

Edition

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Bosses behind bars

Lafarge Cement: When Profit Fuels Atrocity

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BOSSES BEHIND BARS

By Satyajit Boolell - Chairperson NHRC

The conviction of senior executives in the Lafarge Syria financing terrorism case marks far more than a corporate scandal. It is a defining human rights moment – one that sends a powerful message that financing terrorism is not merely a financial crime, but a crime against humanity.

Lafarge Cement: When Profit Fuels Atrocity

The landmark ruling delivered by the Paris Criminal Court on 13 April 2026 has shattered the long-standing illusion that corporations can hide behind “business as usual” when operating in conflict zones. The French cement giant Lafarge, which later merged with Swiss group Holcim, was found to have paid approximately USD 6.5 million between 2013 and 2014 to armed terrorist groups, including ISIS, in order to maintain operations at its Jalabiya cement plant in northeast Syria.

These payments were not incidental or unavoidable. In exchange, Lafarge obtained strategic advantages: safe passage for trucks and employees, access to raw materials, cleared transport routes, and even the elimination of commercial competition in the region. The Court rejected attempts to portray the company as a victim of extortion, finding instead that Lafarge willingly entered into arrangements that allowed it to preserve profits in the midst of war and terror.

But the true significance of this case lies beyond corporate misconduct. The funds transferred to terrorist organisations directly contributed to their ability to expand territorially, recruit and train fighters, acquire weapons, and carry out atrocities against civilian populations. The Court expressly recalled the genocide against the Yazidi people beginning in August 2014 and noted that no one could plausibly claim ignorance of the crimes being committed by these groups.

This is why the financing of terrorism must be understood through a human rights lens. Terrorist financing is not an abstract economic offence. Every dollar channelled to terrorist organisations can translate into lives destroyed, communities displaced, women enslaved, children traumatised, and entire populations subjected to fear and violence. Financing terrorism sustains the machinery of atrocities and enables crimes that shock mankind.

The Lafarge judgment therefore sends an essential signal to today’s society. In an increasingly interconnected global economy, corporations cannot separate commercial decisions from their human consequences. Profit cannot come before the right to life, security, dignity, peace and above all, **ethics**. Companies operating in fragile or conflict-affected environments carry a heightened responsibility to ensure that their activities do not contribute, directly or indirectly, to human rights violations.



Satyajit Boolell

The ruling is historic for several reasons. First, it confirms that corporations themselves can face criminal responsibility for financing terrorism, moving beyond regulatory penalties toward genuine accountability. Second, it establishes that economic self-interest cannot excuse complicity in violence. Third, it reinforces an important principle for modern governance: pursuing profits at the expense of human rights may amount to criminal conduct.

At a time when extremist violence, armed conflicts, and transnational insecurity continue to threaten societies worldwide, strong judicial action is essential. Accountability must extend not only to those who pull the trigger, but also to those who finance, facilitate, or profit from systems of terror. Courts, regulators, and governments must continue sending an unequivocal message that economic actors are not above international law or human rights obligations.

The Lafarge case is therefore more than a prosecution – it is a warning. It reminds corporations, financial institutions, and decision-makers that neutrality in the face of atrocities is an illusion. Where money enables terror, silence and inaction become complicity.

In today's world, where the defence of human rights and democratic values is increasingly under pressure, such strong signals are not only necessary; they are indispensable.



DYING WITH DIGNITY

Mourir avec dignité en prison : une exigence des droits humains

By Vijay Ramanjooloo - Member

Mourir en prison demeure une réalité peu visible, reléguée aux marges du regard social, dans des espaces où l'intimité est restreinte et la parole contrainte. Elle pose pourtant une question fondamentale: la dignité humaine s'arrête-t-elle aux portes de la prison? Au moment où la vie s'achève, la réponse à cette question devient un révélateur des valeurs d'une société.

Garantir une fin de vie digne en détention ne relève pas d'un idéal abstrait, mais d'une exigence éthique. Depuis les travaux de Elisabeth Kübler-Ross, qui ont contribué à reconnaître la dimension psychique et émotionnelle du mourir, jusqu'à l'approche globale des soins palliatifs portée par Cicely Saunders, la fin de vie est désormais pensée comme un processus complexe, impliquant des dimensions physiques, psychologiques, sociales et spirituelles. Pourtant, cette approche demeure inégalement appliquée en milieu carcéral.



