

**Table 8. Comparison of Mitigation Strategies in Response to COVID-19 in Prison Systems around the World, Ranked by Corrections Population**

Country (Rank)	Front-End	Within	Back-End
<b>USA (1<sup>st</sup>)</b>	Suspension of visitation and prison transfers; New intakes for federal prisons only if offender being held for federal government in a state or local facility; Preventative screening for prison staff	Federal system-wide and state-level lockdowns; Widespread testing; Disbursement of masks, dispersal of hand sanitizer and other PPE among staff and inmates; increased sanitation; Isolation of confirmed or suspected inmates; remote legal counsel; Use of ‘field-ready’ tents to maximize social distancing; “Stay at home” policy for prison staff manifesting COVID-like symptoms, coming in contact with individuals (including inmates) that have, or are suspected of having, COVID-19	Appx. 4.29% (N = 7,000) inmates in the federal system released to home confinement; Inmates in states such as CA, AL, CO, and MA have implemented early release (for inmates with low-level offenses or who are high-risk in terms of health)
<b>China (2<sup>nd</sup>)</b>	Supplemental funding from federal and local governments to financially support prison responses to COVID-19; Suspension of family visitation; Sentence deferment (in some cases)	Dispersal of PPE; Testing; Increased efforts in providing medical care (including mental health services); Establishment of a formal reporting system (for prison staff); Suspension of alternating shifts among prison staff and replaced with consecutive periods of up to 14 days of work, followed by 14 days off; Grid-management approach; Isolation of inmates in contact with suspected cases; Quarantine of inmates with symptoms; Daily disinfection of surfaces; Maintained ventilation by opening windows; Mandated mask-wearing among prison staff; Suspension of certain prison activities	None
<b>Brazil (3<sup>rd</sup>)</b>	Suspension of family and attorney visitation; Suspension of transfers and temporary exits	Daily sanitation of cells; Increased exposure to sunlight; Isolation of symptomatic inmates; Isolation of vulnerable inmates	Appx. 4.6% (N=32,500) released on house arrest or electronic monitoring
<b>Russian Federation (4<sup>th</sup>)</b>	Suspension of in-person court hearings (in some cases); Suspension of visitation (in some regions); Reduction in the use of pre-trial detention; Preventive screening of prison staff and visitors before admission to facility	Lockdowns (quarantining); Aggressive testing; Daily preventive sanitation and disinfection; Mask-wearing by prison staff and visitors; Isolation of infected inmates; Rotations of 14 consecutive days on and off work among prison staff; Newly admitted inmates in isolation for 20 days prior to assimilation with the general prison population	None
<b>India (5<sup>th</sup>)</b>	Formation of high-level committees to create processes and guidelines for early release /	Inmate and staff testing; Prison staff remaining on prison property to reduce the likelihood of contraction (i.e., not entering	Appx. 14.3% (N = 68,264) inmates temporarily released either on parole for 4 - 6 weeks or on interim bail for those

	release on bail; Prison staff preventive screening	the community at large); Quarantining; Proper handling of food; Mandating daily medical check-ups for inmates above 60 years old (in some cases); newly admitted inmate testing and isolation	being held on pre-trial with offenses worth a sanction of 7 years or less <sup>a</sup>
<b>Philippines (10<sup>th</sup>)</b>	Use of videoconferencing for hearings	Improved sanitary conditions in facilities; Expanded access to medical care; Strengthened testing and contact tracing; Established isolation centers for infected inmates	Eased the rules on parole granting and executive clemency; Expanded compassionate release for most vulnerable inmates
<b>Mexico (11<sup>th</sup>)</b>	Suspension of transfers; Reducing or eliminating visits; Suspended work-related activities that occurred outside of custody	Implemented policies for early detection, isolation, identification of severity, and evacuation of the seriously ill; Testing of inmates and staff; Restricted movement of people and staff inside the 525 state-level prisons, as well as suspended work and/or educational activities; Use of videoconferencing to reduce inmate trips to court	Amnesty for first-time, low level inmates, and/or inmates whose crimes were driven by poverty
<b>South Africa (12<sup>th</sup>)</b>	Reconsidering the sentencing of certain offenses and those awaiting pre-trial to incarceration; Non-arrest for certain offenses, particularly those that are lockdown-related	Designation of facilities to quarantine sick incarcerated individuals; Enhanced testing protocols for inmates and staff; Provision of PPE for inmates	Early release; Alterations to current sentencing policies; Engagement with community-based support
<b>Argentina (16<sup>th</sup>)</b>	Suspension of educational and work activities occurring outside of prisons; restriction for on-site prison visitation; restriction on transfers	Restriction on staff per unit; controls for at-risk groups; testing for inmates and staff; health kits and PPE for inmates and staff; designated areas for isolation	Appx. 13% early release to probation, parole, house arrest, or other exceptional mechanisms
<b>Colombia (17<sup>th</sup>)</b>	Suspension of educational and work activities occurring outside of prisons; restriction for on-site prison visitation; restriction on transfers	Restriction on staff per unit; educational campaigns regarding COVID-19; testing for inmates and staff; health kits and PPE for inmates and staff; designated areas for isolation	Appx. 20% released to house arrest or other exceptional mechanisms
<b>United Kingdom (22<sup>nd</sup>)</b>	Temporary suspension of visits; Suspended educational programs and non-essential work; Halted inter-prison transfers; Movement from courts to prison effectively stopped – court hearings were held remotely by video and by phone; lockdown of facilities with only essential staff permitted access to facilities	Establishment of hand washing stations and adequate supplies of soap and cleaning supplies; Distribution of personal protective equipment (PPE) to staff; Routine testing of prison officers; Isolated confinement of inmates for social distancing purposes; Movement from prisons to courts effectively stopped – court hearings were held remotely by video and by phone	Early release of some prisoners (if deemed necessary); Addition of temporary accommodations across prisons; Implementation of a “cohorting” strategy
<b>Pakistan (23<sup>rd</sup>)</b>	Release of pre-trial detainees on bail/surety; Police discretion to not use arrest for less serious offenses’ Pre-entrance screening for all visitors	Mass testing; Contact tracing; On-site containment; Quarantine suspected cases; Restricted mobility within jails; Distribution of PPE to staff (e.g., Hazmat Suits, surgical gowns, surgical	None

