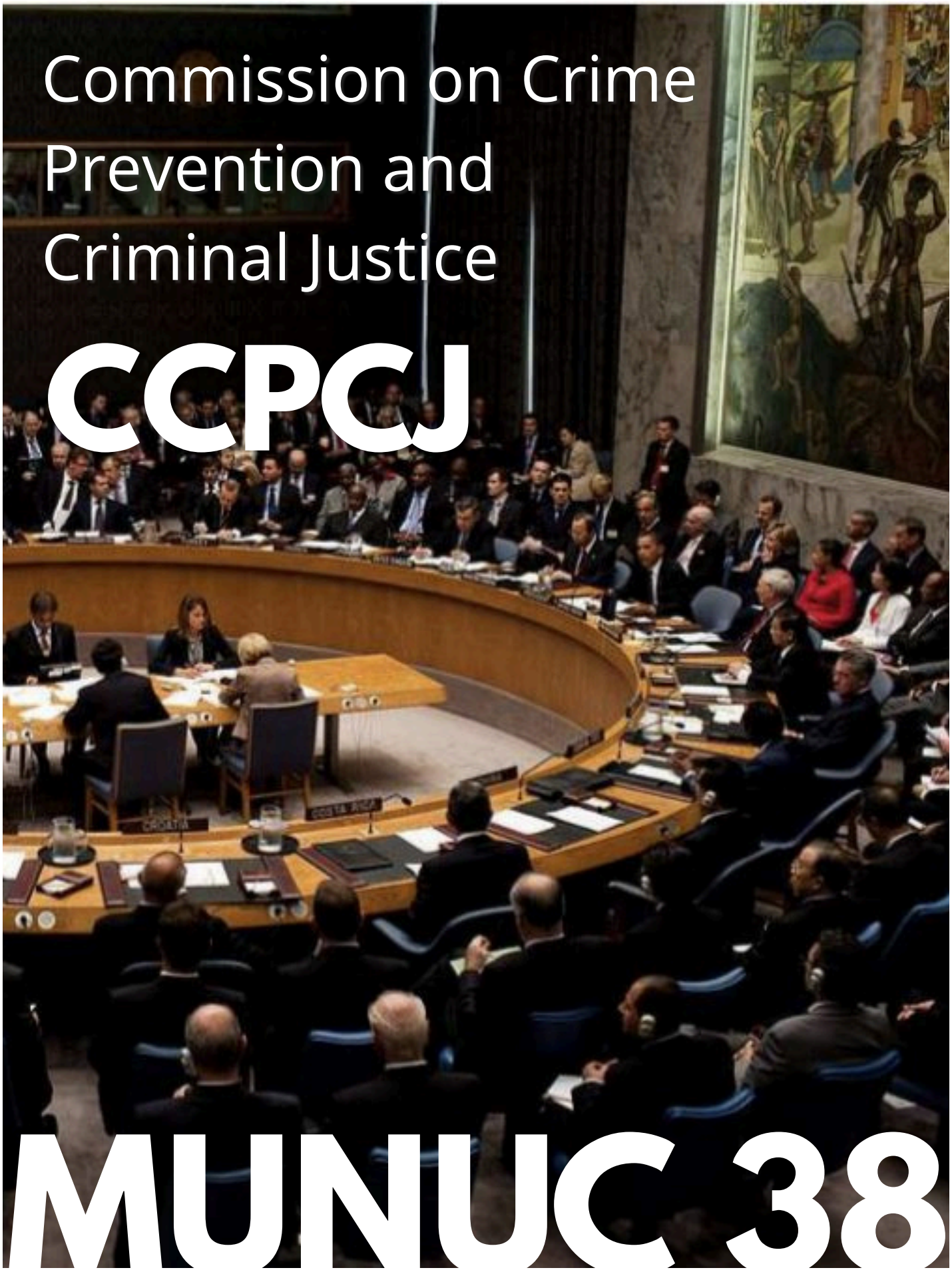

# Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice

# CCPCJ

# MUNUC 38

Model United Nations of the University of Chicago

# Chair Letters

Dear delegates,

A warm welcome to the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ) at MUNUC 38! My name is Anna Hatchikian and I will be serving as one of your co-chairs this year. Last year, I chaired for MUNUC 37's UNESCO Committee, and was an assistant chair for MUNUC 36's SPECPOL along with my co-chair Aidan.

In terms of introductions, I hail from the far land of Sofia, Bulgaria and am currently a third year studying Psychology, Economics and Comparative Human Behavior. Outside of MUNUC, I am also part of our college conference ChoMUN and our competitive MUN Team. Beyond MUN, I work as a Tour Guide for our Admissions Office (so if you come tour the University, I might see you there!) and I also do research in our Psychology department.

For this year's CCPCJ we have selected the following two topics: prison labor and human rights standards, and implementation of predictive policing tools. These topics shed light on the current and emerging issues within the policing and incarceration policies related to addressing crime. While solutions to crime have often been focused on efficiency, we challenge you to think about the ethical and societal concerns woven into our perception and approach to dealing with crime on a local and on a global scale. As such, regardless of which topic is chosen for discussion, I am excited to see how you can invoke your critical thinking, fruitful debate, but also empathy for the topic at hand.

Empathy, however, should be extended beyond the contents of our committee. It is both in MUNUC's institutional values and my own that we believe the committee should be an inclusive and welcoming environment. While Model UN is a competitive activity, it is more importantly an opportunity to learn and engage with new people and ideas. Therefore, we expect you to abide by MUNUC guidelines on mutual respect and kindness. If issues come up, please do not hesitate to reach out to your chairs and we will support you accordingly.

I hope your MUNUC experience in the CCPCJ will not only help you develop skills as a delegate, but encourage your curiosity and courage. Critical thinking, public speaking, leadership, and above all collaboration are skills that will be useful to you beyond the committee room, and as your chair I will be there to support you in developing your skills! I am excited to see you all in February and to be part of an engaging and most importantly fun weekend for all of you! If you have any questions, feel free to contact me anytime at my email!

Best wishes,

Anna Hatchikian

ahatchikian@uchicago.edu

Dear delegates,

Welcome to the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ) at MUNUC 38! My name is Aidan Li, and I will be serving as one of your co-chairs this year. A little about myself – I was born and raised in northern Virginia, and I am a third-year in the College, majoring in political science and astrophysics. Last year, I was chair for MUNUC 37's CSW; the year prior, I was an assistant chair for MUNUC 36's SPECPOL. Outside of MUNUC, I am the chief of staff at our collegiate conference, ChoMUN. I also conduct political economy and economics research on campus.

This year, CCPCJ will discuss one of two topics: implementation of predictive policing tools and prison labor and human rights standards. These topics address the ethical, legal, and societal implications of emerging technologies in law enforcement and the treatment of incarcerated individuals. While many solutions have been proposed to address these issues, these problems are intertwined with a host of institutional challenges. I am truly excited to see how you navigate such a complex and systemic issue through fruitful debate and holistic resolutions.

As an organization committed to fostering an inclusive learning environment, we are dedicated to creating an environment where everyone feels safe and respected. This committee will not tolerate discrimination in any form. Delegates who are found in violation of MUNUC policies will face disciplinary action; if you feel unsure whether or not a specific piece of content is permissible, the best practice is to ask one of the chairs.

When you leave MUNUC 38, I hope you walk away with skills that will help you for a lifetime: leadership, public speaking, and critical thinking, to name a few. As one of your chairs, I will be responsible for fostering an environment in which you can not only learn but also have fun doing so. I am thrilled to have this opportunity, and I cannot wait to see what ideas you come up with in February. If you have any questions about the committee, please do not hesitate to reach out!

Sincerely,

Aidan Li

aidanli@uchicago.edu

# History of the Committee

The Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ) is the policymaking body of the United Nations responsible for crime prevention and criminal justice. Established in 1992 by the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), the CCPCJ is the core organization responsible for handling crime and ensuring the rule of law is upheld. Each year, the Commission convenes in Vienna, Austria. The commission brings UN member states, international organizations, and civil society together to hear about issues like organized crime, cybercrime, law enforcement and crime prevention, and prison reform. The commission also organizes an international congress every five years to further share information in the field of crime prevention and control. With 40 member states elected by the ECOSOC on a balanced regional basis, CCPCJ formulates and submits proposals which may be taken by the ECOSOC or the General Assembly as non-binding decisions. The activity of the commission significantly contributes to shaping national criminal justice reform and international cooperation towards secure and more equitable societies worldwide.

# Topic A: Implementation of Predictive Policing Tools

## Statement of the Problem

### Types of Predictive Policing Tools

Compared to conventional methods of crime analytics, predictive policing tools are distinctive in their data-driven, highly complex methods. Despite these similarities, predictive policing encompasses a wide range of tools and methods, not all of which are similar to one another. A 2013 study by the **RAND Corporation** outlined four broad categories of predictive methods:[1]

1. Predicting crime locations
2. Predicting offenders
3. Predicting perpetrator identities
4. Predicting crime victims

#### Predicting Crime Locations

The most widely utilized predictive tool is place-based predictive policing, which typically uses preexisting crime data to identify areas and timeframes that have a higher risk of crime.[2] Conventionally, this may have been done by manually placing crimes and using human judgment to determine **hotspots** and active timeframes; however, with predictive analytics, several new tools have become available. Rather than using human judgment to determine

[1] *Predictive Policing: The Role of Crime Forecasting in Law Enforcement Operations.* (n.d.), https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RR200/RR233/RAND_RR233.sum.pdf.
[2] Madison Cutler, *Development of Predictive Policing Technology and Justification for Use* (Ford School of Public Policy, 2024), https://stpp.fordschool.umich.edu/sites/stpp/files/2024-06/stpp-predictive-policing-memo.pdf

hotspots, police departments may be able to utilize regression and clustering models, which reveal hidden hotspots that may be unclear to the human eye.

When accounting for increased risk after a recent crime, departments may implement **near-repeat modeling** rather than broadly assuming increased risk around the entire area. This identifies areas with an increased risk of crime after an initial crime event occurs analytically, rather than arbitrarily through human judgment. This is one usage of **spatiotemporal analysis** methods, which broadly attempt to determine when and where areas will be most at risk of crime.[3] Also included are **risk terrain analyses**, which specifically aim to quantify how geographical features – such as parks, bars, and schools – affect or increase the likelihood of crime.

Place-based predictive tools vary around the world; often, tools are developed on a per-city basis. One of the most widely utilized programs is PredPol, developed in conjunction with the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD); today, the software is used in over 50 police departments across the US. Outside of the US, similar programs have been implemented in both Europe, India, and China.[4,5]

## Predicting Offenders

In order to predict individuals at risk of offending, predictive policing programs use regression and classification models with common risk factors for individuals to become offenders. This includes factors such as mental illness, criminal history, or a pattern of violence.[6]

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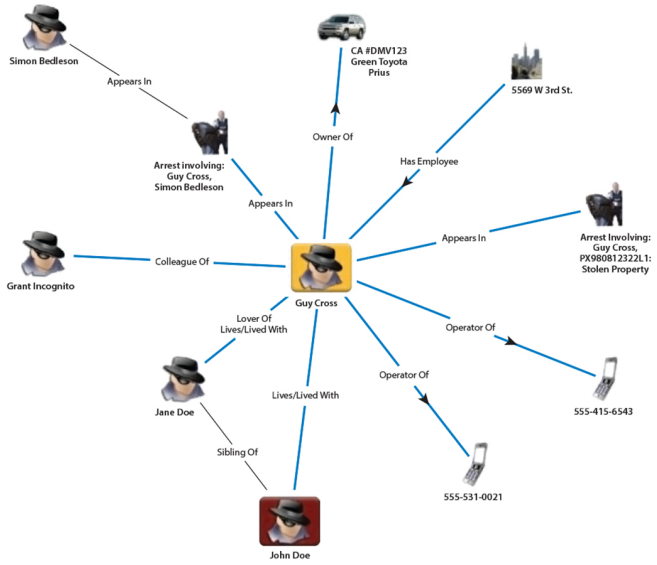
[3] *Predictive Policing: The Role of Crime Forecasting in Law Enforcement Operations*.
[4]Ankita Deshkar, "To Fight Crime Using AI, Maharashtra Police Create MARVEL," The Indian Express, 2024, https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/mumbai/to-fight-crime-using-ai-maharashtra-police-create-marvel-9460472/lite/.
[5] Paul Mozur et al., "'An Invisible Cage': How China Is Policing the Future," Technology, *The New York Times*, 2022, https://www.nytimes.com/2022/06/25/technology/china-surveillance-police.html.
[6] *Predictive Policing: The Role of Crime Forecasting in Law Enforcement Operations.*

This data-driven approach may be advantageous when compared to conventional methods, which may use more subjective, clinical techniques to assess risk. Near-repeat modeling may also be implemented to identify criminal groups that may commit crimes in the near future, rather than relying on manual review of intelligence reports or criminal activity.[7]

One program that attempts to predict offenders is the Violent Offender Identification Directive, which is used in New York. This initiative aims to prioritize individuals who require increased attention for enforcement and prevention services. Another example is **Palantir**'s Gotham, which is used in both the US and Europe.[8] Palantir creates network diagrams that utilize information both directly from law enforcement and from data collected in non-law enforcement situations.[9] An example of a network diagram is shown below:




*An Example of a Palantir Network Diagram.*[10]

[7] *Predictive Policing: The Role of Crime Forecasting in Law Enforcement Operations.*
[8] Arthur Neslen, "Pushback against AI Policing in Europe Heats up over Racism Fears," *Reuters*, 2021, https://www.reuters.com/article/world/pushback-against-ai-policing-in-europe-heats-up-over-racism-fears-idUSKBN2HA1G1/.
[9] Sarah Brayne, "The Criminal Law and Law Enforcement Implications of Big Data," *Annual Review of Law and Social Science* 14, no. 1 (2018): 293–308, https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-lawsocsci-101317-030839.
[10] *Predictive Policing: The Role of Crime Forecasting in Law Enforcement Operations.*

## Predicting Perpetrator Identities

Predicting perpetrator identities broadly attempts to identify likely perpetrators of previous crimes. Conventionally, law enforcement manually reviews intelligence reports, retrieves data, and identifies areas near the crime scene. However, with predictive analytics, linking and identifying potential crimes and perpetrators can be achieved through statistical modeling and geographic profiling tools, as well as automatic retrieval of sensor and camera data.[11] Furthermore, predictive analytics automates the linkage of different clues and datapoints with one another in ways sometimes overlooked through conventional means.

