situation found in the four prisons in the Northern Region.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The high cell room congestion, poor lighting and ventilation, lack of bedding facilities and presence of epidemics like C.S.M., are all problems of the Northern Region. Prison deterrence from crime is not an adequate justification for the low quality of food in prison houses, poor medical attention given to inmates, and the inadequate provision of drinking water and toilet detergents to prisoners.

We therefore recommend as follows:

- 1) immediate steps should be taken to decongest the cell rooms. This can be done by expanding some of the prison houses such as the Salaga and Gambaga Prisons;
- 2) appropriate bedding facilities should be provided and avenues for relaxation and recreation, such as shades and games, put in prison houses as shelter against the hot season and diversions from acute boredom .
- 3) efforts should be made to liberalize food purchases. The source of food supply should not be restricted to the defunct Ghana Food Distribution Corporation (GFDC). This will enable prison authorities to procure food from local markets, possibly at cheaper prices than the GFDC prices. It might also facilitate more variety of meals and ~~curtail~~ the repetitive meal service;
- 4) funds should be made available for vocational training in prison;

- 5) central government should release more funds to the prison authorities for the provision of medical care for prisoners and special medical doctors mandated to pay fortnight visits to prisons;
- 6) finally, all prison houses should be given the necessary attention by the authorities, including the judiciary, so as to curtail cases where prisoners' rights are violated or abused.

6. VOLTA - 1996

For the first time, our Volta Regional Directorate was able to visit the three prisons in the region; the Ho, Kpando and Kete Krachi prisons.

FINDINGS

KPANDO PRISONS

Population of Inmates: 268 including remand prisoners, one of whom had been there since April, 1994 on a suspected charge of murder.

Juvenile Prisoners: The Chief Superintendent, who has been at his present station for barely five months, indicated that he has given strict instructions to his officers at the gate not to admit any person who looks under-aged into the cells unless the Police substantiate his age. This seems to have worked.

Upon inspection, only one inmate reported being under-aged. On his records, Frank Agbenyo, who claimed to be 16 years of age, said he was beaten and intimidated by the Police to say that he was 18 years of age. He was sentenced by the Jasikan Circuit Court to a term of imprisonment totalling 20 months. Our officers promised to take up investigation to ascertain his actual age.

PREGNANT AND MENTALLY DISABLED INMATES

The Kpando Prisons is a Male Prison and so there are no female inmates there. None of the prisoners were mentally disabled.

HEALTH AND MEDICAL CARE

The officer explained that, the Kpando Prison, has not had the usual problems associated with the cash-and-carry system of the Ministry of Health. This is because the Margaret Marquart Catholic Hospital at Kpando has agreed to treat the inmates on credit and thereafter submit the bills to the prison authorities for settlement.

HO CENTRAL PRISON

Population of inmates was 305, including 38 remand prisoners. Two of the remand prisoners had been there since 1991 charged with suspected murder. They were, however, appearing in court for trial at the time of our inspection.

JUVENILES

Two juveniles were discovered in the Ho Central Prison. The youths were aged 15 and 17 respectively. The 15 year old was sentenced to a term of 18 months imprisonment on 4th May, 1996. The other juvenile, a 17 year old was sentenced to 6 years imprisonment on 3rd June, 1996. The Commission has been assured that these cases had been referred to the Department of Social Welfare.

MEDICAL AND HEALTH

The Prison authorities stated that the Ministry of Health's cash-and-carry system had not been helpful to the prison. Under the cash-and-carry system, health personnel at the Government Hospital must reject prisoners who can not pay for the cost of medical services. Recently, however, health personnel received a letter from the Minister of Health exempting prisoners from payment of medical costs. Despite this exemption, the Hospital is still unco-operative. Supplies to the

infirmary continues to come from the Prison Headquarters and there has been a modest improvement in this area.

VOCATIONAL TRAINING

Workshops are in place for the acquisition of vocational skills but are all devoid of tools and equipment needed for the proper training of inmates.