La prison prive de liberté; elle ne devrait jamais priver de dignité. Lorsque la maladie grave, la dépendance ou la fin de vie s'imposent derrière les murs, une tension apparaît entre la logique sécuritaire et les exigences du soin. Le temps carcéral, structuré par la discipline et le contrôle, entre alors en contradiction avec le temps du mourir, qui appelle présence, écoute et adaptation.

Dans l'imaginaire collectif, mourir dignement signifie souvent mourir chez soi, entouré de ses proches, avec la possibilité de dire au revoir. Dans un travail de recherche que j'ai mené en 2002 à l'Université de Paris 7, *Vieillir et mourir accompagné*, il apparaît que la majorité des personnes en fin de vie expriment ce souhait. La présence des proches joue alors un rôle essentiel pour contenir l'angoisse et donner sens à l'ultime étape. La réalité carcérale s'en éloigne profondément.

Mourir reste un processus psychique et relationnel, y compris en détention. Comme l'a montré Elisabeth Kübler-Ross, ce processus s'accompagne de transformations émotionnelles. L'expérience clinique en milieu carcéral suggère que, chez certaines personnes détenues, souvent perçues comme agressives ou instables, un apaisement peut émerger à l'approche de la mort, laissant place au regret, à la peur et parfois à une forme de lucidité.

Cette évolution rejoint les observations de Marie de Hennezel, pour qui la fin de vie peut constituer un temps de transformation intérieure. Toutefois, les conditions de détention en modifient profondément l'expérience. La prison tend à figer l'identité autour de l'acte et de la condamnation, alors que la mort confronte à une réalité plus universelle: celle de la finitude humaine. Une personne détenue en fin de vie n'est plus seulement un condamné, mais un être humain confronté à sa propre disparition.



Les conditions concrètes de détention renforcent cette vulnérabilité. Les personnes détenues, notamment les ressortissants étrangers, peuvent être confrontées à la perspective de mourir loin de leur famille, de leur langue et de leurs repères culturels. Les contacts avec les proches sont limités, et les rituels de fin de vie difficilement accessibles, constituant une forme de « double peine ».

L'expérience de terrain met en lumière des situations préoccupantes: patient gravement malade isolé en unité hospitalière pénitentiaire, personnes âgées dont l'état de santé interroge la capacité même à supporter la détention, femmes condamnées loin de leur pays confrontées à la perspective de mourir sans revoir leurs enfants, ou encore personnes en détention provisoire prolongée- parfois pendant de longues années - atteignant la fin de vie avant même que leur situation judiciaire ne soit tranchée.

Au-delà de l'expérience humaine, ces enjeux trouvent un fondement dans le droit international. L'article 1 de la Déclaration universelle des droits de l'homme affirme que tous les êtres humains naissent libres et égaux en dignité et en droits. Ce principe ne souffre pas d'exception. Les Règles Nelson Mandela rappellent que les personnes privées de liberté doivent bénéficier d'un niveau de soins équivalent à celui disponible dans la communauté. Toutefois, la dignité en fin de vie ne se réduit pas à l'accès aux soins: elle implique également la reconnaissance de la personne, la qualité

de l'accompagnement et le maintien du lien humain.

Dès lors, une question s'impose: la dignité en fin de vie est-elle un droit fondamental, ou une variable dépendante des contraintes institutionnelles? Répondre à cette question engage la responsabilité des systèmes pénitentiaires, mais aussi celle des sociétés dans leur ensemble. Comme le rappelait Cicely Saunders, il reste toujours quelque chose à faire, même lorsque les options médicales sont limitées.

Si ces questions demeurent difficiles à aborder, c'est aussi parce que la mort reste difficile à penser. Sigmund Freud et Maud Mannoni ont souligné cette difficulté à affronter et à nommer la finitude. Pourtant, cette confrontation constitue une condition nécessaire pour penser la dignité.

Une sagesse universelle rappelle que chaque être humain est appelé à mourir. Dans cette perspective, la manière dont une société accompagne la fin de vie des personnes détenues devient un miroir de son humanité collective, mais aussi des conditions dans lesquelles chacun pourrait, un jour, être traité.