## Predicting Crime Victims

While the previous three predictive measures focus primarily on the offense and offenders, the last method of predictive policing attempts to predict victims of crimes that may occur. Conventional means of identifying individuals in at-risk locations involve manually mapping sites of crime and manually identifying individuals likely to be affected at the scene; however, advanced crime-mapping tools and predictors can be used in conjunction with other available data to identify individuals who frequent these identified crime hotspots. These predictive tools can be used to identify individuals who may be at higher risk of experiencing crime, such as interacting with individuals known to participate in criminal activity or identifying possible cases of domestic violence.[12]

[11] Ibid.
[12] *Predictive Policing: The Role of Crime Forecasting in Law Enforcement Operations.*

## Impacts of Predictive Policing Tools

The many effects of predictive policing tools have been widely discussed and are undoubtedly a controversial topic in both the scientific and law enforcement communities. In general, law enforcement officials who utilize predictive policing tools claim that these techniques have significantly improved their effectiveness and efficiency; on the other hand, detractors claim that these tools perpetuate existing biases, disproportionately target marginalized communities, and risk undermining civil liberties by relying on flawed or incomplete data.[13] The debate surrounding the issue centers around two questions. Firstly, are predictive policing measures worth the costs? Secondly, does predictive policing work at all?

[13] "Statement of Concern About Predictive Policing by ACLU and 16 Civil Rights Privacy, Racial Justice, and Technology Organizations," American Civil Liberties Union, 2016, https://www.aclu.org/documents/statement-concern-about-predictive-policing-aclu-and-16-civil-rights-privacy-racial-justice.

## The Case for Predictive Policing

Advocates for predictive policing techniques argue that, yes, predictive policing functions well as a tool for significantly reducing crime. In a 2010 article submitted to the National Institute of Justice Journal, proponents of predictive policing compared it with business practices that anticipate market conditions and increase sales.[14] Just as businesses are able to stock shelves to suit the local customer base, law enforcement can be enabled to provide specialized help to each and every area of operation. In Richmond, Virginia, police officers used predictive techniques to respond to random gunfire during New Year's Eve – as a result, random gunfire was nearly halved, and weapons seizures over tripled.[15] In Arlington, Texas, law enforcement was able to identify a relationship between burglaries and the physical decay of residential buildings. This allowed them to identify so-called "fragile neighborhoods" at higher risk of burglaries, empowering them to more effectively tackle crime.[16]

Predictive policing advocates also point to data-driven reports to support their claims. A 2018 McKinsey Global Institute report claimed that the implementation of predictive policing could reduce assault, robbery, and burglary by up to 40%.[17] In Manchester, New Hampshire, a data solutions firm was contracted to implement predictive policing software; according to the firm, the model reduced crime by 28% in the first five weeks of implementation.[18] Furthermore, they claimed to have been able to predict the exact 500-foot radius in which crime was to occur with 60% accuracy. A Japanese AI system named **Crime Nabi** was developed and implemented

[14] Beth Pearsall, "Predictive Policing: The Future of Law Enforcement?," National Institute of Justice, 2010, https://www.ojp.gov/pdffiles1/nij/230414.pdf.
[15] Ibid.
[16] Ibid.
[17] Jonathan Woetzel, *Smart Cities: Digital Solutions for a More Livable Future* (2018), https://www.mckinsey.com/~/media/mckinsey/business%20functions/operations/our%20insights/smart%20cities%20digital%20solutions%20for%20a%20more%20livable%20future/mgi-smart-cities-full-report.pdf.
[18] "Predictive Policing Success for Manchester PD," Ironside Group, https://www.ironsidegroup.com/case-study/predictive-policing-success-manchester-police-department/.

in the country before the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games. According to Japanese authorities, this AI system was 50 percent more effective than traditional policing in identifying high-risk areas.[19] In more recent years, Crime Nabi has been shared with Latin American law enforcement authorities; a pilot program saw a decrease in theft of metal cables from construction sites.[20] While not the flashiest result, proponents argue that even this result allows for greater resources to go towards high-profile, violent crimes in the area.

Another argument put forth is one of eliminating human biases. While individual law enforcement officers suffer from implicit biases and limitations, predictive modeling can take human subjectivity out of the analysis.[21] Supporters claim that predictive policing can help standardize decision-making and ensure that resources are allocated based on measurable patterns, rather than being poisoned by prejudice or unreliable intuition. Predictive models can minimize the risk of discriminatory enforcement practices and help assign neighborhoods an equitable amount of attention.[22] Advocates do concede, however, that in order for discriminatory practices to be mitigated, the development and implementation of the model – both in model design and data collection – must be done in a neutral manner.

## The Case Against Predictive Policing

A principal concern of predictive policing tools is that, rather than eliminating **systemic biases**, they reinforce bad practices and behaviors by law enforcement while appearing to be neutral.[23] To reduce police bias and predict crime, algorithms must be fed neutral and accurate

[19] Jennifer Tang, "The Promises and Perils of Predictive Policing," Centre for International Governance Innovation, 2025, https://www.cigionline.org/articles/the-promises-and-perils-of-predictive-policing/.
[20] Ibid.
[21] Ibid.
[22] Impala Global, "Predictive Policing & The Right to Non-Discrimination," Impala Global, 2021, https://impalaglobal.org/2021/06/07/predictive-policing-the-right-to-non-discrimination/.
[23] Impala Global, "Predictive Policing & The Right to Non-Discrimination."

data, a monumental and potentially impossible task. Critics argue that in practice, truly neutral data is nearly impossible to obtain. Crime statistics are not created in a vacuum; rather, they reflect decades of social dynamics, including patterns of over-policing in certain neighborhoods and underreporting in others. A prominent example of biased data usage is feeding predictive models with arrest data. Critics argue that, while using arrest data may seem logical, doing so may reinforce systemic biases previously perpetuated by law enforcement officers. In the United States, Black people are twice as likely to be arrested as white people, and five times more likely to be stopped without just cause.[24] Similar patterns emerge in other Western nations; in London, **BAME (Black, Asian, and minority ethnic)** individuals are 2.4 times more likely to be stopped than white individuals by police officers.[25]

## The Efficacy of Predictive Policing

While much of the discussion around predictive policing centers on potential civil rights and discrimination concerns, critics also question whether predictive policing works at all. In a letter to U.S Attorney General Merrick Garland, several U.S. senators called on the Justice Department to halt federal funding for predictive policing software. In the letter, they argued that "Mounting evidence indicates that predictive policing technologies do not reduce crime", a rebuke to supporters of predictive policing.[26] Around the United States, studies on predictive policing models have shown that these technologies may not be effective at reducing or preventing crime.

[24] Will Douglas Heaven, "Predictive Policing Algorithms Are Racist. They Need to Be Dismantled.," MIT Technology Review, 2020, https://www.technologyreview.com/2020/07/17/1005396/predictive-policing-algorithms-racist-dismantled-machine-learning-bias-criminal-justice/.
[25] Impala Global, "Predictive Policing & The Right to Non-Discrimination."
[26] "Wyden and Clarke Press Justice Department to End Funding for Flawed Predictive Policing Systems | U.S. Senator Ron Wyden of Oregon," Senate.Gov, 2024, https://www.wyden.senate.gov/news/press-releases/wyden-and-clarke-press-justice-department-to-end-funding-for-flawed-predictive-policing-systems.

In 2009, the city of Chicago implemented a person-based predictive policing model.[27] This model was a Party to Violence (PTV) model, aiming to quantify the likelihood that an individual would be either the victim or perpetrator of a shooting.[28] The model returned a list of people likely to be party to violence and created a list known as the **Strategic Subjects List (SSL)**, a list of 426 individuals at the highest risk of being involved in gun violence.[29] Unlike its description, however, Chicago law enforcement viewed it as a list of future criminals. A police force commander told journalists in 2014 that "If you end up on that list, there's a reason you're there", with the implication that the list was inherently criminal.[30] As the heat list continued operation in the city, a 2016 study found that individuals on the SSL had no significant difference in likelihood of being a murder or shooting victim or perpetrator compared to those not on the SSL.[31] In 2019, the Chicago police ended the SSL program following a report by the RAND corporation calling the program "operationally unsustainable" and the end of federal grant money funding the program.[32]

In Europe, the Netherlands was one of the first countries to implement a predictive policing model throughout the entire nation. The **Crime Anticipation System (CAS)** was a program aimed at identifying 125×125 meter crime "hot spots" across the Netherlands, rolled out

[27] Matt Stroud, "Heat Listed," The Verge, 2021, https://www.theverge.com/c/22444020/chicago-pd-predictive-policing-heat-list.
[28] Stella Cheng, "Predictive Policing in Practice: A Case Study of Chicago's Strategic Subject List," Scholarship @ Claremont, 2025, https://scholarship.claremont.edu/cmc_theses/3923/.
[29] Jessica Saunders et al., "Predictions Put into Practice: A Quasi-Experimental Evaluation of Chicago's Predictive Policing Pilot," *Journal of Experimental Criminology* 12, no. 3 (2016): 347–71, https://doi.org/10.1007/s11292-016-9272-0.
[30] Stroud, "Heat Listed."
[31] Saunders et al., "Predictions Put into Practice: A Quasi-Experimental Evaluation of Chicago's Predictive Policing Pilot."
[32] Annie Sweeney, "For Years Chicago Police Rated the Risk of Tens of Thousands Being Caught up in Violence. That Controversial Effort Has Quietly Been Ended.," Chicago Tribune, 2020, https://www.chicagotribune.com/2020/01/24/for-years-chicago-police-rated-the-risk-of-tens-of-thousands-being-caught-up-in-violence-that-controversial-effort-has-quietly-been-ended/.

nationally in 2017.[33] A study on CAS in 2020 found that, while burglaries decreased after CAS was implemented, there was no correlation between the predicted hot spots and the actual location of burglaries.[34]

In New Jersey, **Geolitica** – formerly known as **PredPol** – was used by the Plainfield Police Department in place-based predictive settings. Out of 23,631 predictions, fewer than 100 correctly assessed the location and type of crime.[35] Digging deeper, journalists found that predictions for aggravated assault and robbery had just a 0.6 percent success rate, slightly above the average. Burglaries, on the other hand, had just a 0.1 percent success rate.[36] In a town of just 54,000 people, Geolitica predicted 80 crime events per day, while the most crimes reported in any day during the analysis period was just 22.

## Data Availability and Transparency

Outside of discrimination and efficacy concerns, critics of predictive policing technologies are concerned about the transparency, or lack thereof, of law enforcement agencies that utilize predictive technologies. As previously mentioned, LAPD's LASER required lawsuits in order to release limited information, and the New York Police Department (NYPD) similarly has been historically reluctant to provide their data.[37] In 2016, civil rights groups, including the NAACP and ACLU, issued a joint statement regarding predictive policing; one of their principal concerns was the lack of transparency offered by both law enforcement and the vendors that

[33] Gabriel Geiger, "The Netherlands Is Becoming a Predictive Policing Hot Spot," VICE, 2020, https://www.vice.com/en/article/the-netherlands-is-becoming-a-predictive-policing-hot-spot/.
[34] Litska Strikwerda, "Predictive Policing: The Risks Associated with Risk Assessment," *The Police Journal: Theory, Practice and Principles* 94, no. 3 (2020): 0032258X2094774, https://doi.org/10.1177/0032258x20947749.
[35] Aaron Sankin and Surya Mattu, "Predictive Policing Software Terrible at Predicting Crimes – The Markup," The Markup, 2023, https://themarkup.org/prediction-bias/2023/10/02/predictive-policing-software-terrible-at-predicting-crimes.
[36] Ibid.
[37] Tim Lau, "Predictive Policing Explained," Brennan Center for Justice, 2020, https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/predictive-policing-explained.

produce predictive policing software.[38] In cities like New Orleans, the vendor of their predictive policing software remained publicly undisclosed, requiring a journalistic investigation to uncover that the vendor was Palantir, a data mining and software firm.[39] Palantir is no stranger to transparency concerns; the NYPD paid them $2.5 million, the reason for which is still undisclosed.[40] In Australia, the Victoria Police Force has refused to elaborate on its predictive policing tool and has yet to provide even the name of the tool.[41]

While critics seek greater transparency in predictive policing tools, law enforcement and software vendors have pushed back on these calls for openness. Law enforcement officials want to avoid informing potential offenders about how their tools work, and vendors themselves want to protect their **proprietary** technology and intellectual property.[42] Through this, predictive policing as it is currently is akin to a **black box**–in other words, a system that law enforcement can use and receive information from without any technical knowledge about the inner workings.

Lastly, researchers are limited in their ability to accurately judge predictive tools due to their proprietary nature. As most predictive software is black-boxed, access to the code is hidden. As such, it becomes difficult to accurately judge and assess the algorithms themselves, not just the variables that the predictive tools process.[43] To study the algorithm, researchers may be forced to reverse-engineer the predictive algorithms. The proprietary nature of predictive software impedes peer review, leaving the real-world impacts of predictive policing largely unverified before its implementation. Without pre-implementation verification, the consequences and effects of predictive software often become clear only long after widespread deployment.

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[38] Am. Civ. Lib. Union, "Statement of Concern About Predictive Policing by ACLU and 16 Civil Rights Privacy, Racial Justice, and Technology Organizations."
[39] Heaven, "Predictive Policing Algorithms Are Racist. They Need to Be Dismantled."
[40] Impala Global, "Predictive Policing & The Right to Non-Discrimination."
[41] Ibid.
[42] Impala Global, "Predictive Policing & The Right to Non-Discrimination."
[43] Kiana Alikhademi et al., "A Review of Predictive Policing from the Perspective of Fairness," *Artificial Intelligence and Law* 30, no. 1 (2021), https://doi.org/10.1007/s10506-021-09286-4.

# History of the Problem

## Evolution of Policing Tools over Time

Attempting to predict crimes dates back to the early 20th century, where in the late 1920s, the Chicago School of Sociology sought to predict the **recidivism** rate of formerly incarcerated individuals on parole.[44] This initiative was led by Ernest Burgess, who created the Burgess method of unit-weighted regression and institutionalized the **actuarial approach**.[45] Using 21 variables, such as personality type, nationality, and prior criminal records, Burgess sought to identify which independent variables were most correlated with recidivism.[46] Once completed, he graded inmates and assigned points to them based on whether they scored above the average on each factor. Ultimately, he found that those with the most above-average scores had the lowest rates of reoffending, while those with the fewest had the highest.[47] By 1935, the Burgess method was being applied in the field in Chicago and Illinois.[48] Burgess's actuarial predictive method spread to several additional aspects of the justice system, leading to the creation of tools to predict sexual offender recidivism and violent recidivism for offenders with mental disorders.[49]

In 1994, the first known predictive policing tool was created by the New York City Police Department (NYPD). Created by then-police Commissioner Bill Bratton and Jack Maple, the system known as **CompStat** was the precursor to modern predictive policing.[50] Under this system, precincts recorded crime data to NYPD analysts, who modified computer programs to

[44] Andrew Ferguson, *Policing Predictive Policing* (2017), https://openscholarship.wustl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=6306&context=law_lawreview.
[45] Ibid.
[46] Bernard Harcourt, "Ernest W. Burgess and Parole Prediction," *University of Chicago Press eBooks*, University of Chicago Press, 2013, 47–76, https://doi.org/10.7208/chicago/9780226315997.003.0003.
[47] Ibid.
[48] Ibid.
[49] Ferguson, *Policing Predictive Policing*.
[50] David Black, "Predictive Policing Is Here Now," Manhattan Institute, 2023, https://manhattan.institute/article/predictive-policing-is-here-now.

analyze the data and identify lagging precincts.[51] After CompStat was launched, New York City saw a significant decrease in crime; whether or not CompStat was a significant contributor to that decrease is still hotly debated to this day.[52] Today, variations of CompStat are used in large cities and police departments worldwide.