FEMALE PRISON

At the time of the visit, there were 29 inmates including four on remand. The longest prisoner has been there for seven months on a charge of murder.

PREGNANT PRISONERS

Our officers discovered one Nigerian female prisoner by name Britu Salawu who was pregnant. She was on remand on charges of drug trafficking. The trial would begin when the laboratory analysis of the drug was received. When interviewed, she stated that she was allowed to attend antenatal clinic.

CONCLUSION

All the people our officers met and interacted with admitted that there has been a great improvement in the conditions of the prisons since the last visit of the Commission. They prayed that the Commission continues to press for better conditions.

KETE-KRACHI PRISONS

The Kete-Krachi prison is one of the four prisons, which were not inspected in 1995.

At the time of the visit, the inmates numbered 204, including 5 remand prisoners. Two of the remand prisoners were charged with murder and were there awaiting the advice of the Attorney General.

JUVENILES

Officially, there are no cases of juveniles being kept in the Kete-Krachi prison. Upon inspection, however, our officer came across two convicts whose appearances indicated that they were below 18 years of age. On interrogation, one stated his age as 18 and remarked that the police gave him that age. The other said he did not know his age. Both were convicted of stealing.

HEALTH AND ACCOMMODATION

From our officer's report we determined that the health and medical situation here is akin to the majority of prisons.

As regards accommodation the prison itself contains only four cells. It was learnt that since it was built, the Kete-Krachi prison has not seen any infrastructural development.

CONCLUSION

The Kete-Krachi Prison is a male prison. Most of the inmates there are transferred from Ho and the prisons in the South of the Region.

Our report shows that the only area that has seen some improvement is that of feeding. There is no doubt that much needs to be done to improve the conditions under which the prisoners live especially as the place is quite removed from the other parts of the region.

7. GREATER ACCRA - 1996

INSPECTION OF POLICE CELLS

Between August and September 1995, our office inspected cells at five Police Stations namely;

1. Regional/ Central Police Cells, Tudu;
2. Adabraka Police Station Cells;
3. Nima Police Station Cells;
4. Tesano Police Station Cells;
5. Kaneshie Police Station Cells

FINDINGS

1. ACCRA CENTRAL (REGIONAL) POLICE CELLS

There was little improvement in the conditions of the cells at this particular Police Station. Poor ventilation, poor lighting, poor toilet facilities and lack of tap water and or shower still persisted.

The poor sanitary conditions were intolerable and the stench was over-powering. The recommendations made by the Commissioner last year have not been implemented in any meaningful way at the Accra Central Police Station.

2. ADABRAKA POLICE CELL

There were 4 suspects in the cell. The sanitary conditions were very good, and many of the needed improvements had been made. But like the previous year, the stench from the toilet was intolerable. The sewage system needed rehabilitation. Ventilation and beddings have improved markedly. But the feeding situation was not different from that at Central Police Station, Tudu. The suspects were being fed on a daily ration of ₵80.00. The District Commander was not aware of the increase in ration to ₵600.00 per day for each suspect. We made it known to the District Commander that by circular No. SCR/1500/Vol. Vi/81 dated 30th May, 1996, the ration had been increased to ₵600.00 per inmate and he promised to follow up on the matter.

He, however, complained that it took 3 to 6 months for feeding expenses to be refunded whenever the police used their own resources to feed the suspect.

The Police here appeared conversant with the constitutional rights of suspects. They assured the team that the suspects held on stealing charges were covered by proper remand warrants, pending investigation. The police prosecutor complained about frequent remand by the courts of suspects on petty offences without even seeing the suspects in the court room. His complaint tallied with that of the prosecutor from Central Police Station, Tudu. He also complained about lack of transportation, which forced police to spend portions of their own salaries on the commuting of suspects to and from court.