Garantir une fin de vie digne en prison n'est pas seulement une question de moyens, mais de volonté morale. Elle interroge moins ce que nous pouvons faire que ce que nous sommes prêts à tolérer - et, en définitive, ce que nous reconnaissons encore comme humain.

La fin de vie assistée et principaux courants religieux

By Jean Marie Richard - Member

La fin de vie dans la dignité est devenue une option que bon nombre de personnes considèrent de plus en plus sérieusement dans le cas d'un membre qui se retrouve en phase terminale d'une maladie incurable. Le sujet est souvent associé à l'euthanasie, terme désignant l'acte de provoquer volontairement la mort d'une personne afin de mettre fin à ses souffrances. Les grandes religions du monde accordent généralement une valeur sacrée à la vie humaine, mais leurs approches diffèrent selon leurs croyances, leurs traditions, leur appréhension de la souffrance et de la dignité.



Le christianisme

L'Église catholique s'oppose fermement à l'euthanasie. La vie est un don et l'œuvre de Dieu. Cependant, le catholicisme distingue l'euthanasie de l'arrêt de traitements médicaux disproportionnés. Une personne et/ou sa famille peuvent refuser un acharnement thérapeutique lorsque les soins ne donnent plus d'espoir de guérison. Le pape Jean-Paul II et le pape François ont rappelé l'importance des soins palliatifs, de l'accompagnement humain et du respect des personnes en fin de vie.

The Right to Dignity and the Prohibition of Ageism

By Noorya Surrooh - Investigator

Human dignity constitutes the foundational normative principle of the international human rights system. In contemporary legal discourse, dignity has evolved into a foundational human right. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) establishes its normative framework by affirming that *“all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights”* (Article 1). This positions dignity as the ontological source of all fundamental rights, serving as the interpretive lens through which equality, liberty, autonomy, and non-discrimination are construed.



The definition of Ageism

The prohibition of ageism, understood as systematic discrimination, stereotyping, and marginalisation based on age, constitutes a necessary corollary of the right to dignity. The term ageism was first conceptualised by Butler (1975), who defined it as *“a process of systematic stereotyping and discrimination against people because they are old”*.

From a legal perspective, ageism manifests across multiple domains, including employment, healthcare, social security, housing, digital governance, and access to justice. For example, in the employment sector, the case of *Fuchs and Köhler v Land Hessen* (CJEU, 2011) upheld mandatory retirement at 65, legally legitimising forced labour market exit solely based on age, irrespective of individual capacity, directly impacting dignity and economic autonomy. In healthcare, during the COVID-19 pandemic, Italy, Spain, and the United Kingdom adopted age-based ICU triage protocols, deprioritising patients above 75 and raising serious violations of dignity, equality, and the right to life (The Lancet, 2020; WHO Ethics Guidance, 2022).

Ageism in Mauritius

Mauritius is undergoing a rapid demographic transition, with 18.7% of the population aged 60 years and above in 2021, projected to rise to 36.5% by 2061, making it one of the fastest ageing societies in Africa. This demographic shift presents significant legal, social, and economic challenges, particularly regarding the protection of dignity, autonomy, and social inclusion of older persons.

Section 9(1) of the Protection of Elderly Persons Act 2005 empowers the Court to issue protection orders when an elderly person is victims of, or threatened by abuse. These orders legally restrain the respondent from harmful conduct and mandate *“good behavior”* toward elderly persons. The statute explicitly affirms the preservation of dignity as a core legislative objective.

The Right to Dignity and Ageism

Despite the universality of ageing, older persons remain uniquely exposed to systemic marginalisation, often rendered invisible within equality jurisprudence. As Fredman (2011) observes, equality law has historically prioritised race and gender, leaving age discrimination doctrinally underdeveloped. The intersection of ageism and dignity becomes particularly salient within international human rights frameworks. Ageism constitutes a direct affront to dignity, negating personal autonomy, undermining equal moral worth, and instrumentalising older persons as economic or social burdens. Denial of adequate healthcare, forced retirement, digital exclusion, and paternalistic governance mechanisms collectively erode both the existential and normative dimensions of dignity.

In addition, Mauritius launched the National Integrated Care for Older People (ICOPE) Strategic and Action Plan, 2023–2026, targeting over 260,000 elderly citizens with person-centred care models designed to preserve autonomy and dignity.