Beginning in the early 2000s, predictive policing evolved from rudimentary crime-mapping tools like CompStat into data-driven, algorithmic systems powered by **machine learning** and **big data**. The United States was one of the earliest adopters of more algorithmic policing in the wake of the 2008 recession. With police budgets slashed, law enforcement turned to predictive policing tools to improve efficiency and cut costs.[53] In 2009, the U.S **National Institute of Justice (NIJ)** awarded millions of dollars to major U.S cities to develop predictive tools.[54] In the following years, the adoption of predictive policing skyrocketed; in 2014, a survey of 200 police departments saw 38% of departments already using predictive policing, while 70% expected to implement predictive policing tools within the next five years.[55]

In the 21st century, governments around the world are placing a heightened focus on predictive policing tools. The U.S allocated millions of dollars in funds towards developing predictive tools, as did nations like Australia, the Netherlands, and Denmark in partnership with private vendors such as Palantir and Geolitica. Cities and regions in nations such as India and China have developed their own in-house systems like Maharashtra's Maharashtra Advanced

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[51] Chris Smith, "The Crime-Fighting Program That Changed New York Forever," Intelligencer, 2018, https://nymag.com/intelligencer/2018/03/the-crime-fighting-program-that-changed-new-york-forever.html.
[52] Ibid.
[53] VRKRBR, "The History of Predictive Policing in the United States," Medium, 2022, https://medium.com/%40Vera_Kerber/a-brief-history-of-predictive-policing-in-the-united-states-ec3568e5c42c.
[54] "NIJ FY09 Predictive Policing Demonstration and Evaluation Program," National Institute of Justice, 2009, https://nij.ojp.gov/funding/opportunities/nij-2009-2239.
[55] *Future Trends in Policing* (2014), https://www.policeforum.org/assets/docs/Free_Online_Documents/Leadership/future%20trends%20in%20policing%202014.pdf.

Research and Vigilance for Enhanced Law Enforcement (MARVEL) or the Crime Prediction System in Suzhou.[56]

Recently, however, there is a growing international consensus that predictive policing as it currently exists is unfit for purpose. The United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination has concluded that predictive policing systems that rely on historical data are prone to producing discriminatory outcomes.[57] In the European Union, the EU Commission's then-vice president Margrethe Vestager called predictive policing "not acceptable", while cities across the United States have scaled back their predictive policing operations after backlash surrounding failed predictive tools and allegations of discriminatory practices.[58]

## Key Historical Cases

### Case Study: New Delhi's CMAPS

In India, researchers found that a New Delhi-based predictive model named the **Crime Mapping, Analytics and Predictive System (CMAPS)** suffered from a multitude of biases, both implicit and explicit. They found that the model put specific groups of individuals under increased surveillance based on caste, gender, class, and religious minority status, among other factors.[59] Hotlines from which the model used data saw the "overwhelming majority" of calls

[56] 丁国锋, "法制日报--2014年10月09日--视点--'大数据'给公安警务改革带来了什么," Archive.Org, 2025, https://web.archive.org/web/20181221041642/http://epaper.legaldaily.com.cn/fzrb/content/20141009/Articel04001GN.htm.
[57] Impala Global, "Predictive Policing & The Right to Non-Discrimination."
[58] Daphne Leprince-Ringuet, "The Trouble with AI: Why We Need New Laws to Stop Algorithms Ruining Our Lives," ZDNET, 2020, https://www.zdnet.com/article/the-trouble-with-ai-why-we-need-new-laws-to-stop-algorithms-from-ruining-our-lives/.
[59] Vidushi Marda and Shivangi Narayan, "Data in New Delhi's Predictive Policing System," *Proceedings of the 2020 Conference on Fairness, Accountability, and Transparency*, ahead of print, 2020, https://doi.org/10.1145/3351095.3372865.

originate from slums, while individuals from wealthier areas "hardly called", introducing a reporting bias to the data.[60] Critics point to this as another bias; to have accurate, unbiased data from hotlines, individuals across race, class, and other characteristic demographics must report crime at proportional rates to the true crime in a given area.

Data availability and granularity were also identified as issues by researchers. According to the study on CMAPS, data collected by the New Delhi Police had a "disproportionate impact on historically marginalised and vulnerable groups."[61] For example, the study found that while those reporting from more affluent areas often knew their exact address, those living in slums often did not; this led to crimes reported from poorer neighborhoods being plotted at the same spot, artificially creating a hotspot of crime.[62] This induced overpolicing in these hotspots, disproportionately targeting more vulnerable populations in the city. As a heightened law enforcement presence increases the number of stops and arrests, legitimate or not, a **positive feedback loop** is created, which induces further policing of vulnerable populations.

While many predictive systems around the world practice this inadvertent or indirect discrimination, CMAPS also includes a potentially problematic layering system. Within the system itself, CMAPS can be filtered by layers representing immigrant colonies and minority settlement areas, which was implemented due to the belief that crime rises in these areas by virtue of the individuals who live there.[63] Researchers argue that, while this practice is debatably unconstitutional, law enforcement hides behind CMAPS' "veneer of objectivity" to shield themselves against challenges.

[60] Ibid.
[61] Ibid.
[62] Ibid.
[63] Marda and Narayan, "Data in New Delhi's Predictive Policing System."

Lastly, researchers question the potential arbitrary nature of some data points fed to CMAPS. Researchers point to New Delhi's crime-recording method: the PA100 form. Created in 1956, this form is used today to categorize all crimes into one of 130 categories; CMAPS later uses these labels to make predictions, assuming that these labels are objectively correct. Scholars find issue with this approach, claiming that the PA100 reflects an antiquated understanding of crime shaped by mid-20th-century legal and social norms. This embeds outdated and potentially biased assumptions into modern predictive policing systems, which treat potentially flawed categorization as absolute truth.

## Case Study: Los Angeles' LASER

One of the earliest adopters of predictive policing techniques was the Los Angeles Police Department, which won nearly half a million dollars to fund the development of the **Los Angeles Strategic Extraction and Restoration (LASER)** program in 2008.[64] Combining both place-based predictive techniques and person-based techniques, the LAPD field-tested LASER in 2011. In this test, LASER created areas called "LASER zones" where gun violence was predicted to occur, thereby requiring heightened law enforcement presence. It also created a database of likely offenders, the worst of which would be featured in "Chronic Offender Bulletins", a real-time intelligence brief distributed to officers.[65,66] These offenders were judged on a point-based system:

- 5 points if the individual is a gang member.
- 5 points if the individual is on parole or probation.

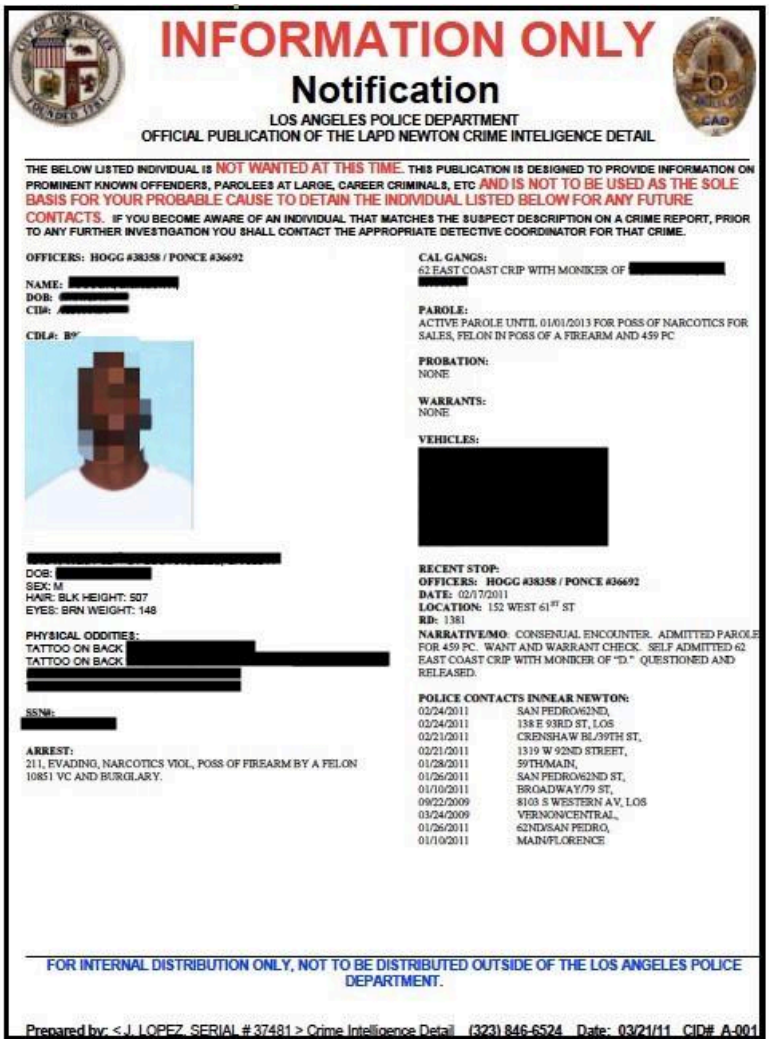
[64] Eva Ruth Moravec, "Do Algorithms Have a Place in Policing?," The Atlantic, 2019, https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2019/09/do-algorithms-have-place-policing/596851/.
[65] Ibid.
[66] Craig Uchida et al., *The Los Angeles Smart Policing Initiative: Reducing Gun-Related Violence through Operation LASER Smart Policing: Research Snapshot* (n.d.), https://bja.ojp.gov/sites/g/files/xyckuh186/files/media/document/LosAngelesSPI.pdf.

- 5 points if the individual had any prior arrests with a handgun.
- 5 points if the individual had any violent crimes on his or her rap sheet.
- 1 point for every "quality police contact" in the last two years.[67]

In 2017, two more factors were added:

- Identify the number of violent crime arrests the individual had over the last two years. Apply 5 points for each violent crime arrest.
- Determine whether the individual has used a gun in the course of his/her activities. Apply 5 points for each incident involving a gun over the last two years.[68]

[67] Mark Smith, *Review of Selected Los Angeles Police Department Data-Driven Policing Strategies* (2019), https://www.lapdpolicecom.lacity.org/031219/BPC_19-0072.pdf.
[68] Smith, *Review of Selected Los Angeles Police Department Data-Driven Policing Strategies*.



INFORMATION ONLY

Notification

LOS ANGELES POLICE DEPARTMENT
OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE LAPD NEWTON CRIME INTELIGENCE DETAIL

THE BELOW LISTED INDIVIDUAL IS NOT WANTED AT THIS TIME. THIS PUBLICATION IS DESIGNED TO PROVIDE INFORMATION ON PROMINENT KNOWN OFFENDERS, PAROLEES AT LARGE, CAREER CRIMINALS, ETC AND IS NOT TO BE USED AS THE SOLE BASIS FOR YOUR PROBABLE CAUSE TO DETAIN THE INDIVIDUAL LISTED BELOW FOR ANY FUTURE CONTACTS. IF YOU BECOME AWARE OF AN INDIVIDUAL THAT MATCHES THE SUSPECT DESCRIPTION ON A CRIME REPORT, PRIOR TO ANY FURTHER INVESTIGATION YOU SHALL CONTACT THE APPROPRIATE DETECTIVE COORDINATOR FOR THAT CRIME.

OFFICERS: HOGG #38358 / PONCE #36692

NAME: [redacted]
DOB: [redacted]
CII#: [redacted]
CDL#: [redacted]

[redacted]
DOB: [redacted]
SEX: M
HAIR: BLK HEIGHT: 507
EYES: BRN WEIGHT: 148

PHYSICAL ODDITIES:
TATTOO ON BACK [redacted]
TATTOO ON BACK [redacted]

SSN#: [redacted]

ARREST:
211, EVADING, NARCOTICS VIOL, POSS OF FIREARM BY A FELON
10851 VC AND BURGLARY.

CAL GANGS:
62 EAST COAST CRIP WITH MONIKER OF [redacted]

PAROLE:
ACTIVE PAROLE UNTIL 01/01/2013 FOR POSS OF NARCOTICS FOR SALES, FELON IN POSS OF A FIREARM AND 459 PC

PROBATION:
NONE

WARRANTS:
NONE

VEHICLES:
[redacted]

RECENT STOP:
OFFICERS: HOGG #38358 / PONCE #36692
DATE: 02/17/2011
LOCATION: 152 WEST 61ST ST
RD: 1381
NARRATIVE/MO: CONSENUAL ENCOUNTER. ADMITTED PAROLE FOR 459 PC. WANT AND WARRANT CHECK. SELF ADMITTED 62 EAST COAST CRIP WITH MONIKER OF "D." QUESTIONED AND RELEASED.

POLICE CONTACTS INNEAR NEWTON:

| | |
|---|---|
| 02/24/2011 | SAN PEDRO/62ND, |
| 02/24/2011 | 138 E 93RD ST, LOS |
| 02/21/2011 | CRENSHAW BL/39TH ST, |
| 02/21/2011 | 1319 W 92ND STREET, |
| 01/28/2011 | 59TH/MAIN, |
| 01/26/2011 | SAN PEDRO/62ND ST, |
| 01/10/2011 | BROADWAY/79 ST, |
| 09/22/2009 | 8103 S WESTERN AV, LOS |
| 03/24/2009 | VERNON/CENTRAL, |
| 01/26/2011 | 62ND/SAN PEDRO, |
| 01/10/2011 | MAIN/FLORENCE |

FOR INTERNAL DISTRIBUTION ONLY, NOT TO BE DISTRIBUTED OUTSIDE OF THE LOS ANGELES POLICE DEPARTMENT.