3. NIMA POLICE STATION

The cells here were neat, but over-crowded. The Nima Police Station was holding suspects remanded from the Kotobabi Police Station as well its own prisoners. This was due to the on-going physical rehabilitation and renovation of the Kotobabi Police Station, where there was alleged to have been a cell breakout sometime ago. The feeding situation was as bad here as at the other Police Cells inspected. Though the District Commander was aware of the increase in the ration for feeding suspects, he lamented that the circular on the matter had just been received by him. The funds might take another 3 to 6 months to be released for feeding the suspects. He also lamented that transportation of suspects to court was receiving little priority from the authorities, and wondered why the "Black Maria System" was withdrawn. (The "Black Maria" was a police van used in the past to drive suspects from different police cells to the courts.)

According to the District Commander, the availability of Black Maria in those days saved the police from using their own money to transport suspects.

4. TESANO POLICE STATION CELL

The Tesano Police Station Cell looked neat, save for the toilet and bath, which needed rehabilitation. The District Commander informed us that the Police Cells rehabilitation programme was being run by the Police Administration in phases, and that the Tesano Police Station would have its turn sooner than later. The ventilation and lighting systems were good, but the food situation was poor. The District Commander was not aware that the daily ration had been increased to ₵600.00 per suspect. Like the other Police Cells, the Tesano Police Station has problems with paying for the transportation of suspects to and from the court. Police have used their own monies to supplement cash-and-carry system with the purchase of drugs when ever possible. Where the police were not able to afford the drugs, the suspects had to go without the drugs.

5. KANESHIE POLICE STATION CELL

There were 11 inmates in a cell whose sanitary condition was adequate. The ventilation and lighting systems were good. On feeding, the District Commander was informed about the increment in the daily allowance from ₵80.00 to ₵600.00 and he has appealed to the Commission to ensure that the funds for feeding be released in time for the ration increment to be effective.

HEALTH AND MEDICAL CARE

The cash-and-carry system appeared to have been worked out in such a way that the District Commander would buy the drugs and seek a refund later, though the refund was always effected 3 to 7 months later.

THE PRISONS

A team from the head office inspected the James Fort and James Camp prisons in Accra on 23rd July, 1996.

FINDING

REMAND PRISONERS

The plight of remand prisoners remained unchanged at the James Fort Prison. The James Camp Prison, which is an unwallled prison, is meant for short sentence prisoners and therefore has no remand prisoners. At the female section of the James Fort Prison one Mary Gyama, charged with the murder of her husband, had been in prison custody, at the time of inspection, for 4 years 8 months. At the time of compiling this report she has been tried, convicted and sentenced to death.

Some inmates at the James Fort Prison complained that even though they were granted bail by the Courts, the police in charge of their cases were refusing to accept their sureties. One of them charged with stealing, was granted bail in April, 1994, but the police would not accept his surety, and was still in prison custody.

8. EASTERN - 1996

KOFORIDUA PRISON

FINDINGS

ACCOMMODATION

No remarkable improvement was seen during the exercise. The cells were crowded and congested. A cell measuring 10' x 12' contained sixteen prisoners. In every cell, half of the population was found sleeping on the bare floor. They did not have mattresses, or blankets. The total population in the prison was 210 inmates instead of a maximum capacity of 66.

Leakages in some of the rooms were a problem. Evening rain would soak the floor forcing some inmates to stand for lack of dry sleeping space. The toilet, which is sited in the middle of the yard near the kitchen, was giving a bad odour.

FEEDING

The feeding situation has improved a little. The quantity of food served has increased as a result of the increase in the money released for feeding prisoners. The inmates the team talked to expressed their satisfaction with the meals served. The quantity however needs to be improved.

HEALTH AND MEDICAL SITUATION

There has been no improvement in the health delivery system in the prisons. The main problem is with the "Cash and Carry system."

SUSPECTS ON REMAND

The team observed that two remand cells with a dimension of 24 x 12 feet each accommodated fifty-six crowded suspects who were on remand for periods ranging between one month to six years.

