



For Immediate Release

PRAWA AND THE NIGERIAN PRISON SERVICE TO PRESENT OFFICIAL PRISON SURVEY REPORTS FOR 2017 TO STAKEHOLDERS

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On Thursday, 1 February 2018, the Prisoners Rehabilitation and Welfare Action (PRAWA) and the Nigerian Prison Service will be presenting the 2017 official prison survey reports in Abuja to stakeholders in the security and justice sector.

The Prison Survey Reports are implemented as a component of the Prison Reform Project with support from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. This is one of the key projects under their Security and Justice Sector Reform Programmes. As a non-governmental organization established in 1994, PRAWA works to promote institutional reforms for access to justice, rehabilitation, and social development of prisoners, ex-prisoners, torture victims and youth at risk. PRAWA has observer status with the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR).

It is necessary to point out here that some of our recent Fact Sheets, provide workable solution to Prison Reform in Nigeria. We believe in the urgent need for strategic engagement of the leadership of the prison service and where necessary with relevant agencies including the executive and the legislators to articulate clear strategies to effectively address the issues identified by the prison staff, in one of our reports, as their key problem especially gender related issues.

According to Dr. Uju Agomoh, PRAWA Executive Director, "We also consider it imperative for provision of enhanced paralegal and pro bono legal services and other related support to pre – trial detainees all through the trial process to ensure that free and quality legal representation are provided for those in need of these.

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Steps should be taken to professionalize and strengthen the work of the paralegal ensuring also that their services are rendered in prisons, courts, prosecution agencies, family links and where possible at the police level.

In addition, the Legal Aid Council of Nigeria (LACON) should be supported to implement its mandate, the Legal Aid Act, National Legal Aid Strategy, and promote strong collaboration and synergy between LACON, the Nigerian Bar Association, Office of the Public Defender, and other relevant stakeholders.

On gender issues, we have noted that females are almost rarely assigned as officers in charge of male prison. Given that all the 242 prisons (with the exception of two prisons) in Nigeria are male prisons or mixed prisons, this narrows the opportunity for upward career mobility for female prison officers in Nigeria. Interestingly 85% of the respondents indicated that there are practices undermining gender equality in their work”.

The three survey reports are titled as follows: A research on pre-trial detention in Nigeria (Vol. 1), Socio-economic characteristics of prisoners and impact of imprisonment in Nigeria (Vol. 2), and A perception survey of prison officers in Nigeria (Vol. 3). The reports are of pressing significance given the government's stance on prison decongestion. These will be presented to policy makers, security agents, the judiciary and civil society organizations for urgent analysis and inclusion in justice sector reforms.

The presentation will be well attended by dignitaries such as the Minister of Interior, Lieutenant General Abdulrahman Bello Dambazau as Special Guest of Honor, the Controller-General of Prisons, Alhaji Ja'afaru Ahmed and the British High Commissioner. Also in attendance will be distinguished senators, house members, Heads of missions, security chiefs and chief judges.

Dr. Agomoh, has expressed her deep concern for the plight of Awaiting Trial Prisoners who inadvertently contribute to the overcrowding of prisons.

Date and Time of Presentation: Thursday, 1 February 2018, 10.00 AM
Venue: Sheraton Hotel, Abuja

For further information: please contact
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