Prepared by: < J. LOPEZ, SERIAL # 37481 > Crime Intelligence Detail (323) 846-6524 Date: 03/21/11 CID# A-001

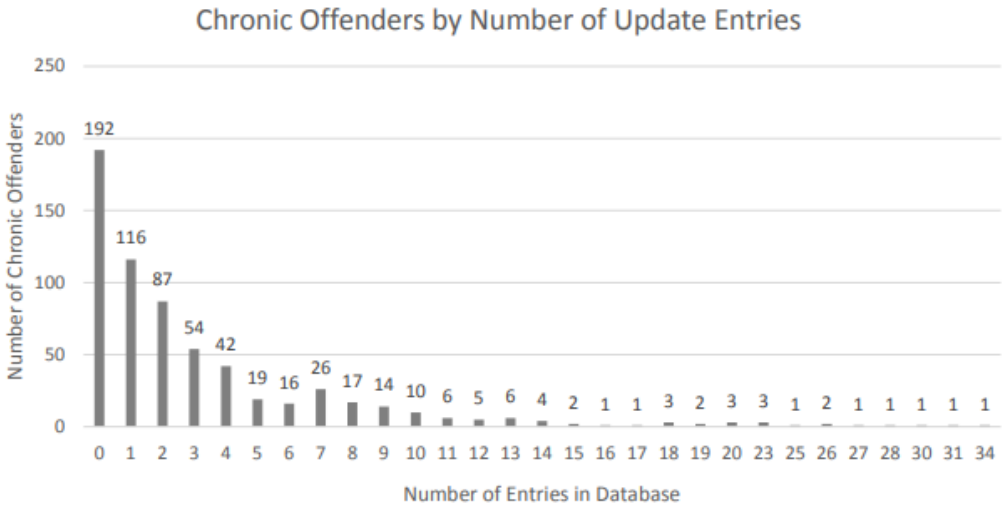
*A "work up" template created to organize data points for the department's predictive "chronic offender" formula.*[69]

Critics argue that the chronic offender point system was designed to fail. They point primarily towards the last point – gaining points for being stopped by police – as particularly problematic. Individuals on the offending lists were argued to be stopped more often than those

[69] George Joseph, "The LAPD Has a New Surveillance Formula, Powered by Palantir," Theappeal.Org, 2018, https://theappeal.org/the-lapd-has-a-new-surveillance-formula-powered-by-palantir-1e277a95762a/.

off the list by virtue of their being on the list, which made it impossible to get off the list due to the increased police stops.[70]

Concerned with the implementation of LASER, a community group in Los Angeles known as the Stop LAPD Spying Coalition filed California Public Records requests in 2017 to push the LAPD to release information about LASER; after these requests went ignored, they filed a lawsuit, forcing the LAPD to release LASER records.[71] Following this, the LAPD Inspector General internally audited the program in 2019, which revealed significant issues with the program. Nearly half of the "chronic offenders" had zero or one previous arrests for a violent crime, and half also had zero previous gun-related arrests.[72] Furthermore, while the vast majority of individuals on the chronic offender list had been contacted fewer than five times, some had been contacted up to 45 times.[73]




*Chronic offenders by number of quality police contacts.*[74]

[70] Grace Baek et al., "LAPD Not Giving up on Data-Driven Policing, Even after Scrapping Controversial Program," Www.Cbsnews.Com, 2020, https://www.cbsnews.com/news/los-angeles-police-department-laser-data-driven-policing-racial-profiling-2-0-cbsn-originals-documentary/.
[71] Ibid.
[72] Smith, *Review of Selected Los Angeles Police Department Data-Driven Policing Strategies*.
[73] Ibid.
[74] Smith, Review of Selected Los Angeles Police Department Data-Driven Policing Strategies.

In April 2019, the LAPD shut down LASER. The chief spokesperson for the LAPD described LASER's data as "inconsistent", while the inspector general's report asserted that there was a "lack of clear, reliable data that could be used to measure both the inputs and outcomes related to these efforts."[75,76]

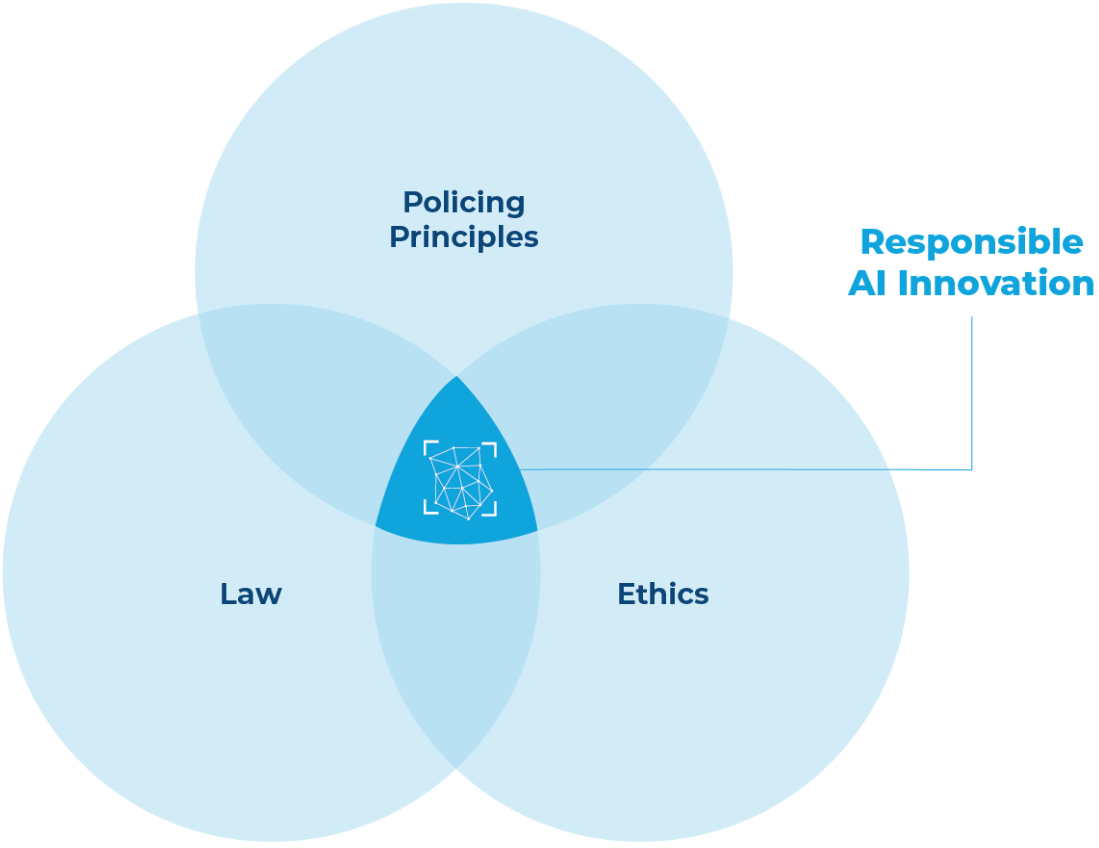
[75] Mark Puente, "LAPD Ends Another Data-Driven Crime Program Touted to Target Violent Offenders," Los Angeles Times, 2019, https://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-laser-lapd-crime-data-program-20190412-story.html.
[76] Smith, *Review of Selected Los Angeles Police Department Data-Driven Policing Strategies*.

# Past Actions

## UNODC Guidelines on AI and Crime Prevention

In November 2024, the **United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)** held a joint seminar with the **International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL)** and the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI) regarding artificial intelligence in law enforcement capacities.[77] In this seminar, they introduced the Toolkit for Responsible AI Innovation in Law Enforcement, which provides a framework for responsible applications of AI in law enforcement capacities.[78] In this toolkit, the UNODC emphasized that predictive policing and AI in law enforcement are not inherently good or bad, but rather dependent on their design. According to the UNODC, the responsible development of predictive tooling lies at the intersection of policing principles, law, and ethics.[79]

[77] Martin Reeve and Golda Roma, "Responsible AI Innovation in Law Enforcement: Understanding Risks and Opportunities," United Nations : Office on Drugs and Crime, 2021, https://www.unodc.org/unodc/human-trafficking/glo-act6/Countries/responsible-ai-innovation-in-law-enforcement_-understanding-risks-and-opportunities.html.
[78] Ibid.
[79] "Introduction to Responsible AI Innovation | AI Toolkit," Ai-Lawenforcement.Org, 2025, https://www.ai-lawenforcement.org/guidance/intro#ch1-2.




*UNODC-identified requirements for responsible AI innovation.*[80]

The UNODC also established more specific guidelines for the criteria of using predictive tooling and AI: Legitimacy, Necessity, and Proportionality.[81] As using predictive policing may infringe on the rights of others, the UNODC argues that law enforcement must only utilize predictive tooling when there is a legitimate reason, according to both domestic and international law. Furthermore, law enforcement should only interfere with the rights of others when

[80] UNICRI and INTERPOL. (Revised February 2024). Toolkit for Responsible AI Innovation in Law Enforcement: Introduction to Responsible AI Innovation.
[81] "Principles for Responsible AI Innovation | AI Toolkit," Ai-Lawenforcement.Org, 2024, https://www.ai-lawenforcement.org/guidance/principles.

absolutely necessary to achieve the goal; in other words, when deploying predictive systems, they should only be utilized when needed to fulfill specific and targeted goals. Lastly, if civil liberties are violated, the negative effects of violating civil liberties must be less than the good done by achieving a specified goal.[82]

Lastly, the UNODC Toolkit specifies certain aspects of predictive tools that should be avoided or treated with caution. They place a heavy emphasis on avoiding human bias when providing predictive tools with data, as they claim that predictive models are prone to taking on the human biases of the data that they receive.[83] Furthermore, they caution against significant autonomous decision-making by predictive software, citing concerns over accountability should the model act incorrectly. The Toolkit further specifically addresses "black box" systems, where law enforcement and oversight groups do not receive the model itself, but rather the data it outputs. This, according to UNODC, is highly undesirable due to issues surrounding transparency, as oversight groups and law enforcement cannot tell how the predictive model reaches its conclusions.[84]

## International Actions and Agreements

Other branches of the United Nations have made recommendations regarding the broader use of artificial intelligence worldwide. In 2021, the **United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)** released the Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence, which outlined a global standard on the usage of AI. In this recommendation, UNESCO acknowledged the value and potential benefits of AI, with some important caveats. On AI actors – individuals involved in the creation of agentic ai or predictive

[82] Ai-Lawenforcementorg, "Principles for Responsible AI Innovation | AI Toolkit."
[83] Ai-Lawenforcementorg, "Introduction to Responsible AI Innovation | AI Toolkit."
[84] Ibid.

systems – UNESCO wrote that they should "promote social justice and safeguard fairness and non-discrimination of any kind in compliance with international law", as well as "make all reasonable efforts to minimize and avoid reinforcing or perpetuating discriminatory or biased applications and outcomes."[85]

Outside of the United Nations, the European Union (EU) has also made efforts to regulate the usage of AI and predictive tools. In 2024, the EU adopted the **Artificial Intelligence Act**, which partially banned predictive policing.[86] The ban specifically targets person-based predictive policing, making it illegal to predict one's probability of committing a crime solely based on their personal characteristics or demographics. However, it allows for person-based predictive policing in order to assess and identify potential perpetrators for crimes that have already been committed, as it works with verifiable facts.[87]

[85] UNESCO, "Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence | UNESCO," Www.Unesco.Org, 2021, https://www.unesco.org/en/legal-affairs/recommendation-ethics-artificial-intelligence.
[86] EU AI Act, "High-Level Summary of the AI Act," EU Artificial Intelligence Act, Future of Life Institute, 2024, https://artificialintelligenceact.eu/high-level-summary/.
[87] Europol, *An Observatory Report from the Europol Innovation Lab AI and Policing The Benefits and Challenges of Artificial Intelligence for Law Enforcement* (2023), https://www.europol.europa.eu/cms/sites/default/files/documents/AI-and-policing.pdf.

## Possible Solutions

In 2016, civil rights groups, including the NAACP and ACLU, issued a joint statement regarding predictive policing.[88] Their statement argued the following:

> "Whenever automated predictions are considered for policing, all **stakeholders** must understand what data is being used, what the system aims to predict, the design of the algorithm that creates the predictions, how predictions will be used in practice, and what relevant factors are not being measured or analyzed…Vendors must provide transparency, and the police and other users of these systems must fully and publicly inform public officials, civil society, community stakeholders, and the broader public on each of these points. Vendors must be subject to in-depth, independent, and ongoing scrutiny of their techniques, goals, and performance…A thorough and well-informed public debate, and rigorous, independent, expert assessment of the statistical validity and operational impact of any new system, are essential before any new system can be deployed at scale."[89]

Civil rights groups argue for full transparency, independent oversight, and meaningful public engagement before and during the use of predictive policing systems. Without such oversight and screening, predictive tools run the risk of causing harm to the very communities they are meant to protect.

One suggested solution to the possible **algorithmic bias** present in models is extensive human oversight. This implies the prohibition of "blind box" operations, which cannot be

[88] Am. Civ. Lib. Union, "Statement of Concern About Predictive Policing by ACLU and 16 Civil Rights Privacy, Racial Justice, and Technology Organizations."
[89] Am. Civ. Lib. Union, "Statement of Concern About Predictive Policing by ACLU and 16 Civil Rights Privacy, Racial Justice, and Technology Organizations."

overseen by law enforcement or investigators. With that comes the necessity for independent oversight of predictive policing outside of law enforcement; through transparency and publicly sharing data, law enforcement may be able to build trust within the communities that they serve.[90] Furthermore, predictive systems should be tailored to the needs of their communities; through community involvement in the development of predictive tools, the community can have a say in how they are implemented to serve the community best. Lastly, law enforcement could be subject to regular audits of its predictive tools in order to ensure that predictive tools are both trustworthy at the inception of the program and throughout their lifespan.[91]

Another group of solutions involves specific restrictions on the types of predictive policing allowed, such as in the EU, or restrictions on the filters and data points fed to the predictive tool. For example, there could be restrictions placed on the type of personal data collected in person-based predictive tools, such as race, gender, and class, or a ban on these tools altogether. In terms of place-based predictive policing, restrictions could be placed on the usage of known, biased historical data, which may represent overpolicing and overreporting of minority areas. As seen in the New Delhi case, data could also be required to undergo **normalization** in order to correct for data availability issues.

[90] Brandon Pimentel, "Predictive Policing: Navigating the Challenges," Thomson Reuters Law Blog, 2025, https://legal.thomsonreuters.com/blog/predictive-policing-navigating-the-challenges/.
[91] Pimentel, "Predictive Policing: Navigating the Challenges."

# Bloc Positions

## Commonalities

All nations interested in the development of predictive policing have an inherent incentive to have a predictive tool that functions properly and optimally. As a natural extension, countries are incentivised to produce and utilize systems that pass neutral, unbiased judgement and are not discriminatory. Likewise, countries want to produce predictive systems that transcend the implicit and historical biases of conventional policing that hinder effective and equitable law enforcement. In order to do so, all nations want high-quality, up-to-date, and representative data for the nation, region, and city in which the predictive tools are being implemented. Lastly, nations hope that predictive policing will not only reduce crime, but also reduce the cost of law enforcement and limit inefficiencies.

## Privacy-Focused Democracies

In democracies with high standards of privacy laws, predictive policing is a considerable policy challenge, as governments seek to balance potential security and safety benefits with the ever-present risk of violating civil liberties. In order to implement predictive policing, they argue for strict data protections and emphasize privacy and transparency over marginal benefit in crime prevention. Nations that fall into this category are most likely to support an international agreement limiting the usage of potentially problematic identifiers such as race, political affiliation, and religion as factors. They may also be averse to implementing person-based predictive tools, preferring place-based tools as an alternative.

## Security-Centered Governance Models

In security-centered nations, predictive policing is an extremely viable solution to tackling crime within their countries. While civil liberties are certainly a factor in these nations, security and order may take precedence over potential privacy concerns. Often, they look to produce predictive tools in-house or without outsourcing to private entities to produce predictive tooling. While this removes the black-box problem, these nations are often hesitant to publicly share data. Furthermore, these nations may be skeptical of international agreements limiting predictive tools; however, they may be supportive of some restrictions on private vendors with minimal governmental oversight.