Interaction with the suspects revealed that most of them were dumped by the Police and were never sent to courts again for the hearing of their cases. One of them, Yaw Ankomah, 30 years of age, told the team that he had been on remand for five months and, had pleaded guilty whenever he was taken to court. He could not understand why the court was refusing to convict him.

AKUSE PRISON (MALE)

Conditions in the cells were not far from what the team saw in the Koforidua Prisons.

REMAND PRISONERS

Out of a total number of 157 inmates 16 were on remand. The general complaint made by the suspects was the failure of the police to send them to court for the hearing of their cases on scheduled dates. One particular case, which needs mentioning here, is that of one Okye Kudjo, aged 50. Kudjo had been on remand since 4/8/92 on a murder charge. The last time he went to court was on 8/1/93. It was learnt that his docket was sent by the police to the Attorney-General's Office for advice in 1993. At the time of inspecting the prison in July, 1996 nothing had been heard from the police.

JUVENILES

Three juveniles were found among the adults in the prison. According to these juveniles they were advised by the police to inflate their ages to enable them have speedy trials and serve shorter sentences in prison instead of longer periods in the Borstal Homes.

FEEDING

The inmates indicated that there has been an improvement in the quantity of food served.

HEALTH AND MEDICAL SITUATION

There was no improvement in this area. The cells were crowded and congested. The inmates did not have beddings. More than half of the inmates were sleeping on the bare floor.

One HIV infected inmate who was seriously sick, shared a cell with forty-four other inmates.

AKUSE PRISON - FEMALE

As usual, the female section was neater and less congested. The total number of inmates was 6. One notable thing found here was a nursing mother and her four months old baby boy. The mother, aged 38 years was sentenced to two years imprisonment on 14/7/95 at a time that she was pregnant. She delivered a baby boy on 22/3/96. She was expected to be discharged on 14/11/96; thus she was left to serve four months with the baby.

NSAWAM MEDIUM SECURITY PRISONS

FINDINGS

MALE SECTION

The peculiar situation at the male section of the Nsawam Prisons at the time of inspection in 1996, was the presence of too many remand prisoners. The majority of them have been in remand for 5 years and above. The majority of them were charged with armed robbery, robbery or murder.

SICK INMATES

A few inmates complained about serious ailments afflicting them. Three of the condemned prisoners had developed hydro cells. One also reported an acute stomach ulcer. According to the officer in charge, their complaints have been passed on to the Presbyterian Church Headquarters for assistance.

CONGESTION AND OVER CROWDING

The Assistant Director in charge of the Nsawam Male Prison, complained about congestion in the cells.

At the main condemned block, an average of 5 prisoners occupy a cell which measure 6 feet x 9 feet. According to the officer in charge, the problem of congestion could be solved or reduced if only the Government would put up

one big central prison to serve the entire country. The congestion is not peculiar to only the condemned cells; the normal cells are equally congested.

COCOA SACKS AS COFFINS

During the interaction with the inmates, a prisoner reported the practice of burying dead inmates in cocoa sacks instead of wooden coffins. This report was, feebly denied by the prison authorities. The CHRAJ has reason to believe that this allegation is credible.

NSAWAM PRISONS 1997

The 1997 inspection exercise at the Nsawam Prisons took place on Monday 26th and 27th May, 1997. There were a total of 1,571 prisoners at the male section. Eighty one of whom were on remand while 222 were condemned prisoners.

At the female section, the population of inmates was 143. None of them was on remand. Six of them were condemned for murder.

GENERAL CONDITIONS

There have been no drastic changes in conditions at the male section in terms of congestion, bedding, health and medical care as reported during the previous inspection exercises.