The Senior Citizens Council of Mauritius plays a central role in promoting social participation, active ageing, and dignity, affiliating over 915 registered senior citizens associations and representing more than 97,000 elderly persons nationwide.

Elderly Watch Committees: There are approximately 20 “Elderly Watch” groups across the island that act as a *service de proximité* (local service) to identify and report cases of neglect or abuse within communities.

Elderly Persons’ Protection Unit: Operates under the Ministry of Social Integration and has the power to summon perpetrators of abuse and apply for court orders to protect victims.

The Equal Opportunities Act 2008 explicitly prohibits discrimination based on age in various sectors, including employment, education, and the provision of goods and services.

The Workers’ Rights Act 2019 protects against age-based discrimination in the workplace, specifically stating that an employer cannot terminate an agreement based on a worker’s age.

The Residential Care Homes Act 2003 regulates and standardizes the norms for private and public care homes to ensure that seniors living in these facilities are treated with dignity and receive quality care.

Possible Avenues to Combat Ageism

Several avenues merit consideration in the fight against ageism. One approach would be to strengthen the legal framework by introducing explicit provisions prohibiting age-based discrimination across employment, healthcare, social security, housing, and digital services, backed by accessible and effective judicial remedies. Another avenue worth exploring is the creation of a dedicated mechanism for older persons, such as an Ombudsperson for Elderly People, mandated to receive and investigate complaints relating to violations of the rights of older persons and to conduct public sensitisation campaigns aimed at shifting attitudes toward ageing and older members of our society.



DONN NOU ENN DEZIEM SANS

The Certificate of Character Act: A step toward genuine rehabilitation

By Najah Ahmed - Deputy Chair Person

The passage of the Certificate of Character Act 2026 is a welcome and overdue reform. It addresses a problem the Commission has encountered repeatedly in its work: the burden of a criminal record that hangs over a person's life, often well after the punishment has been served.

The previous statute treated certain convictions as effectively permanent on the certificate, regardless of their seriousness or the time elapsed since they occurred. The result was a major barrier to employment, to further studies, and to travel for thousands of people who had completed their sentences. A young person fined for a minor offence at the age of nineteen could find, twenty years later, that the same record continued to affect his every job application. This was no longer the disclosure of a relevant fact about a candidate, it was the indefinite extension of a sentence.

The new Act introduces a graduated mechanism for the disappearance of less serious convictions from the certificate after a reasonable period. Convictions punished by fines of up to fifty thousand rupees disappear after two years. Those punished by imprisonment of up to five years disappear after ten. Offences committed before the age of eighteen are treated separately, reflecting what any humane system must accept: young people make mistakes and the law should not turn those mistakes into a life sentence.

This approach is consistent with the international standards that govern rehabilitation. The Nelson Mandela Rules, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2015, set out a clear proposition. Rule 4 of the Nelson Mandela Rules provides that the purposes of a sentence of imprisonment are primarily to protect society against crime and to reduce recidivism, and that those purposes can be achieved only when the time in custody is used to prepare the person for reintegration on release, so that ex-detainees "can lead a law-abiding and self-supporting life". Rule 90 goes further, treating post-release support as part of the responsibility of the correctional system itself. Article 10(3) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Mauritius is a State Party, is equally clear: the "essential aim" of the penitentiary system shall be reformation and social rehabilitation.

A reformed person who cannot find work has not, in any meaningful sense, been reintegrated. The right to work, recognised in Article 23 of the Universal Declaration of

Human Rights and in successive regional instruments, is not reserved only to those with a clean record. It is a component of human dignity for everyone. In fact, it also allows individuals to exercise most of their other social and economic rights. Having permanent obstacles to employment for minor offences denies that dignity. It also pushes people back toward the very conditions that contributed to their offending.

The Commission has noted with appreciation the willingness of the Attorney-General to amend the Bill at Committee stage in light of consultations. The removal of offences such as simple larceny from the First Schedule of serious offences is one such revision which broadens the reach of the reform. Larceny is among the most common offences before our courts, and it disproportionately affects young and disadvantaged people. Its retention among the lifelong-disclosable offences would have weakened much of what the Bill set out to achieve.