## Technology-Oriented Democracies

Countries that fall into this category are often supportive of the usage of predictive tools, but often collaborate with the private sector to produce them. While civil liberties are certainly a factor, these nations are more comfortable with the security-privacy tradeoff than privacy-focused democracies. Due to the private nature of the development of their predictive tooling, these nations may be more hesitant to agree to international transparency standards that may come into conflict with intellectual property rights or proprietary technology violations. These nations may be highly resistant to bans on predictive policing software, but may support marginal agreements, such as best practices documents or internal auditing. While they may release some data to the public, they are highly unlikely to release details of the model and algorithm itself.

## Resource-Conscious States Prioritizing Public Safety

In nations where resources for law enforcement are strained and sometimes insufficient, predictive policing is seen as a tool to bridge the gap between the funding allocated and the funding necessary to properly operate. These states place a large emphasis on predictive tools that maximize the efficiency of their budget and personnel, even sometimes at the expense of some privacy or civil liberties. Rather than person-based predictive policing, which may incur a larger cost of data collection, they may prefer place-based predictive tools that may be less expensive. Furthermore, they may outsource their predictive efforts to overseas technology companies, as production in-house may be unaffordable or inefficient. Internationally, they may be supportive of international funding and guidelines for ethical AI usage, but are hesitant to embrace potentially costly international regulations or compliance checks by international inspectors. Furthermore, they may be open to regulation of private vendors to ensure sovereign ownership of the data collected, as well as potential access to the algorithms produced by these vendors.

# Glossary

*Actuarial Approach* - A method that uses statistical variables and data (e.g., past crime records, personality) to estimate the likelihood of future events.

*Algorithmic Bias* - Systematic and reproducible as well as intrinsic errors in a computer system that can cause discriminatory results, such as biasing some users over others.

*Artificial Intelligence Act* - A 2024 regulation adopted by the European Union (EU) that sets rules for artificial intelligence. It partially prohibits person-based predictive policing.

*BAME (Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic)* - An acronym used in the United Kingdom to refer to individuals from non-white ethnic backgrounds.

*Big Data* - Extremely large, complex datasets that are analyzed computationally to reveal patterns, trends, and associations.

*Black Box* - A term describing a system or software whose internal workings are hidden from the user.

*CAS (Crime Anticipation System)* - A place-based predictive policing program rolled out nationally in the Netherlands in 2017.

*CMAPS (Crime Mapping, Analytics and Predictive System)* - A predictive policing model used in New Delhi, India.

*CompStat* - A performance management system and precursor to modern predictive policing, created by the NYPD in 1994. It used crime statistics to identify crime patterns and hold police precincts accountable for crime reduction.

*Crime Nabi* - An AI-based predictive policing system developed in Japan and implemented before the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games.

*Geolitica* - A predictive policing software vendor, formerly known as PredPol.

*Hotspots* - Geographic areas identified as having a high prior concentration or future risk of crime.

*INTERPOL (International Criminal Police Organization)* - An intergovernmental organization that supports worldwide crime control and law enforcement.

*LASER (Los Angeles Strategic Extraction and Restoration)* - A predictive policing program field-tested by the LAPD in 2011 and later implemented. It combined place-based "LASER zones" with a person-based point system to identify "Chronic Offenders."

*Machine Learning* - A subset of artificial intelligence where computer systems learn and adapt from data without being explicitly programmed. It is the core technology behind many advanced predictive policing algorithms.

*Near-repeat Modeling* - An analytical technique that identifies the increased risk of a crime occurring near the location of an initial crime event for a short period afterward.

*NIJ (National Institute of Justice)* - The research, development, and evaluation agency of the U.S. Department of Justice.

*Normalization of Data* - The process of adjusting values in a dataset to correct for inconsistencies or biases.

*Palantir* - A private American data mining and software firm that develops predictive tools used by law enforcement in the US and Europe, such as its "Gotham" software.

*Positive Feedback Loop* - A process where a system's output amplifies its own input, creating a self-perpetuating cycle where outputs lead to more of the same inputs that caused the original output.

*PredPol* - One of the most widely used place-based predictive policing software programs, developed in conjunction with the LAPD and now used in over 50 police departments across the US. Its parent company is now named Geolitica.

*Proprietary* - Something owned by a private individual or company and protected by patents or copyrights.

*RAND Corporation* - A non-profit global policy think tank.

*Recidivism* - The tendency of a convicted criminal to reoffend.

*Risk Terrain Analysis* - A spatiotemporal method that quantifies how features of a physical landscape affect the likelihood of crime occurring in that area.

*Spatiotemporal Analysis* - Methods that analyze data incorporating both space (geography) and time. In policing, it is used to determine when and where crime is most likely to occur.

*SSL (Strategic Subjects List)* - A list generated by a person-based predictive model in Chicago that identified individuals considered to be at the highest risk of being involved in gun violence as either the victim or perpetrator.

*Stakeholders* - Individuals, groups, or organizations with an interest or concern in a particular system or policy.

*Systemic Bias* - Prejudice and/or discrimination that is embedded within the policies, practices, and culture of institutions, which may lead to unequal treatment and outcomes for different groups. Systemic bias typically disadvantages minority groups, but may affect all members of society.

*UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization)* - A specialized agency of the UN that aims to achieve world peace and security through international cooperation.

*UNODC (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime)* - A UN office responsible for helping member states combat illicit drugs, crime, and terrorism.

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# Topic B: Prison Labor and Human Rights Standards

## Statement of the Problem

### Definitions of Prison Labor

**Prison labor** is a concept that has existed and evolved for centuries, becoming one of the most prevalent ways of disciplining people within a variety of **prison** systems. To better understand what prison labor entails, it is important to first define what labor is and where prison labor falls within it.

Labor generally refers to "human activity that provides the goods or services in an economy".[92] Within labor, an important subsection, distinguished by the International Labour Organization (ILO), is **forced labor**, which the ILO defines as "all work or service which is exacted from any person under the threat of a penalty and for which the person has not offered himself or herself voluntarily".[93]

Within the definition of forced labor, the ILO also includes a handful of exceptions, including the following: "work or service exacted from any person as a consequence of a conviction in a court of law, carried out under the supervision of a public authority".[94] Because of this exception codified by the ILO, the existence of labor within prisons is not considered an infringement on workers or human rights generally. However, between theoretical definitions

[92] Merriam Webster. 2019. "Definition of LABOR." Merriam-Webster.com. 2019. https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/labor.
[93] ILO. "What Is Forced Labour? | International Labour Organization." www.ilo.org, January 28, 2024. https://www.ilo.org/topics/forced-labour-modern-slavery-and-trafficking-persons/what-forced-labour.
[94] Ibid.

and the reality of forced labor, there exists a gray area, allowing the inhumane treatment of prisoners.

## Rights of Prisoners

According to the Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights (OHCHR), all prisoners falling under the jurisdiction of member states to the UN "all prisoners shall retain the human rights and fundamental freedoms set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights," such as treatment with respect and dignity, livable conditions, and opportunities for reintegration into society, "except for those limitations that are demonstrably necessitated by the fact of **incarceration**".[95]

The last excerpt of this proclamation often refers to the deprivation of the right to freedom, which is inherent to imprisonment. The restricted movement and time spent in prison is what, at its core, is seen as the punishment for imprisoned people.[96] The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the OHCHR list of basic rights for prisoner rights are broad, leaving themselves to a plethora of interpretations. One relevant piece of international legislation that functions as a ceiling to how liberally the "limitations that are demonstrably necessitated" can be interpreted is the so-called Nelson Mandela Rules. The Nelson Mandela Rules, adopted by the United Nations in 2015, are an extended list of explicitly outlined rules for the treatment of prisoners, including the prohibition of torture and ill-treatment of prisoners.[97] The Nelson Mandela Rules were a big step towards better legislation protecting prisoners, but their implementation is far from ideal. With poor oversight and continuously existing gray areas

[95] United Nations. "Basic Principles for the Treatment of Prisoners." OHCHR, December 14, 1990. https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/basic-principles-treatment-prisoners.
[96] Penal Reform International. "Prison Conditions: The Issue." Penal Reform International, 2021. https://www.penalreform.org/issues/prison-conditions/issue/.
[97] Gilmour, Andrew. "The Nelson Mandela Rules: Protecting the Rights of Persons Deprived of Liberty." United Nations, July 18, 2019.

between prisons as centers for justice and spaces for the maintenance of private interest, prisoner mistreatment in the form of excessive labor and exploitation remains a problem.

## Labor Within Prison Systems

There is a separation to be made between prison work and prison labor. Prison work often entails giving prisoners minimal administrative and maintenance tasks, which help prisons keep running, such as cleaning, doing laundry, or waste management.[98] These tasks are generally unpaid or paid at a very minimum wage, far below domestic and international pay standards.[99]

Prison labor, on the other hand, often "involves prisoners producing goods or services for sale outside of the prison".[100] Since most prisoners don't have the complex skills necessary for more engaging types of work, the labor they conduct is typically boring, repetitive tasks, such as packaging.[101] As such, this type of labor rarely leads to gaining qualifications or growing skills, which could be helpful in the long-term, particularly post-release.[102]

Because of this, arguments that prison labor has benefits for prisoners often fall flat. While doing some sort of work can reduce the issue of boredom and inactivity, which produces risks of self-harm, suicide, and violence in the short-term, due to the nature and conditions of the labor, the costs outweigh the benefits for the prisoners.[103] Not only do prisoners report long-term negative effects on their mental and physical health as a result of prison labor, but the work is often done against prisoners' will and, as mentioned above, doesn't lead to any personal, professional, or even financial benefit.

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[98] Jarman, Ben, and Catherine Heard. "LABOURING behind BARS: ASSESSING INTERNATIONAL LAW on WORKING PRISONERS," 2023. https://www.prisonstudies.org/sites/default/files/resources/downloads/labouring_behind_bars_web_final.pdf.
[99] Ibid.
[100] Ibid.
[101] Ibid.
[102] Ibid.
[103] Ibid.

## Prison Reform Movements

Reckoning with the continuous exploitation of prisoners, many organizations nationally and internationally have united in their efforts to inform people about the inhumane treatment of prisoners and the necessity to reform existing incarceration and prison systems. Imprisonment should lead to the betterment of the individual and of society, but not at the expense of prisoners' rights.

Internationally, the CCPCJ, alongside the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), has continuously encouraged efforts towards prison reform movements. Most recently, at the CCPCJ's 34th session during May 2025, the committee adopted a new resolution, pushing for continued action towards better prison management and treatment of prisoners.[104] This resolution was passed at the 10th anniversary of the adoption of the Nelson Mandela rules.[105] As such, the issue remains just as relevant today as it was a decade ago.

On a national level, many efforts toward a shift away from prison labor and toward comprehensive prison reform are seen within the United States. United States prisons, to this day, remain one of the primary systems that implement excessive prison labor as both punishment to prisoners and a cost-effective method for economic development. U.S. states make up most of the world's largest incarceration rates per capita, as demonstrated in Table 1.[106] Of the 1.2 million total prisoners incarcerated in state and federal prisons in the US, 800,000 are prison laborers, working for either the prison, public enterprises, or private companies.[107]

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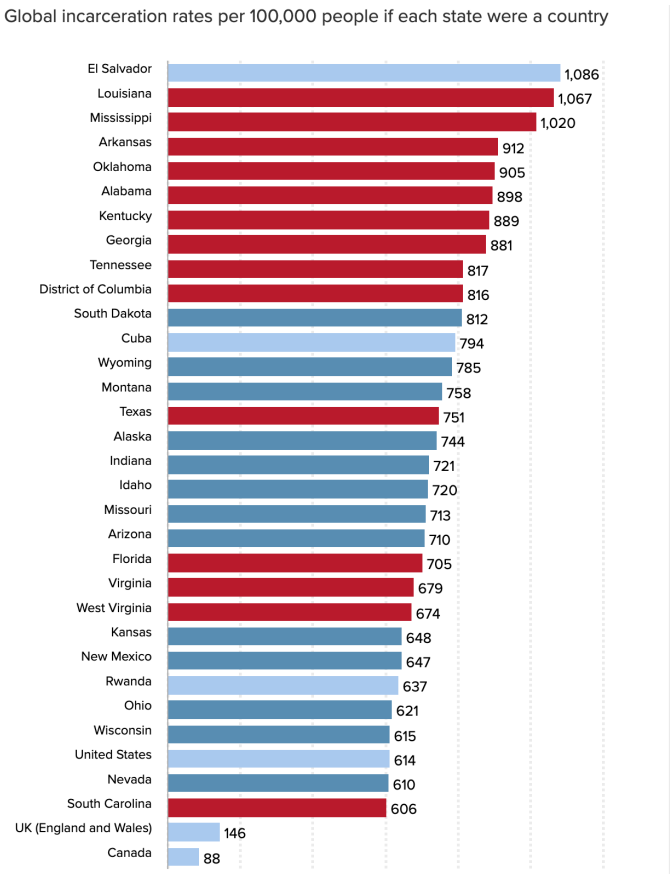
[104] UNODC. "Action on Prisons at the 34th Session of the CCPCJ: New Resolution Adopted." United Nations : Office on Drugs and Crime, 2021. https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/justice-and-prison-reform/cpcj-prison-reform/news/action-on-prisons-at-the-34th-session-of-the-ccpcj_-new-resolution-adopted.html.
[105] Ibid.
[106] Mast, Nina. "Forced Prison Labor in the 'Land of the Free': Rooted in Racism and Economic Exploitation: Spotlight." Economic Policy Institute. Economic Policy Institute, January 16, 2025. https://www.epi.org/publication/rooted-racism-prison-labor/.
[107] Ibid.




*Global Incarceration Rates.*[108]

Since the 1970s, incarceration in the US has increased by 700%. While this number does not reflect the lowering crime rates in the US since the 1970s, the increase is often suspected to be correlated with an idea seemingly shared by the private and public prisons in the US—that prison labor massively lowers the cost of production of goods, thus servicing economic development.[109] By incarcerating more people, they create a larger **labor force**, unprotected by international labor law, and thus available to be used for cheap labor.

US advocacy groups such as the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and the Economic Policy Institute (EPI) have made efforts toward informing, researching, and

[108] Ibid.
[109] Ibid.

supporting prison reforms, highlighting the exploitative labor prisoners are forced to perform, often disproportionately done by prisoners from minority groups in the US.[110]

Addressing prison labor has stakes globally, involving a necessity to create better legislation, oversight, and to divorce prisons from economic interests and from their roots in discriminatory practices. Therefore, the question of prison labor becomes a fundamental question of the protection of human rights and of holding governmental institutions accountable.

[110] ACLU. "Captive Labor: Exploitation of Incarcerated Workers." American Civil Liberties Union. American Civil Liberties Union, June 15, 2022. https://www.aclu.org/news/human-rights/captive-labor-exploitation-of-incarcerated-workers.