RENOVATION OF HOSPITAL BAY AT MALE SECTION

The only marked improvement at the male section has been the renovation of the hospital bay. This was solely undertaken by the Presbyterian Church of Ghana. It was commissioned by the Vice President of the Republic of Ghana a few days after the inspection. With the renovation and refurbishment of the facility, prisoners with certain ailments can now receive medicare attention including surgical operations without being sent outside to such major hospitals as the Korle-Bu Teaching Hospital in Accra.

GENERAL COMPLAINTS BY PRISONERS

Inmates at the condemned blocks think that the 10 years limitation for condemned prisoners to qualify for an amnesty for a death sentence to be commuted to life imprisonment subject to certain conditions, is too high.

Inmates mentioned their difficulty acquiring appeal forms from the courts when they wished to appeal against their conviction as well as delays in court proceedings (especially for detainees). See appendix for documented grievances submitted by inmates of the condemned blocks.

DISCRIMINATION IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PRESIDENTIAL AMNESTY

Inmates at the condemned block felt the prison authorities have been biased in the implementation of the Presidential Amnesty granted to all categories of persons earlier in the year. The amnesty required that those who are sentenced to death and who have been in the condemned block for a period of ten years and above, should have their sentences commuted to life imprisonment on such grounds as old age. The amnesty also stipulated that the very aged and very sick were to be freed.

According to a list authenticated by the prison authorities in charge of the Nsawam prisons about 32 prisoners who qualified to have their death sentences commuted to life imprisonment have not enjoyed the presidential favour.

The Assistant Director, in charge of the prison explained that the presidential amnesty for the ten years qualification was subject to other factors or legal considerations.

9. ASHANTI - 1996

As at the time of the inspection of the Prisons in the Ashanti Region, namely the Kumasi Central Prisons, Manhyia Prisons, Fomena Prison Camp, Obuasi Prisons, Amanfo Settlement Camp, there were 1214 inmates serving various sentences ranging from two months to death for various offences including murder, stealing, narcotics and assault.

The breakdown of the inmates in the various prisons is as follows:

Kumasi Central Prisons	-	760 (727 males and 33 females)
Manhyia Prison	-	130
Fomena Prison Camp	-	74
Obuasi Prisons	-	178
Amanfo Settlement Camp		62

INMATES WHO HAVE BEEN ON REMAND FOR MORE THAN 5 YEARS

OBUASI: One of the inmates in the Obuasi Prisons has been on remand custody for more than 5 years. Our interview, revealed that, Mr. David Agyenkwa, 42, has been on remand for more than 5 years since his arrest. He was arrested on a murder charge at Obuasi in 1991 and has been on remand in police cells at Obuasi, Kumasi Central Prisons and later transferred to the Obuasi Prisons on 19/10/95 where he has since been on remand.

KUMASI CENTRAL PRISONS: There is one inmate, Kwame Boateng, 32, who has been on remand for more than 6 years. He was arrested on 9/9/89 on a murder charge.

JUVENILES IN ADULT PRISONS

OBUASI: - There was one juvenile, Kofi Adu, 15, serving a year's sentence in the Obuasi Prisons for stealing at Dunkwa. He comes from Dunkwa Diago.

KUMASI CENTRAL PRISONS: There were three juveniles in Kumasi Central Prisons, one on remand while the other two were serving prison terms.

Their particulars are as follows:

KWAME EMOH, 15, on remand: He was remanded by the Kumasi Circuit Court for possessing narcotic drugs.

ABUBAKAR ISSA, 17 Years : This 17 year old juvenile was convicted for stealing and sentenced by the Kumasi Circuit Court to a fine of ₵50,000.00 or 18 months imprisonment.

ZITO BUSANGA, 16 years: He was convicted and sentenced to three months imprisonment by the Nkawie Court for assault.

PREGNANT WOMEN AND WOMEN WITH BABIES

There was one pregnant woman and two other women with babies in the Kumasi Central Prisons whose particulars are as follows:

ABENA ACHINAMAA: This 20 year-old pregnant woman is serving a year's imprisonment for assault.