		gloves, respirators, eye protection goggles, caps, hand sanitizers, gloves, blankets and drip sets); Close monitoring and distribution of high-nutrition meals to infected patients <sup>3</sup>	
<b>Spain (32<sup>nd</sup>)</b>	Suspension of visitation, but free telephone and videoconferencing with families and attorneys; Use of pre-trial and sentencing alternatives; Electronic monitoring; Decline in the number of offenders remanded to prison by courts during the pandemic – drop of over 50% in first part of 2020 when compared to same period in 2019	All external communications and all leave exits suspended, except for reasons of force or extreme necessity; Prohibition of access to prisons of any person (volunteers, collaborating entities, etc.) who are not part of the prison staff, unless their work inside was considered essential; Suspension of teaching activity and production workshops; Suspension of inmate transfers, except for health or judicial reasons; Authorization for the inmates to stay voluntarily in their cells; Staggering of mealtimes in dining areas; Communication of mitigation efforts to inmates; Provision of PPE to inmates and staff	Extensive release to community— an increase of over 400% of the number of offenders on home confinement
<b>Germany (33<sup>rd</sup>)</b>	Courts limited their work and mainly dealt only with cases of alleged offenders being sent to pre-trial detention, reducing new prison admissions; Elimination of incarcerations for nonpayment of fines; Restricted visits by suspending all visits with personal contact; Implementation of video telephone calls	Provision of masks, hygiene products and other PPE to inmates; Establishment of quarantine areas in facilities; Restriction of inmates to cells for more hours per day; Suspension of activities such as work, re-entry programs, and recreation	Early release or non-execution of short-term prison sentence since March (i.e., Germany’s prison occupancy level has decreased from 83.3% to 78.7% since March 2020)
<b>Republic of (South) Korea (37<sup>th</sup>)</b>	Reduction of new incarceration-based sanctions; Restrictions placed on visitation	Provision of the prison population protective eyewear, clothing, and hand sanitizer; Isolation and medical examinations of those newly entering facilities	Modest reductions in prison populations via early release, particularly in facilities that had outbreaks
<b>Italy (38<sup>th</sup>)</b>	Restricted access into and out of prison facilities; Substitution of phone calls or other available technology in lieu of in-person visits with relatives or third parties (other than defense lawyers)	Temporary suspension of treatment programs that involved participation from people in the local community; Curtailment of work related activities serving the facilities that involve people coming in from outside; Extended release time for those already out on leave	Eligible persons with 18 months or less of their sentence to serve remainder of sentence at home or at other private healthcare facilities; Expanded use of electronic monitoring for those released to the community; Measures resulted in a decrease of nearly 10% of the incarcerated population
<b>Kenya (39<sup>th</sup>)</b>	Temporary scale down of services and activities in the justice sector to curtail the number of offenders entering the system—the National Council on the Administration of Justice discouraged the arrest and detention of minor offenders; Suspension of visitation	Mandatory screening for all prison officers; Sanitization at all entry points; Regular disinfection of prison facilities; Mandatory quarantine of symptomatic inmates; Testing of all new inmates entering the prison system; Use of PPE; Maintenance	Aggressive program of deinstitutionalization implemented—an estimated 12,000 persons had been released from prison within a span of five months since March 2020