# History of the Problem

## Introduction of Prison Labor in the British Empire

The notion of hard labor in prison was first properly introduced in the 18th century in the British Empire. Since the dawn of the 17th century, the British Empire had been sending prisoners to their colonies in the Americas and Australia.[111] However, as criminal convictions were vastly increasing, the Empire was struggling to fit the number of prisoners within their limited spaces. As a result, the Transportation Act of 1717 was passed, which allowed for criminals arrested for a variety of crimes to be transported to the colonies where their sentences would consist of doing labor.[112] At the end of their service, they would receive a pardon and be able to freely pursue paid work.[113] Due to the costs associated with going back to the Empire, many of the convicts remained in the colonies where they were indentured.[114]

Up until the American War of Independence in 1775, an estimated 52,000 convicts were transported to the Americas to do hard labor there as a form of punishment.[115] This was a severe increase, compared to the 16th century—prior to the 1717 Transportation Act, less than 1% of British Empire convicts were transported, whilst after the passing of the act, over 70% were transported.[116] Even so, at least a quarter of the convicts died on their journey to the colonies, due to the poor conditions aboard the **hulks**.[117] Unfortunately, while it was in the captain's interests to maintain the convicts alive to receive their share of the sale proceeds, the material costs

[111] Salmon, Emily. "Convict Labor during the Colonial Period – Encyclopedia Virginia." Encyclopedia Virginia, December 7, 2020. https://encyclopediavirginia.org/entries/convict-labor-during-the-colonial-period/.
[112] Ibid.
[113] BBC. "Methods of Punishment – WJEC - Revision 4 - GCSE History - BBC Bitesize." BBC Bitesize, 2019. https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/z938v9q/revision/4.
[114] Ibid.
[115] Salmon, Emily. "Convict Labor during the Colonial Period – Encyclopedia Virginia." Encyclopedia Virginia, December 7, 2020. https://encyclopediavirginia.org/entries/convict-labor-during-the-colonial-period/.
[116] Clarke, R.J. "The Land of the 'Free': Criminal Transportation to America." The History Press, April 1, 2019. https://thehistorypress.co.uk/article/the-land-of-the-free-criminal-transportation-to-america/.
[117] Ibid.

associated with preserving a slave were much higher than preserving a convict.[118] Therefore, captains prioritized the living conditions of slaves over convicts, in the interest of profits.

*Conditions for Convicts During Transportation on the Hulks.*[119]

While the Empire was pushing for the transportation of these convicts, there were beneficial aspects for landowners in the American colonies, which also contributed to the continuous transportation of convicts to the colonies—indentured labor, performed by the convicts, was significantly cheaper than the labor performed by enslaved people at the time.[120] First, the upfront price to purchase an indentured servant was lower than that of a slave, as the

[118] Ibid.
[119] MilitaryHistoryNow.com. "Floating Purgatory – Life and Death Aboard an 18th Century British Prison Hulk - MilitaryHistoryNow.com." MilitaryHistoryNow.com, January 8, 2018. https://militaryhistorynow.com/2018/01/07/floating-purgatory-life-and-death-aboard-an-18th-century-british-prison-hulk/.
[120] Salmon, Emily. "Convict Labor during the Colonial Period – Encyclopedia Virginia." Encyclopedia Virginia, December 7, 2020. https://encyclopediavirginia.org/entries/convict-labor-during-the-colonial-period/.

indentures were transported and sold through the government, as opposed to through private sellers.[121] Additionally, indentured servants did not need to be paid for the work that they do. Instead, they received their pardon and some clothes after carrying out their sentence, reducing labor costs to a minimum.[122] Lastly, since the convicts were already largely regarded as unworthy members of society, they were easier to exploit.[123]

This process continued in the American colonies until 1776, so once the war had ceased, the Empire had to find different places to transport convicts. Facing many issues with logistics and overcrowding, it was only in 1787 that the Empire began mass transportation of convicts to the Australian colonies.[124] Prisoners convicted of petty crimes received a seven-year sentence, whilst those convicted of more severe crimes received 14-year sentences.[125]

By 1868, the transportation of prisoners to the colonies ceased.[126] The Empire had begun a nationwide prison reform, building over 50 new prisons by 1850 to accommodate the large number of convicts.[127] More than building more prisons, the reforms also introduced the controversial issue of prison labor. In the 1850s, there were many proponents of giving prisoners silent work, which would help them gain skills they could use to retain a job post-prison.[128] However, by the 1860s, the government had started pushing for what they referred to as pointless work—boring tasks which gave prisoners no skills, such as walking a treadmill.[129] The reasoning

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[121] Ibid.
[122] Ibid.
[123] Ibid.
[124] Archives, The National. "The National Archives - Homepage." The National Archives, n.d. https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/criminal-transportation/.
[125] BBC. "Methods of Punishment – WJEC - Revision 4 - GCSE History - BBC Bitesize." BBC Bitesize, 2019. https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/z938v9q/revision/4.
[126] Archives, The National. "The National Archives - Homepage." The National Archives, n.d. https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/criminal-transportation/.
[127] BBC. "Punishments - Developments in Prisons in the Later Industrial Period - Crime and Punishment in Industrial Britain, C.1750-c.1900 - OCR B - GCSE History Revision - OCR B - BBC Bitesize." www.bbc.co.uk, n.d. https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/zgx94xs/revision/7.
[128] Ibid.
[129] Ibid.

behind this push was that pointless work would motivate prisoners to not come back again, lowering **recidivism** rates.[130]

After multiple instances of violent outbursts in the 1860s, the reformed British prisons began getting heavily critiqued for not being harsh enough with their punishments.[131] As a consequence, the Prisons Act of 1865 reintroduced the use of hard, pointless labor as a punishment in prisons.[132] The practice continued for the next 30 years, after which national and international reforms pushed for more humane treatment of prisoners.[133]

## Modern Day Prison Labor (19th Century - Present)

Prison labor is a practice that continues across the world today and has been the source of controversy for politicians, policy-makers, and civilians globally. With minimal information and research existing on prison conditions worldwide, it is hard for any debate to be settled in accuracy. Instead, debates around prison labor often reflect preexisting notions about whether and to what extent the government can punish prisoners. More importantly, the core of modern debate often lies in this question: what is punishment, and what is *just* punishment?

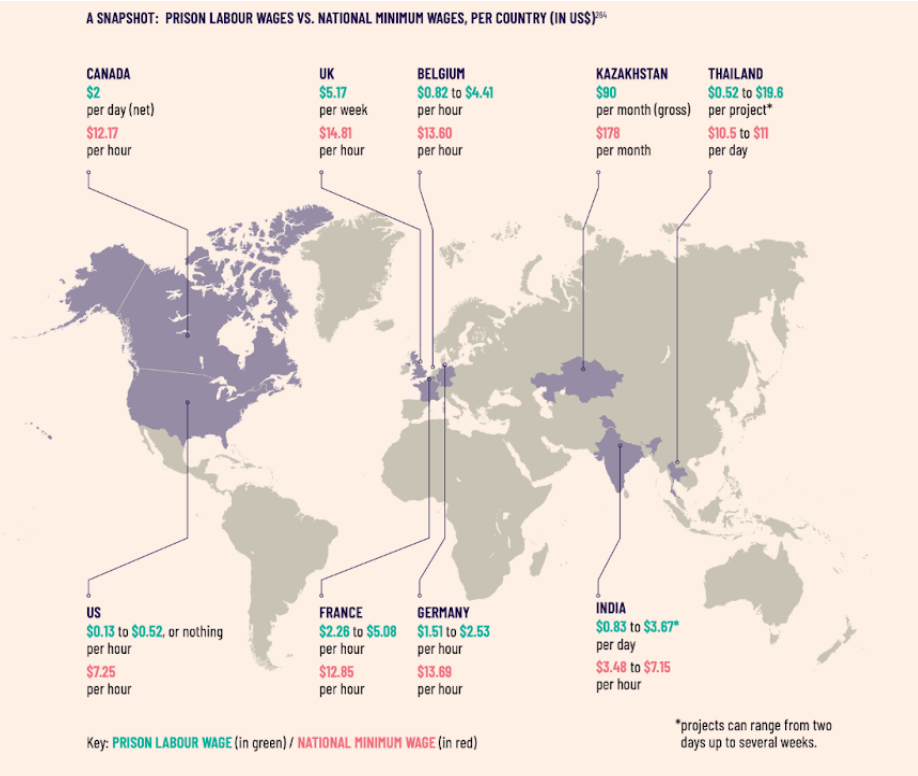
Depending on personal, governmental, and commercial interests, the answer can vary. Consequently, different prison systems around the world have adopted different measures to account for what they perceive to best align with their interests. Throughout the 20th century, many countries, including China, North Korea, and France, have used prison labor as part of their prison systems.[134] This labor is often thought to fall within the definition of forced labor, as

[130] Ibid.
[131] Ibid.
[132] Ibid.
[133] Ibid.
[134] Reuters Staff. "Factbox: Ten Facts on Prison Labor Worldwide." *Reuters*, April 11, 2019. https://www.reuters.com/article/world/factbox-ten-facts-on-prison-labor-worldwide-idUSKCN1RN0ZK/.

while it may be presented as voluntary, refusing to do work within the prison can often lead to retribution. Thus, many prisoners end up performing boring, repetitive labor against their will.[135] As of 2023, there are 17 known countries that use forced labor as a punishment for criminal (and sometimes non-criminal) offenses in prison, amongst which are Brazil, Poland, the United States, and Zimbabwe.[136]

The worldwide phenomenon of forced labor in prisons drives convicts further away from the possibility of reintegrating into society, causing them great physical strain and preventing the development of useful skills. Further, prisoners receive little to no financial gain from the labor they perform, since they are not protected by international labor law. The average prisoner wages are significantly lower (if at all existent), compared to the minimum wages in countries across the globe, as demonstrated in Image 1.[137]

[135] Nikkel, Mary. "Human Trafficking and Prison Labor - the Exodus Road." The Exodus Road, July 30, 2024. https://theexodusroad.com/human-trafficking-and-prison-labor/.
[136] Ibid.
[137] Penal Reform International. "Global Prison Trends 2024," September 2024. https://cdn.penalreform.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/PRI_Global-prison-trends-report-2024_EN.pdf.




*Prison Labor Wage vs National Minimum Wage Worldwide.*[138]

Since commodities in prison retail at significantly higher prices, virtually any income prisoners may get from the work they do is spent on basic necessities. Therefore, prisoners are left with minimal to no spending power to support their families on the outside or pay the fees associated with imprisonment, trial, or being released.

Prison work itself also disproportionally affects different groups of people. Most notably, marginalized communities tend to both get worse work opportunities and become victims of exploitation more often. For example, in China's reeducation camps, hard labor is seen as part of the "re-education process," necessary to rehabilitate prisoners.[139] However, as human rights

[138] Ibid.
[139] Hunt, Katie. "Amnesty Report: China's Abolition of Labor Camps a 'Cosmetic Change.'" CNN, December 17, 2013. https://edition.cnn.com/2013/12/16/world/asia/china-labor-camps-report.

organization Amnesty International reports, China's over 300 labor camps are made up predominantly of people convicted of petty crimes, such as theft, or people who the government believes need to be punished for their personal, political or spiritual beliefs.[140] Recently, reports on prison conditions in China have also found a high concentration of Uyghur migrants to be held in those prisons.[141] Thus, these populations have a disproportionately higher likelihood of being held in harsh labor camps.

Additionally, women also experience gender-based discrimination within prisons, including in terms of the work they are allowed to do and their compensation. For example, women in prisons and Belgium are reportedly given limited access to work and education opportunities.[142] They are often forced to perform work, typically associated with gender stereotypes for women, such as sewing, which is not only discriminatory, but also typically a lower-paid work opportunity.[143] As such, women in prisons face even lesser chances of gaining financial or practical benefits from their prison labor.

## Key Case Studies - United States and Norway

### United States

When it comes to the conversation on prison labor, the United States is at the forefront of controversy. Despite only representing 5% of the world population, the United States currently holds 25% of the entire world's incarcerated population.[144] This means that for every 100,000

[140] Ibid.
[141] Nikkel, Mary. "Human Trafficking and Prison Labor - the Exodus Road." The Exodus Road, July 30, 2024. https://theexodusroad.com/human-trafficking-and-prison-labor/.
[142] Penal Reform International. "Global Prison Trends 2024," September 2024. https://cdn.penalreform.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/PRI_Global-prison-trends-report-2024_EN.pdf.
[143] Ibid.
[144] Nikkel, Mary. "Human Trafficking and Prison Labor - the Exodus Road." The Exodus Road, July 30, 2024. https://theexodusroad.com/human-trafficking-and-prison-labor/.

people, the US incarcerates 639, and based on recent data, these prisoners are being actively used in the US workforce, as 3 out of 4 prisoners are performing forced labor.[145]

The reason for these staggering numbers, contrary to popular belief, is not correlated with crime rates. In fact, while incarceration rates have increased by 700% since the 1970s, US crime rates have been rapidly decreasing.[146] Instead, some scholars and policymakers attribute the increase in incarceration rates to what they call the **prison-industrial complex**. The prison-industrial complex is a term used to explain the existing network of parties, both governmental and industrial, which have a vested interest in and benefit from mass incarceration.[147]

*Image 3. Prison-industrial complex.*[148]

[145] Ibid.
[146] Tufts University Prison Divestment. "What Is the Prison Industrial Complex? – Tufts University Prison Divestment." Tufts University Prison Divestment. Tufts University, 2022. https://sites.tufts.edu/prisondivestment/the-pic-and-mass-incarceration/.
[147] Ibid.
[148] Nunez, Ricardo. "Worker Co-Op Solutions in the Prison Industrial Complex." Sustainable Economies Law Center, 2015. https://www.theselc.org/worker_coop_solutions_in_the_prison_industrial_complex.

Due to the lack of protection for prison laborers, the government and private corporations quickly understood that prisoners offer a cost-effective way for the production of goods. In the specific context of the United States, the 13th Amendment of the US Constitution is often credited as the reason why prisoners in the US are exploited for work to an extent that no other Western power seems to match. The 13th Amendment was meant to abolish slavery, but to this day, the amendment "explicitly excludes from its reach those held in confinement due to a criminal conviction".[149] Therefore, working conditions, which would be considered to border on slavery, are constitutionally possible within prisons, given that prisoners are serving time for a criminal offence.