NANA NKOR, 18: This girl who was on remand was arrested for disturbing the public peace.

PERSONS WITH MENTAL DISABILITY

OBUASI CENTRAL PRISONS: There was one inmate, Joseph Kwadwo Kontor, 36, who appeared to be insane. He comes from Bekwai Dominase. He was convicted and sentenced to four months imprisonment by the Bekwai High Court for causing harm. He was due for discharge on 21/10/96. Efforts are being made by the Prison Authorities to liaise with his parents to send him to a Psychiatric Hospital for confirmation and treatment.

KUMASI CENTRAL PRISONS

There were ten inmates with suspected mental problems whose conditions are yet to be examined and confirmed by a Psychiatrist.

ASHANTI, 1997

POPULATION OF PRISON INMATES

Kumasi Central Prison	839 (809 males 30 females)
Manhyia Prisons	130
Arhindan Settlement Camp	70
Obuasi Prisons	157
Amanfo Camp	46

FINDINGS

BEDDING:- All of the prisons, except in the settlement camps, are congested to the extent that some of the inmates are compelled to sleep outside the cells. Beds, blankets, mattresses and clothing are inadequate as a result of which some of the inmates sleep on the bare floor while some sleep on only

blankets. This condition exposes them to lung diseases such as pneumonia. Even if enough beds and mattresses were supplied there would not be enough space to accommodate them, especially in the Obuasi and Manhyia Prisons

REMAND PRISONERS

The prisons have on record 338 remand prisoners whose length of stay at the prisons ranges from three days to five years. Eighty of them claimed to have pleaded guilty to the offences they were charged with in their first appearances in the court, yet they have not been sentenced.

Most of them have complained of harsh bail conditions and the inability of the police to conduct thorough investigations into their cases before the inmates are remanded. Some have also claimed they were still on remand either because their dockets are missing or the police officers handling their cases are on postings to other stations. Further complaints show that police have not fulfilled their responsibility to take the remand prisoners to the hospital.

STATE OF WORKSHOPS OR FACILITIES FOR VOCATIONAL TRAINING

Apart from the Kumasi Central Prisons which has facilities for vocational training in carpentry, leather works, weaving, masonry and plumbing, the prisons do not have facilities for vocational training. Most of the tools/equipment at the Kumasi Central Prisons have broken down and the workshops which are earmarked for weaving, carpentry, shoemaking, are plagued with problems.

RECOMMENDATIONS/SUGGESTIONS ON CASH-AND-CARRY POLICY

The implementation of this policy is fraught with problems as a result of inadequate and irregular release of funds to cater for the health needs of the inmates. In view of this, it is suggested that the prison authorities arrange with

the Ministry of Health to enable bills to be sent to the Ministry of the Interior for reimbursement.

FEEDING

Since the increase in prices of foodstuffs and vegetables seem to outstrip the increase in the feeding allowance, it is suggested that the weight system of food rationing be reintroduced.

CONGESTION

To reduce the congestion in the prisons, the following proposals are put forward for consideration:

1. *the police should be prevailed upon to conduct investigation expeditiously for prosecution;*
2. *police Personnel on postings should be made to hand over all outstanding dockets to enable other officers handle the cases;*
3. *cases of remand prisoners who plead guilty should be disposed of with despatch;*
4. *other forms of punishment like fines, suspended sentences, community services, etc. should be explored and the present custodial sentences system played down;*
5. *more settlement camp prisons should be set up;*
6. *the National Commission For Civic Education should educate the public to re-orient it's attitude towards discharged prisoners for easy integration into the society.*

10. WESTERN - 1996

There are two main prisons in the Western Region. The third is a prison settlement camp.

FINDINGS

CENTRAL PRISON, SEKONDI (MALE)

Eleven inmates were found to have been in remand custody for over five years. No juvenile inmates were found. However, seven of the inmates were found to be mentally disabled. They were kept separate from the others.