Real progress on this issue will be measured in the years to come, not just at the moment of enactment. The Commission will pay close attention to the implementation of the Act, and in particular to the equal application of its protections in practice. A law of this kind can succeed when its effects are really felt by the people it was designed to help: those who have served their sentence and now seek, often against considerable obstacles, to live the rest of their lives as citizens rather than as permanent suspects.



THE COMMISSION AT WORK

GANHRI AGM 2026 – Mauritius Joins Global Dialogue on AI and Human Rights

The 2026 Annual Meeting of the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) was held from 30 March to 1 April at the Palais des Nations in Geneva. The meeting, organized in cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and co-funded by the European Commission through the NHRI.EU project, brought together national human rights institutions (NHRIs) from across the globe, including Mauritius, alongside the 61st session of the UN Human Rights Council.

The Annual Meeting featured a high-level conference on “*The Role of National Human Rights Institutions in Promoting and Protecting Human Rights in the Digital Space*,” reflecting growing global concern over the human rights implications of emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence.

Mauritius was represented by its Chairperson, Mr S Boolell, SC, who contributed to discussions on the intersection of artificial intelligence and human rights. In his intervention, he emphasized the urgent need to ensure that the development and deployment of AI systems remain firmly grounded in human rights principles. He highlighted that while AI presents significant opportunities, it also carries risks related to privacy, discrimination, and accountability.

Importantly, Mr Boolell called for a shift in responsibility on AI developers and digital platforms, stressing that the burden of safeguarding human rights should not rest solely on States. Instead, technology companies must be held accountable for the design, deployment, and impacts of their systems, including through stronger regulatory frameworks and human rights-based approaches to innovation.

In a powerful keynote address, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Volker Türk, stressed that human rights must be the foundation of digital governance because “human rights are designed to protect us from an Orwellian future.” While acknowledging both the harm caused by digital technologies and the immense potential to use these same technologies for the advancement of human rights, he reminded that all national human rights institutions (NHRIs) are uniquely positioned to use technology to:

1. Deliver our mandates, through campaigns on social media and the use of AI to detect human rights violations, for example; and
2. Protect human rights in the digital space through the monitoring and documentation of human rights impact of digital technologies so that there can be a push for accountability.

The meeting also included GANHRI Bureau discussions, the General Assembly, and knowledge exchanges on people on the move, providing a platform for NHRIs to share experiences and strengthen cooperation in addressing global human rights challenges.

Mauritius’ participation in the GANHRI Annual Meeting underscores its continued commitment to engaging in international human rights dialogue and contributing to emerging debates on digital technologies and accountability in the AI era.



Mr Boolell, SC, remitting the NHRC Annual Report 2025 to GANHRI Chairperson Mrs Amina Bouayach

Meeting with Mr Beekun, newly appointed Commissioner of Prisons

The newly appointed Commissioner of Prisons, Mr. Beekun, paid a courtesy visit to the National Preventive Mechanism Division on 10 April 2026, barely a week into his mandate.

The meeting set a constructive tone for institutional collaboration. Discussions centred on strengthening cooperation between the prison administration and the NPMD in upholding humane detention conditions and the standards set out under the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture (OPCAT) and the United Nations Nelson Mandela Rules. The Chairperson recalled the Division's preventive mandate; the Deputy Chairperson, Mrs Najah Ahmed, underlined its collaborative approach to identifying systemic challenges and developing practical solutions with stakeholders.

The exchange also addressed prison overcrowding, staff shortages, and training officers in de-escalation techniques and the proportionate use of force. The Commissioner outlined his vision for modernising prison operations, centred on rehabilitation.

The Commission welcomed this first exchange and looks forward to a sustained partnership in the interests of all persons in the care of the Mauritius Prisons Service.



Integrating Climate Justice into Sustainable Waste Governance at Mare Chicose

The Human Rights Division (HRD) has recently intensified its oversight of the Mare Chicose landfill, Mauritius' primary waste disposal site since 1997. This project examines the critical intersection of environmental degradation and fundamental human rights, specifically addressing concerns regarding methane emissions, groundwater safety, and recurring fires. Rooted in the principles of climate justice, the HRD's intervention recognises that a healthy environment is a third-generation human right, as supported by the Constitution of Mauritius and the Environment Act 2024. By monitoring these legal frameworks, the HRD aims to ensure that the state's transition toward a circular economy, incorporating waste-to-energy and gas capture systems, effectively safeguards the livelihoods of nearby populations.