This significant legislative loophole has become both a motive and a tool for the government to fill up prisons with more people, creating a larger supply of free, overworked laborers.[150] A primary example of how prison labor functions in US prisons in the 21st century is the Prison Industry Enhancement Certification Program (PIECP). Through PIECP, prisoners are contracted out through the prisons to produce goods for sale on the market.[151] The program supposedly exists as a way for prisoners to work for higher wages and attain more marketable skills, compared to standard prison operations jobs, whilst still having oversight from the federal government.[152] However, in reality, prisoners employed through PIECP are not only often exploited, working way more hours than legally allowed, but the Economic Policy Institute (EPI)

[149] ACLU. "Captive Labor: Exploitation of Incarcerated Workers." American Civil Liberties Union. American Civil Liberties Union, June 15, 2022. https://www.aclu.org/news/human-rights/captive-labor-exploitation-of-incarcerated-workers.
[150] Tufts University Prison Divestment. "What Is the Prison Industrial Complex? – Tufts University Prison Divestment." Tufts University Prison Divestment. Tufts University, 2022. https://sites.tufts.edu/prisondivestment/the-pic-and-mass-incarceration/.
[151] US Department of Justice. "Prison Industry Enhancement Certification Program (PIECP) | Overview." Bureau of Justice Assistance, March 14, 2023. https://bja.ojp.gov/program/piecp/overview.
[152] Ibid.

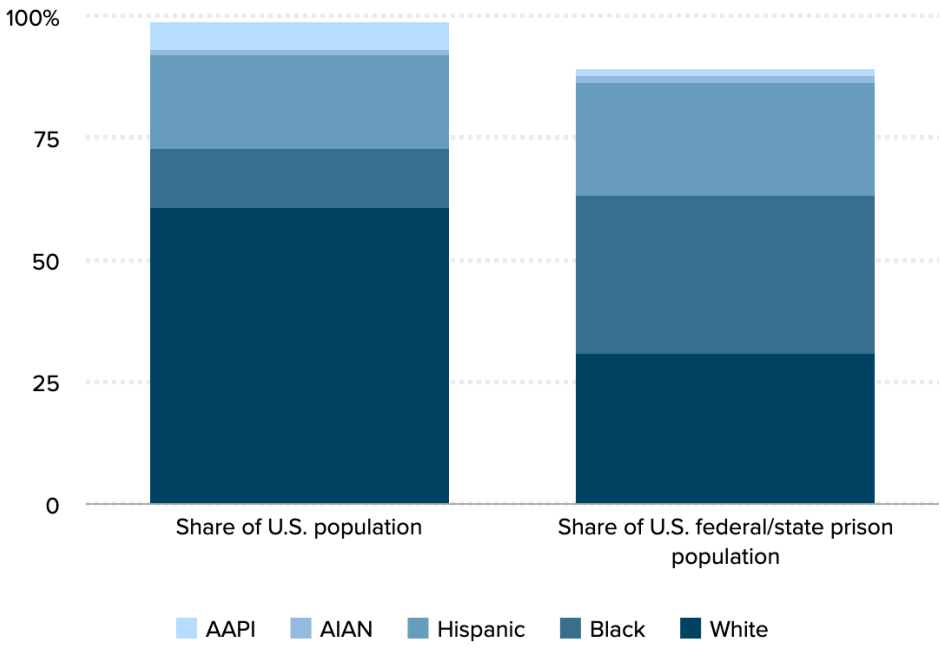
and the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) reported that as of 2022, up to 80% of those workers' wages were deducted as payment for room and board, administrative fees, and taxes.[153] Furthermore, while PIECP workers make up a relatively small percentage of production laborers in the US economy, their work contributes to the generation of large profits for many companies.[154] Because this workforce requires significantly lower payment, companies using prison labor through PIECP or similar programs are able to artificially lower the prices of their products, which also helps them outcompete smaller, local businesses, which pay their workers standard wages.[155] Employment of workers through PIECP has also been shown to reduce job availability for workers in local US economies.[156]

*Production of Incarcerated Workforce.*[157]

[153] Mast, Nina. "Forced Prison Labor in the 'Land of the Free': Rooted in Racism and Economic Exploitation: Spotlight." Economic Policy Institute. Economic Policy Institute, January 16, 2025. https://www.epi.org/publication/rooted-racism-prison-labor/.
[154] Ibid.
[155] Ibid.
[156] Ibid.
[157] ACLU. "Captive Labor: Exploitation of Incarcerated Workers." American Civil Liberties Union. American Civil Liberties Union, June 15, 2022. https://www.aclu.org/news/human-rights/captive-labor-exploitation-of-incarcerated-workers.

Numerous reports like these demonstrate that even with federal oversight, there is a clear motive for the public and private sectors to maintain mass incarceration rates, protect the current 13th Amendment, and exploit the captive workforce. This web of exploitation also disproportionately captures marginalized populations in the United States. While Black and Hispanic people make up 12.2% and 19.1% of the US population, respectively, they are significantly overrepresented in prison populations, making up 32.4% and 23.1% of US state and federal prisons.[158] Sociologists, historians, and economists argue that this oversaturation of racial and ethnic minorities in prisons is a primary example of modern-day racial injustice, as the rates at which racial minorities are incarcerated are significantly higher than the rates at which White people are incarcerated for the same crimes.[159] As such, the disproportionate incarceration of minorities also means that they are disproportionately affected by the exploitation and harmful cycles perpetuated by the US prison-industrial complex.

[158] Mast, Nina. "Forced Prison Labor in the 'Land of the Free': Rooted in Racism and Economic Exploitation: Spotlight." Economic Policy Institute. Economic Policy Institute, January 16, 2025. https://www.epi.org/publication/rooted-racism-prison-labor/.
[159] Tufts University Prison Divestment. "What Is the Prison Industrial Complex? – Tufts University Prison Divestment." Tufts University Prison Divestment. Tufts University, 2022. https://sites.tufts.edu/prisondivestment/the-pic-and-mass-incarceration/.




*Racial Breakdown of US Population vs US Prison Population.*[160]

The US Prison System is currently oversaturated with private economic interest, expressing little care for the improvement, rehabilitation, or reintegration of prisoners. The captive workforce in the United States yields a high percentage of profits for its patrons, be it public or private, yet sees little, if any, benefit from the work they perform. The problem of mass incarceration is directly related to the problem of unregulated, exploitative prison labor, rooted in the desire for capital production and in the systematic racial injustice of US legislation. Therefore, non-profit organizations on a national and global level, such as the Economic Policy Institute, The Sentencing Project, and the American Civil Liberties Union, continue to push for more research and significant reformation of the current US Prison System.

[160] Mast, Nina. "Forced Prison Labor in the 'Land of the Free': Rooted in Racism and Economic Exploitation: Spotlight." Economic Policy Institute. Economic Policy Institute, January 16, 2025. https://www.epi.org/publication/rooted-racism-prison-labor/.

## Norway

Norway is often considered the global trailblazer in the sphere of rehabilitative justice and prison standards. Unlike many other prison systems in the world, Norway has a main objective of achieving the successful reintegration of its prisoners into society, while maintaining the safety and security of both citizens and prisoners alike.[161] Their rehabilitative approach relies on three main values: safety, transparency, and innovation.[162]

On the safety side, Norway consistently ranks among the top 30 safest countries in the world, while the United States, for example, consistently scores among the bottom 30 safest countries, according to the Global Peace Index.[163] Specifically, in terms of criminal justice and imprisonment, Norway has among the lowest recidivism rates of most Western countries, at only 20%.[164]

On the side of transparency, according to the Norwegian Correctional Service's Strategic Plan for 2021-2026, the nation is committed to creating a uniform, clear, and consistent procedure for the execution of prison sentences.[165] It is through this system that they are able to maintain short, effective prison sentences, which deliver necessary justice without stripping prisoners of their fundamental human rights.

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[161] Norwegian Correctional Service. "Operational Strategy for the Norwegian Correctional Service," 2021. https://img3.custompublish.com/getfile.php/4888894.823.ijuubwissujnwu/KDI_strategibrosjyre_TRYKK_FINAL2_Engelsk.pdf?return=www.kriminalomsorgen.no.
[162] Kriminalomsorgen. "About the Norwegian Correctional Service - Kriminalomsorgen.no." Kriminalomsorgen.no, 2021. https://www.kriminalomsorgen.no/about-the-norwegian-correctional-service.6327382-536003.html.
[163] World Population Review. "Safest Countries in the World 2023." worldpopulationreview.com, 2024. https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/safest-countries-in-the-world.
[164] Denny, Meagan. "Norway's Prison System: Investigating Recidivism and Norway's Prison System: Investigating Recidivism and Reintegration Reintegration." *Journal of Student Research* 10, no. 10 (2016). https://digitalcommons.coastal.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1032&context=bridges.
[165] Norwegian Correctional Service. "Operational Strategy for the Norwegian Correctional Service," 2021. https://img3.custompublish.com/getfile.php/4888894.823.ijuubwissujnwu/KDI_strategibrosjyre_TRYKK_FINAL2_Engelsk.pdf?return=www.kriminalomsorgen.no.

*Norwegian Prison Cell.*[166]

In fact, the role of innovation in the Norwegian Prison System is predominantly seen within the main principle guiding their prisons: the principle of normality. The principle of normality essentially states that the punishment for prisoners' transgressions is the restriction on liberty.[167] As such, no other rights need or will be infringed upon during prisoners' time in prison or post-release. Therefore, Norwegian prisons strive for life on the inside to resemble life on the outside as much as possible, giving prisoners the opportunity for education and work.[168]

If prisoners engage in any labor within prison, they are treated and protected by the same labor standards as people outside of prison.[169] Thus, they are actually able to work jobs, which give them transferable skills, and for which they are fairly compensated. These standards have

[166] CNN. "Welcome to Prison - CNN Video." edition.cnn.com, 2018. https://edition.cnn.com/videos/tv/2018/03/08/welcome-to-prison-full-doc-orig-cm.cnn.
[167] Kriminalomsorgen. "About the Norwegian Correctional Service - Kriminalomsorgen.no." Kriminalomsorgen.no, 2021. https://www.kriminalomsorgen.no/about-the-norwegian-correctional-service.6327382-536003.html.
[168] Ibid.
[169] Ibid.

not only shown to be more humane in terms of prisoner treatment, but also effective in terms of the low crime and recidivism rates in Norway. While an unconventional approach to the prison system, Norway and other Scandinavian countries are at the forefront of rehabilitative justice and the prevention of prison labor exploitation.

# Past Actions

## International Agreements on Prisoners' Labor Rights

The largest set of internationally accepted guidelines for the treatment of prisoners is the Nelson Mandela Rules, applied to all UN member states. The document is named after the most famous prisoner in the world—Nelson Mandela, who spent 27 years in prison, trying to fight for the rights of South Africans, including those in prison.[170]

The 122 rules listed out in the document provide guidelines for the training of prison staff, the rights and amenities prisoners should be given, and the acceptable conditions under which prisoners can work.[171] The guidelines specifically point out under the section Work (Rule 96 - Rule 103) that prisoners should not only be given the opportunity to work, but should have freedom over the work they want to engage in, the work should contribute useful skills when possible, and the working conditions (hours, health and safety protections, etc.) that are observed outside of the prison should also be respected inside.[172] Additionally, the rules recommend that prisoners either work for the prison or the government and *not* for the private interest of a company, but if in a situation a prisoner is working for a private enterprise, the prisoner should at all times be supervised by prison staff.[173] While these rules outline crucial best practices, the UN rules are a "soft law," meaning they are non-binding for member states and more so serve as an

[170] United Nations. "Nelson Mandela Rules." UN.org, 2015. https://www.un.org/en/events/mandeladay/mandela_rules.shtml.
[171] Penal Reform International. "UN Nelson Mandela Rules." Penal Reform International, n.d. https://www.penalreform.org/issues/prison-conditions/standard-minimum-rules/.
[172] United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. "United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (Nelson Mandela Rules)." *International Legal Materials* 55, no. 6 (December 2016): 1180–1205. https://doi.org/10.1017/s0020782900030898.
[173] Ibid.

ideal, which states should strive for.[174] However, without implementation or oversight, the Rules are not far from being simply words on paper.

In terms of binding legislation, primary examples are the International Labor Organization (ILO)'s **Convention** 29 of 1930 and Convention 105 of 1957.[175] Both conventions have been ratified by almost every member state of the ILO and they are some of the most significant laws accepted in regard to preventing prison workers from forced labor.

The ILO's Convention 29 of 1930 lists out the necessary conditions that need to be met, in order for people to perform any form of forced labor, which is most typically found in prisons. Specifically, the convention officially calls on member states to immediately suppress forced labor of any kind (Article 1), and when forced labor is necessitated, that specific guidelines are followed.[176] In the case of forced labor, Articles 10-17 outline that those from whom forced labor is exacted shall be working normal hours and paid adequately for any overtime, shall receive **remuneration** in cash individually, shall have the same health and safety protections as regular workers, and that forced labor should not be exacted for more than 60 days in every 12 month period, among various other standards.[177] This convention has been ratified by 181 members of the ILO, but notably has not been ratified by the United States of America and Afghanistan, meaning they are not legally bound to comply with any articles from the convention.[178]

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[174] Jarman, Ben, and Catherine Heard. "LABOURING behind BARS: ASSESSING INTERNATIONAL LAW on WORKING PRISONERS," 2023. https://www.prisonstudies.org/sites/default/files/resources/downloads/labouring_behind_bars_web_final.pdf.
[175] Ibid.
[176] OHCHR. "Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29)." OHCHR, June 28, 1930. https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/forced-labour-convention-1930-no-29.
[177] Ibid.
[178] ILO. "Ratifications of ILO Conventions: Ratifications by Convention." Ilo.org, 2023. https://normlex.ilo.org/dyn/nrmlx_en/f?p=1000:11300:0::NO:11300:P11300_INSTRUMENT_ID:312174.

As for ILO's Convention 105 of 1957, it can be regarded as an extension of Convention 29. Convention 105 specifically outlines that forced or compulsory labor cannot be used as political coercion, as punishment for expressing political views or protesting, as a means of discrimination, discipline or economic development.[179] While a much shorter Convention, the specifications it outlines are of great importance, as forced labor has historically been used in the cruel, corrupt, and coercive ways described above. Notably, the convention has been ratified by 178 ILO members, with China and Japan only adopting it in 2022, Singapore and Malaysia denouncing it, and the Republic of Korea not having ratified it at all.[180]

## Issues With Existing Legislation

Without ratification of the above binding conventions, they are ineffective in reducing the use of forced labor within prisons. More importantly, even when ratified, these binding contracts are presently often contested by member states of the ILO who take issue or refuse to comply with some of the Conventions' rules.