FEMALE SECTION

Three of the inmates in the female Section were found to be nursing mothers. One of them delivered while in prison. The ages of the babies range between 2 to 11 months.

There were no juvenile prisoners at the prison. One of the inmates was mentally disabled and had been on remand for more than five years.

TARKWA PRISON

Two juvenile prisoners were found in this prison aged between 14-17 1/2 years. None of the prisoners here had been on remand for more than 5 years. There were no prisoners with mental disabilities.

AKUASE PRISON CAMP

Prisoners at this prison settlement camp looked healthier than those found at the other prisons. There were no juvenile prisoners, mentally disabled or remand prisoners. The prison settlement camp, is for short sentence convicts.

GENERAL CONDITIONS

FEEDING

The feeding situation has improved a little. Prisoners were now fed on ₦600.00 a day instead of ₦200.00.

MEDICAL

The cash and carry policy of the Ministry of Health was still a problem for the prisoners. Prescribed drugs for sick prisoners are not given due to lack of funds. Often sick prisoners are left unattended to.

OVER-CROWDING OF REMAND PRISONERS AT THE CENTRAL PRISONS SEKONDI (MALE SECTION)

Remand prisoners were over-crowded in all the cubicles visited. There were no beds. A few of the inmates slept on blankets while others slept on the bare floor. The cumulative effect was that almost all the remand prisoners had rashes all over their bodies.

Apart from the feeding situation that has slightly improved, other problems identified in our earlier report, such as inadequate toilet, bedding, clothing, and medical facilities, as well as , over-crowding and lack of detergent have not changed.

WESTERN - 1997

FINDINGS

SEKONDI CENTRAL PRISONS (MALE)

The male section of this prison has a normal capacity for 600. At the time of the inspection there were 446 inmates in the prison, 89 of whom were on remand and 357 had been convicted. According to the report, even though there has been an improvement in the quality of food, the quality remains basically poor. The prison still uses firewood in cooking for the inmates.

The report indicated that the health and medical care situation still leave much to be desired.

Most of the inmates were found to be without mattresses and blankets. There were no recreational facilities. Consequently, life at this prison appeared quite unbearable.

TARKWA PRISONS

This prison has a normal capacity for 100 inmates. However at the time of inspection the prison was holding 201 inmates. Inclusive in this total population was 78 remand prisoners. One of them had been on remand for over 6 years.

The feeding situation had improved following the increase in the daily feeding allowance. The health and medical situation remain a problem. Most of the inmates who require medical attention do not receive prompt service because of the cash-and-carry system.

For purposes of recreation, draft and ludo games were available. The workshops were, however, inadequate for any meaningful vocational training. Sanitation in this prison was generally satisfactory but the remand section was over-crowded. A number of remand prisoners who had been granted bail were still in custody because they could not provide sureties.

GENERAL COMMENTS

It was noticed that the condition of the remand prisoners had not improved much since our initial inspection. There is still over-crowding in the remand section and this has often led to contraction of diseases, particularly rashes.

The number of remand prisoners remaining in custody for longer periods had reduced following the special exercise initiated by the Regional Directorate to secure bail for those who had been in custody for periods exceeding 5 years.

During our inspection this year, it was noticed that apart from one remand prisoner, who had been in custody for over 6 years, no other prisoner has been in custody for more than 3 years.

Efforts are still continuing with the Attorney General's office and the supervising High Court Judge to ensure expeditious trial for remand prisoners. Another problem that continues with the Prison Administration, is the admission of nursing mothers into prison custody. Even though the Regional Directorate is making efforts to secure release for the nursing mothers of the two babies found in prison during this year's inspection through the normal court processes, we suggest that a more permanent solution be found to this problem. It is not only a violation of the rights of the babies concerned but it can traumatize them or create permanent damage to their health. Finally, we wish to put on record the excellent and sacrificial efforts made by prison officers and warders to assist with the difficult situations that confront the prisoners, especially in the area of health and medicare.