On April 2, 2026, the HRD team conducted a comprehensive field visit to the landfill and the remnants of the Mare Chicose village. While the village was largely relocated in the mid-1990s due to health risks, the HRD remains attentive to the historical and ongoing implications of resettlement and compensation for affected families. During the visit, the team engaged with the site manager to review operational safety and waste treatment protocols. Findings indicated that the site currently maintains structured compaction and layering processes, with leachate being treated at specialised facilities. Furthermore, the HRD noted the implementation of mandatory health measures for workers, including annual vaccinations and standard-issue protective gear.

Moving forward, the HRD emphasises that strengthening national waste governance is essential for long-term environmental justice. While current operations appear adequately contained, the introduction of household-level waste segregation and improved infrastructure for advanced treatment remains a priority for reducing ecological harm. By documenting site conditions and facilitating dialogue between authorities and the community, the HRD continues to hold the state accountable to its international obligations under the Paris Agreement, ensuring that the pursuit of sustainable development does not come at the expense of the fundamental right to a clean and healthy environment.



Sharing Minds' Session on Palliative Care, Human Dignity, and the Right to Die with Compassion

The NHRC recently hosted a “Sharing Minds” session dedicated to examining palliative care through the lens of human rights, dignity, and compassionate healthcare. The session was led by Mrs. Shamima Patel, Founder and President of Breast Cancer Care Mauritius (BCC).

Mrs. Patel presented the DIYA Project, an initiative aimed at establishing a specialised palliative care centre in Mauritius to respond to the growing need for holistic and dignified support for individuals living with chronic, life-limiting, and terminal illnesses. The presentation emphasised that palliative care must be recognised not simply as a medical intervention, but as a fundamental human rights obligation rooted in dignity, equality, autonomy, compassion, and the inherent worth of every human being.

The discussions further explored the evolving human rights principle of the right to die with dignity, not as a promotion of death, but as the recognition that every person deserves to approach the end of life free from unnecessary suffering, abandonment, or neglect. The session also highlighted the urgent need for legislative and policy reform to formally recognise palliative care as an essential healthcare service within Mauritius’ national healthcare framework.

The NHRC welcomed the session as an important contribution towards advancing a human rights-based approach to healthcare in Mauritius. The discussions reaffirmed that the protection of human dignity does not end when curative treatment is no longer possible. Rather, human rights principles require societies and institutions to ensure that every individual is treated with humanity, compassion, respect, and dignity until the end of life.



NHRC Mauritius Participates in Dakar Expert Meeting in view of Strengthening Protection for Human Rights Defenders in Africa

The NHRC participated in the Expert Meeting on the Draft African Declaration on the Promotion of the Role of Human Rights Defenders and their Protection in Africa, held from 9 to 11 April 2026 in Dakar, Senegal. The meeting was organised under the auspices of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) and brought together regional and international experts, representatives of National Human Rights Institutions, civil society organisations, academia, and State representatives.

Ms. Melany Nagen, Deputy Chairperson represented the Commission and actively participated in the high-level consultations and discussions surrounding the strengthening of civic space, the protection of defenders, and the obligations of States to prevent reprisals, harassment, and violence against individuals engaged in the promotion and protection of human rights.

During the deliberations, Ms. Nagen made representations highlighting the urgent need for stronger and more explicit protections to be afforded to female human rights defenders, who continue to face gender-specific forms of violence, intimidation, harassment, and stigmatization both physically and digitally. Emphasis was placed on the reality that women human rights defenders are often disproportionately targeted through online abuse, cyber harassment, misogynistic attacks, defamation campaigns, threats of violence, invasion of privacy, and coordinated attempts aimed at silencing their advocacy and undermining their credibility.

The intervention further underscored that such attacks not only violate the dignity, security, and psychological integrity of female defenders, but also contribute to shrinking civic space and discouraging the meaningful participation of women in public discourse, human rights advocacy, and democratic engagement. The discussions also reaffirmed the importance of ensuring that States investigate violations committed against human rights defenders, prosecute perpetrators, and provide effective remedies and reparations to victims. The participation of the Commission further reflects Mauritius' continued commitment to advancing human rights, and promoting inclusive and rights-based governance at both regional and international levels.