		of a well-organized shift system for officers	
<b>Australia (43<sup>rd</sup>)</b>	Suspension of visitation	Screening of inmates, visitors, and staff implemented early in pandemic; Specialized medical facilities established in some prisons; Mandatory testing of inmates and staff; 14 day quarantine of all new intakes; Physical hygiene and social distancing encouraged; Staff required to use PPE where a person was suspected of having COVID-19; Programming conducted with smaller inmate groups; Increased access to telephone and video calls	Accelerated rate of inmate discharges at beginning of the pandemic
<b>Canada (44<sup>th</sup>)</b>	Provisional suspension of arrests and court proceedings for minor offenses; Preparation of protocols for the transfer and hospitalization of inmates with severe cases of COVID-19	Isolation of persons who are, or are suspected of being, COVID-positive; Enhanced hygiene measures and of PPE; Increased training for staff to perform their roles while COVID-19 is a threat	Release from prison of persons with the lowest risk of recidivism, of older inmates, and of persons with health problems; Identification of infected and recovered staff who may have acquired greater immunity and could therefore be assigned to duties related to the hygiene and care of COVID-positive inmates; Release of inmates with mental health problems
<b>Chile (45<sup>th</sup>)</b>	Expanded non-custodial sentences, to stem the flow of offenders entering Chilean prisons (e.g., probation, parole, house arrest, suspended sentences, electronic monitoring, and work release); Restriction of in-person visitation (replaced with video calling capability); suspension of educational/work activities taking place outside of prison grounds	Suspension of educational and work-related activities (in prison); Controls for at-risk groups; Prison authorities conducted preventative informational campaigns about the contagion of COVID-19; Designated spaces inside the prison for medical isolation; Implementation of in-facility testing; Restriction on staff per unit	Appx. 15% (N=5940) early release
<b>El Salvador (47<sup>th</sup>)</b>	Family visitation and transfer rates to other facilities have decreased	Extensive use of lockdowns; Restriction of programming and activities; Early in the pandemic, the Salvadorian government renewed the focus on “sanitary protocols to prevent Coronavirus in the prison population”	None
<b>Guatemala (57<sup>th</sup>)</b>	Visits from court authorities to prison were suspended at the first report of an outbreak; suspension of family visitation	Inmate use of masks; Created a separate isolation unit with a capacity for housing nearly 500 inmates; thorough cleaning / disinfection of certain facilities; Isolation and recovery site (i.e. a hotel) established for infected prison staff	Early release after risk assessment based on criminal profile, age, medical conditions, and conduct reports while in custody; 140 were approved for early release and the applications for the remaining 380 persons under consideration were still being processed

<b>Honduras (66<sup>th</sup>)</b>	Family visitation and transfer rates to other facilities have decreased	“Rapid testing” and quarantine of new inmates coming into facilities; Isolation of staff to prevent spread both into facilities and into their communities; PPE provided to staff; staff remain in facilities leaving only once per month;	Early release of high medical risk and elderly prisoners. In mid-June 2020, 1,624 prisoners as part of the measures being implemented to prevent the spread of the virus
<b>Romania (70<sup>th</sup>)</b>	Restriction of new intakes during the first weeks of the pandemic; Court hearings through videoconferencing or rescheduling upcoming hearings	Certain penitentiary units were specially designated to serve as quarantine units; Monitoring and isolating of those inmates who, after an epidemiological screening, had symptoms of coronavirus infection and/or were new to a facility; Reducing staff that come into contact with inmates by 30%. Those staff remained home while accomplishing professional tasks; psychological services provided only in critical situations; Informational campaigns for inmates; disinfection of accommodation-based areas	None
<b>Portugal (88<sup>th</sup>)</b>	Temporary suspension of visitation; Restriction on outside goods coming into facilities	Creation of specific facilities for COVID-positive inmates; Quarantine of new inmates coming into facilities; Suspension of transfers between facilities, other than in cases of security; Work activities with external entities and leisure activities suspended; Reassignment and differentiation of inmates’ daily routines to try to separate, as much as possible, inmates considered most vulnerable (e.g., aged more than 60, with immunosuppression or chronic disease such as respiratory ailments, hypertension, or diabetics); Increased testing and monitoring of staff and inmates	Partial pardoning of sentences for those whose sentences were less than two years, 65+ years old, having mental or physical diseases, or with degrees of autonomy that are incompatible with life in prison (N=1,289)
<b>New Zealand (101<sup>st</sup>)</b>	In person visitation suspended; Court hearings conducted by videoconference to limit inmate and staff movement	Staff regularly undergoing health screenings, temperature checks, and using PPE; New prisoners, and those who had been transported outside the facility, isolated for 14 days upon entry into the institution; Social distancing aided by lockdown protocols; Government quickly responded with mitigation strategies, such as hygiene, social distancing, and interaction procedures before any reported cases occurred in the NZ correctional system	None

<b>Sweden (117<sup>a</sup>)</b>	Cancellation of furloughs and visitation	Isolation and quarantine of new intakes; Minimizing the size of the custodial and treatment staff; Use of PPE by staff; Elimination of face-to-face contacts in probation and parole when possible; No-charge phone calls to compensate inmates for the loss of visitation and furlough as well as a way to maintain the treatment plans of many inmates who need prosocial contacts as a part of their rehabilitation; Communication with inmates to keep them informed of safety protocols	None
-------------------------------------	--	--	------

\*\*For further details on mitigation efforts, see articles in this special volume.

Extracted from [Arab News](#). Extracted from Butt et al. (2020).