Particularly, in Articles 4, 5 and 6 of Convention 29 of 1930, the convention requires that forced labor cannot be performed for private interests, and when private interests are involved, the labor should be voluntary and compensated similarly to how it would be in standard working conditions.[181] However, throughout the later 20th century and the 21st century, many states have argued that the original 1930s convention is not applicable to modern-day prison work.[182] Two

[179] ILO. "Convention C105 - Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No. 105)." Ilo.org, June 25, 1957. https://normlex.ilo.org/dyn/nrmlx_en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO:12100:P12100_INSTRUMENT_ID:312250:NO.
[180] ILO. "Ratifications of ILO Conventions: Ratifications by Convention." Ilo.org, 2022. https://normlex.ilo.org/dyn/nrmlx_en/f?p=1000:11300:0::no:11300:p11300_instrument_id:312250.
[181] OHCHR. "Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29)." OHCHR, June 28, 1930. https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/forced-labour-convention-1930-no-29.
[182] Jarman, Ben, and Catherine Heard. "LABOURING behind BARS: ASSESSING INTERNATIONAL LAW on WORKING PRISONERS," 2023. https://www.prisonstudies.org/sites/default/files/resources/downloads/labouring_behind_bars_web_final.pdf.

main reasons are listed as to why the convention needs to be reassessed: the reasons for prison work and the differentiation between public vs non-public sector involvement in the criminal justice system.[183]

Countries such as the United Kingdom and Austria have argued that in today's world, prison labor is not used as punishment, but rather as a tool for rehabilitation.[184] In their view, allowing prisoners to work jobs in the sphere of production and manufacturing is a way to retain marketable skills, which would help prisoners reintegrate into society post-release. Therefore, they see it as vital that private sector contractors are involved in creating work opportunities for prisoners.[185] However, the ILO still maintains that any sort of forced labor done in the interest of private actors is harmful to prison workers.[186]

Similarly, to this day, the ILO takes a strong stance on the differentiation between the private and public sectors. However, member states have posited that the 1930 creators of the Convention could not have anticipated that states could use private contractors to run prisons or that prisons could be privately owned as a whole.[187] Because many countries rely on such public-private partnerships, it is in some cases impossible to divorce the public from the private sector, and what are regarded as private enterprises end up with prison workers employed by them.[188] It is for this reason that the US, back in the 1930s and throughout the following decades, has refused to ratify the 1930s Convention, as they are the most common proprietors of privately-owned prisons in the world.[189] With these disputes between the ILO and its members,

[183] Ibid.
[184] Ibid.
[185] Ibid.
[186] Ibid.
[187] Ibid.
[188] Ibid.
[189] Ibid.

and the lack of adequate oversight, it is hardly possible for the binding treaties to have an effect to the extent to which it is desired.

## Possible Solutions

While research and investment into better prison labor protections is currently scarce, non-profit organizations and scholars have worked together in recent years to examine some better ways to integrate work into prisons without falling into the trap of prisoner exploitation.

### Short-Term Solutions

First, many organizations call on authorities within individual member states to actually ensure that prison workers are explicitly included within their workers' protection legislation. For example, as of right now, the United States Fair Labor Standards Act, which ensures that all workers are paid the federal minimum wage and are compensated for their overtime work, does not include incarcerated workers, which is why those working in prisons are seldom paid minimum wage, if anything.[190] Further, governments should strive to legislatively divorce economic development from prison work. While giving prisoners a job can contribute to improved mental health by reducing boredom and inactivity, it is important that prison labor is not used for its economic benefit. The Corporate Accountability Lab argues that such conditions create a perfect incentive for private companies to lobby with governments for mass incarceration.[191]

Second, a crucial voice, which is often left out of the conversation, is that of incarcerated populations, and their involvement is crucial to meaningful action. Prisoner organizations exist across the world, both run by non-profit organizations and by prisoners themselves. For example, the Prisoner Policy Network (PPN) is a non-governmental organization based in the United

[190] Russo, Megan. "Regulating Prison Labor | the Regulatory Review." www.theregreview.org. The Regulatory Review, October 20, 2021. https://www.theregreview.org/2021/10/20/russo-regulating-prison-labor/.
[191] Wu, Cindy, and Prue Brady. "If Prison Workers Are Essential, We Should Treat Them like It: Prison Labor in the US, Part I." Corporate Accountability Lab, August 5, 2020. https://corpaccountabilitylab.org/calblog/2020/8/5/if-prison-workers-are-essential-we-should-treat-them-like-it-prison-labor-in-the-us-part-i.

Kingdom, which helps current and former prisoners share their experiences with policymakers to improve the lives of prisoners.[192] In the United States, the Incarcerated Workers Organizing Committee (IWOC) is an organization run entirely by prisoners, who are sharing their experiences with prison life to bring awareness to the problem of current prison conditions, including the practical existence of modern-day slave labor within US prisons.[193] Platforms such as the PPN and the IWOC are necessary for both policymakers and the general public to ensure they are getting an accurate idea of what life and work look like in prison, as no meaningful reforms can be introduced if they aren't rooted in the experience of incarcerated people themselves.

Third, it is necessary that the context under which prison labor takes place is significantly reassessed to allow for any form of ethical prison labor. Many prisons across the world do not meet international standards for health and safety, so ensuring that there is an infrastructure and regular inspections in prisons globally is vital to meeting these standards.[194] Such a goal can be achieved through both international cooperation and public-private partnerships, given that private companies involved are not to directly benefit from prison labor, as that reaffirms existing incentives for incarceration.

## Long-Term Solutions

To build on improved legislation, it is important that member states also pursue continuous action toward maintaining fair working conditions in prisons. Recognizing the

[192] Prison Reform Trust. "Prisoner Policy Network." Prison Reform Trust, n.d. https://prisonreformtrust.org.uk/project/prisoner-policy-network/.
[193] IWOC. "About Incarcerated Workers Organizing Committee." Incarcerated Workers Organizing Committee, September 28, 2016. https://incarceratedworkers.org/about.
[194] Connecticut Bail Fund. "Prison Labor: Understanding the Role of Inmate Employment in 2024." Connecticut Bail Fund, June 6, 2024. https://ctbailfund.org/blogs/prison-labor-understanding-the-role-of-inmate-employment-in-2024.

capabilities of member states, international cooperation is essential to helping such action come to fruition. The creation or use of an existing UN body for consistent oversight of compliance with international binding treaties regarding prison labor would lead to better insights into the effectiveness of legislative groundwork. While the ILO is the primary example for binding documents in regard to prison labor, the UN should strive to also ratify its own set of standards, beyond current soft law, which can then be subject to oversight through UN-employed agencies.

Further, it is important that private actors in the prison system are taken into consideration. Particularly, the issue of commercial use of prison labor must be addressed. The Northstar Asset Management Group conducted a thorough report on existing issues with employment of prison labor in the production of goods.[195] They recommend that all companies adopt their own Prison Labor Policy and take careful consideration of their **supply chain**.[196] Any contractors, suppliers, or other parts of the supply chain should be assessed for use of prison labor and if such is identified, it should be immediately addressed.[197] Northstar Asset Management also recommends that if prison labor is used at any capacity throughout the supply chain, that it should be made transparent to the public.[198] This can be further supported by government policies requiring companies to explicate their use of prison labor and to conduct regular audits, ensuring the well-being of prison workers is maintained. By doing so, governments can additionally force private companies to take accountability for their involvement in prison labor practices.

[195] Goodridge, Julie, Mari Schwartzer, Christine Jantz, and Leslie Christian. "PRISON LABOR in the UNITED STATES: AN INVESTOR PERSPECTIVE." Mission Investors Exchange, May 2018. https://missioninvestors.org/sites/default/files/resources/Prison%20Labor%20in%20the%20United%20States%20-%20An%20Investor%20Perspective.pdf.
[196] Ibid.
[197] Ibid.
[198] Ibid.

## Case Study - Uruguay

A study published in June of 2025 examined a new approach to prison labor in the Punta de Rieles prison in Montevideo, Uruguay.[199] As part of the program, prisoners in Punta de Rieles were given a wide array of opportunities to spend their time in prison, be it through educational programs, recreational activities, or work.[200]

In terms of the work that was offered, all jobs were part of a wider governance strategy to help prisoners develop skills and reintegrate more easily into daily lives, whilst giving them the autonomy to do so.[201] Unlike many other prisons, all work was optional, but that flexibility was not without oversight.[202] While prisoners received no penalty or threat of retribution for not working, they were encouraged to spend their time meaningfully, be it through one of the existing activities or even by creating their own venture.[203] The work ranged in type, giving them a real freedom of choice, and prisoners were paid, received benefits, and could use the money they made in a variety of ways.[204]

This prison experiment came into fruition as a result of the political and cultural attitude of the prison staff at Punta de Rieles, who believe in the responsibilization of prisoners: encouraging them to be productive, but keeping the terms of that productivity open-ended.[205] Because of the way the prison structured its attitude to work, eight out of ten prisoners chose to work, compared to the national average of 31.8% working prisoners in 2021.[206] There were three main reasons for this engagement: sentence reduction, as Uruguayan law allows reduction of

[199] Avila, Fernando. "The Re-Centralization of Work in Prison. The Punta de Rieles Experiment in Montevideo, Uruguay." *Incarceration: An International Journal of Imprisonment, Detention and Coercive Confinement* 6 (June 16, 2025). https://doi.org/10.1177/26326663251350257.
[200] Ibid.
[201] Ibid.
[202] Ibid.
[203] Ibid.
[204] Ibid.
[205] Ibid.
[206] Ibid.

sentences by one day for every two work days; the ability for prisoners to use their money to buy goods and services in prison; and the ability for them to be independent from their families for economic support, easing the financial burden on their loved ones.[207] All of these reasons contributed tangible benefits to prisoners, as opposed to the government or to private entities.

That is because what made the Punta de Rieles prison experiment successful is that work was recentralized away from being used as a tool with moral or rehabilitative purposes, but rather seen as a pragmatic tool for prisoners—a way for them to derive personal gains, much like in the real world.[208] Shifting prison work away from its association with profit margins or moral agendas and toward its pragmatic function was shown to make prisoners' time more worthwhile, all the while letting prisoners partake in and create their own labor market with regulations and opportunities.[209] This was additionally achieved by embracing a governance-from-afar method, which let prisoners have autonomy over what goes on in their life in prison and not directly correlating any work they do to the government.[210]

[207] Ibid.
[208] Ibid.
[209] Ibid.
[210] Ibid.

*Inmates at Punta de Rieles.*[211]

The example of Uruguay's prison is a recent, but crucial development toward a more practical and humane approach to prison work. The case study demonstrates that framing prison work as a tool with pragmatic benefits for prisoners, as opposed to a tool for moral rehabilitation, and allowing prisoners autonomy and opportunity, are vital in achieving an ethical prison labor system, centered around the reintegration of individuals beyond the prison, and protecting their rights as people and workers.[212]

[211] Iglesias, Eugenia. "Uruguay Prison Turns Inmates into Entrepreneurs." Buenos Aires Times. BATimes Newspaper, June 22, 2019. https://www.batimes.com.ar/news/latin-america/uruguay-prison-turns-inmates-into-entrepreneurs.phtml.
[212] Ibid.

# Bloc Positions

## Countries With Progressive Prison Labor Practices

Countries have embraced a bold approach to prison labor by either working to entirely abolish it or reframing the conditions under which it has previously existed. A primary example can be found in countries such as Norway and Denmark, which have adopted rehabilitative work programs, encouraging inmates to engage in productive activities. In Denmark, depending on the sentence, prisoners may be required to work, but the work consists of practical workshops and comes with the same benefits and protections as work outside the prison.[213] Similarly, Norwegian prisoners can indulge in work activities, which are designed to replicate normal life as closely as possible, from the types of work provided to the hours and benefits.[214] Some countries across the globe have taken a similar approach to prison labor, treating it as an opportunity for prisoners to regain a better footing.

## Countries With Regulated Prison Labor Practices

Most countries around the world have some form of prison labor codified in their law, but have worked toward regulating that labor. While often not entirely compliant with ILO or other standards of prison labor, these countries make an effort to give prisoners jobs, which allow them to attain some level of marketable skills. Countries like Canada may have federally-regulated programs, such as CORCAN, which oversee the work that prisoners do, but do not consider their prison workers under national worker protections, often meaning prison labor is underpaid and prisoners are not always given adequate work opportunities.[215] Therefore, these countries may be

[213] Danish Prison and Probation Service. "The Danish Prison and Probation Service -in Brief," 2012. https://www.prisonstudies.org/sites/default/files/resources/downloads/inbrief_updateddec.2012.pdf.
[214] Kirby, Emma Jane. "How Norway Turns Criminals into Good Neighbours." *BBC News*, July 6, 2019. https://www.bbc.com/news/stories-48885846.
[215] Sinclair, Leslie. "The Vast Hidden Workforce of Canada's Prisons | Broadview Magazine." Broadview Magazine, August 18, 2025. https://broadview.org/prison-labour-canada/.

working toward creating stronger legislative and infrastructural reforms to ensure the protection of prison laborers.

## Countries Reliant on Prison Labor

Prison labor still functions as a critical tool for economic benefit to some countries across the world. These countries would not favorably look toward reforms divorcing the prison system and the private sector. Instead, they see public-private partnership as functional and beneficial for both prisons and the economy at large. For example, Russia's Federal **Penitentiary** Service, according to limited data, requires that prisoners work in what can be described as correctional facility factories, which produce goods for commercial sale.[216] The prisoners rarely get paid, so their free labor is treated and acts as an economic benefit to the country and a handful of business owners.[217] Therefore, countries following similar patterns would be proponents of prison labor privatization.

## Countries Lacking Infrastructure to Address Prison Labor

Finally, many countries across the world lack the financial or legislative capabilities to address infrastructural issues within prison systems. Therefore, prison labor can often be unregulated or vary significantly across different parts of the country. In Brazil, the type of work, contracting, and pay, which prisoners receive for their labor, ranges widely from prison to prison, with some prisons paying workers the minimum prisoner wage of 97.5 reais per month, while others do not pay them at all.[218] In the case of such countries, they would likely support resolving

[216] Romanova, Olga. "How the Gulag Lives on in Russia's Prison Economy." Carnegie Moscow Center, 2025. https://carnegie.ru/commentary/72616.
[217] Ibid.
[218] Human Rights Watch. "HRW: Behind Bars in Brazil (Work)." www.hrw.org, n.d. https://www.hrw.org/legacy/reports98/brazil/Brazil-11.htm.

the issue of prison labor through international cooperation and a mutual sharing of research into best practices for implementing prison labor regulations.

# Glossary

*Convention*: An instrument which, upon ratification, creates legally binding obligations for States parties.[219]

*Forced Labor*: All work or service which is exacted from any person under the threat of a penalty and for which the person has not offered himself or herself voluntarily.[220]

*Hulks*: A ship used as a prison.[221]

*Incarceration*: The act of putting or keeping someone in prison or in a place used as a prison.[222]

*Jail*: A place where criminals are kept to punish them for their crimes, or where people accused of crimes are kept while waiting for their trials.[223]

*Labor force*: Comprises all persons of working age who furnish the supply of labor for the production of goods and services during a specified time-reference period.[224]

*Penitentiary*: A public institution in which offenders against the law are confined for detention or punishment.[225]

*Prison*: An institution for confinement of persons convicted of serious crimes.[226]

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*Prison-Industrial Complex*: The overlapping interests of government and industry that use surveillance, policing, and imprisonment as solutions to economic, social, and political problems.[227]

*Prison Labor*: Work which one is compelled to perform due to lack of options, by choice while in prison, or outright against one's will, while in a condition of confinement or slavery.[228]

*Recidivism*: A person's relapse into criminal behavior, often after the person receives sanctions or undergoes intervention for a previous crime.[229]

*Remuneration*: Payment for work or services.[230]

*Supply chain*: The interconnected journey that raw materials, components, and goods take before their assembly and sale to customers.[231]

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