“Sharing Minds” Session on Climate Justice and Human Rights

On 28 April 2026, a Sharing Minds Session focused on the intersection of Climate Justice and Human Rights, reframing environmental advocacy as a fundamental human rights obligation. The Commission welcomed Ms. Krishnee Appadoo, Founder and CEO of the Climate Justice Compact to deliver a talk on “Shining a Human Rights Light on Climate Change: Beyond Rhetoric.”

Ms. Appadoo unpacked the impacts of climate change. This is not a distant crisis but a lived reality demanding individual accountability and collective action. She traced the evolution of climate change law from its origins in science to its status as a rights-based framework, highlighting the unequal burdens faced by Small Island Developing States (SIDS), low-income communities, children, women, and indigenous peoples. Her intervention on “loss and damage,” the third pillar alongside mitigation and adaptation, underscored the urgent need to recognise the irreversible harms suffered by vulnerable communities and the moral and legal imperative for equitable redress.

Ms. Appadoo introduced theoretical lenses: corrective, recognition, procedural, and intergenerational justice, while citing landmark litigations shaping global climate accountability.

The session served as a profound call to conscience, bridging the gap between legal theory and grassroots vulnerability - a reminder that climate justice is human rights in action and a shared responsibility to safeguard our planet and the dignity of future generations.



NHRC Joins NADC Consultation on Cannabis Policy Reform: A Human Rights Lens on a National Debate

Ms Melany Nagen, Deputy Chairperson and Mr Jean Marie Richard, Member participated in the National stakeholder consultation workshop on National Cannabis Policy Reform organised by the National Agency for Drug Control (NADC).

During the discussions, emphasis was placed on the importance of approaching cannabis policy through a balanced and human rights-centred lens. The dialogue recognised that contemporary debates on cannabis can no longer be confined solely to criminal justice considerations but must also engage broader questions relating to public health, medical access, human dignity, proportionality, equality before the law, social protection, and evidence-based harm reduction strategies.

From the perspective of the NHRC, any future reform process must remain firmly grounded in the protection of fundamental human rights and constitutional values. Attention was drawn to the importance of safeguarding the dignity of individuals suffering from chronic illnesses and debilitating medical conditions, while ensuring public safety and the protection of vulnerable groups.

The NHRC reiterated its support for compassionate and humane approaches to healthcare, including the strengthening of palliative care frameworks and the broader doctrine of “dying with dignity.”

The NHRC also underscored that a rights-based approach does not advocate for unrestricted legalisation, but rather for carefully regulated and medically supervised frameworks supported by scientific evidence, robust safeguards, quality control standards, and targeted therapeutic access where appropriate. Such an approach seeks to reconcile public health objectives with the protection of human dignity and individual well-being.



Equipping Those Who Hold The Keys: Human Rights Training for New Prison Officers

From 12 to 14 May 2026, the NPMD delivered a comprehensive human rights training programme to 54 new recruits of the Mauritius Prison Service at the Prison Training School. The programme, developed over eight months in collaboration with the University of Mauritius, marked a significant step in the NPMD's preventive mandate under OPCAT.

The curriculum, structured across six modules and twelve hours of instruction, covered the foundations of human rights in detention, prisoners' rights and living conditions, use of force and conflict management, the prevention of torture and ill-treatment, the treatment of vulnerable detainees, and accountability and professional ethics. Each session paired an academic component delivered by a Dr Mahadew, Associate Professor from the University of Mauritius with a practical component led by a member of the NPMD, grounding international standards in the daily realities of prison work.

The training drew on the Mandela Rules, the Convention Against Torture, the Constitution of Mauritius, the Reform Institutions Act, and the NHRC's own investigative reports. Recruits engaged with practical scenarios, controlled simulations, and group discussions designed to develop skills in de-escalation, respectful communication, lawful discipline, and incident documentation.

The Mauritius Prison Service welcomed the initiative and facilitated full access to the Training School and its recruits throughout the programme.

The NPMD views this training as a core expression of its preventive mandate. Torture prevention does not begin with investigation after the fact. It begins with equipping the men and women who work in our prisons with the knowledge, skills, and professional standards to ensure that every person in their custody is treated with dignity.



Mauritius NHRC at IMRF 2026: Advancing a Human Rights–Based Approach to Migration Governance

The International Migration Review Forum (IMRF) 2026, held in New York from 4 to 8 May 2026, marked a historic first participation for the NHRC of Mauritius at this global migration governance platform.

Ms Deepti Thakoor was selected as the only National Human Rights Institution (NHRI) panelist for the Informal Interactive Multi-Stakeholder Hearing on 4 May 2026. In her intervention, she emphasised that migrants must be recognised first and foremost as human beings whose dignity and rights are inherent, regardless of migration status, in line with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. She further advocated for a trauma-informed approach to migration governance, noting that many migrants experience invisible trauma linked to conflict, trafficking, violence, displacement, and exploitation. She highlighted that such an approach can strengthen protection systems by preventing misidentification, criminalisation, and further victimisation of vulnerable migrants. Her intervention was well received by NHRIs and civil society representatives. The intervention is available at:

<https://webtv.un.org/en/asset/k1f/k1fb6emjnn?kalturaSeekFrom=2706&kalturaClipTo=3102&kalturaStartTime=1>

During Days 2 and 3, she participated in thematic roundtables addressing key issues including migrant rights protection, labour migration, regular pathways, climate-induced displacement, trafficking, inclusion, and international cooperation.

In the policy debate, Ms. Amina Bouayach, speaking as the Chairperson of the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions, highlighted the critical role of NHRIs in documenting violations, ensuring accountability, and supporting access to remedies, while reaffirming the need to recognise migrants as individuals with “life projects” and inherent dignity.

Days 4 and 5 focused on plenary sessions where Member States reviewed progress and commitments on migration governance, culminating in the consensus adoption of the IMRF Progress Declaration reaffirming international cooperation on safe, orderly, and regular migration. The Forum concluded on 8 May 2026 with a closing reception.

Overall, the participation of Mauritius at IMRF 2026 enhanced the international visibility of its NHRC and reinforced its commitment to human rights-based, people-centred migration governance, while highlighting the growing role of NHRIs in shaping global migration policy.



UN Secretary General: Mauritius "a fantastic example of democracy and good governance"

The Honourable Prime Minister recently participated in the Africa Forward Summit held in Nairobi from 11 to 12 May 2026. In an interview to the press, with the Secretary-General of the United Nations, António Guterres, it was highlighted that Mauritius is a fundamental partner of the United Nations, fully committed to multilateralism

As a Small Island Developing State, Mauritius has been identified as a priority in relation to climate action, as well as in ongoing discussions on the reform of the international financial system, particularly with regard to middle-income countries. The Secretary-General further commended Mauritius as a "fantastic example of democracy and good governance" and a model for many other countries.

The NHRC welcomes these remarks, which also reflect the country's enduring commitment to international human rights principles and underscore how Mauritius continues to strengthen its visibility and credibility on the international stage as a small island developing state.



Courtesy: Le Mauricien

<https://www.lemauricien.com/actualites/politique/navin-ramgoolam-a-nairobi-pour-le-sommet-africa-forward/706917/>

TRIBUNE

AI in Mauritian Prisons: A Turning Point for Reform

By Michel Vieillesse - Member

The integration of artificial intelligence (AI) into prison systems is rapidly reshaping global debates on the future of corrections. Mauritius, while still at an early stage, cannot remain on the sidelines - especially as persistent challenges such as staff shortages begin to pressure the system towards innovation.

Historically, prisons have been slow to embrace technological change, often operating within rigid and traditional frameworks. Yet the emergence of "smart prisons" - institutions that rely on digital technologies to improve security, efficiency, and rehabilitation - offers a timely opportunity to rethink the Mauritian prison model. Countries such as Finland, the United States, China and South Korea have already begun experimenting with AI-driven correctional systems, with varying approaches and outcomes.

In practice, AI in prisons is primarily used in two domains: security and rehabilitation. On the security front, intelligent surveillance systems are transforming how prisons are monitored. Unlike traditional CCTV, AI-powered video analytics can detect abnormal behaviour, anticipate risks such as violence or self-harm, and send real-time alerts to officers. In parallel, wearable technologies enable continuous tracking of inmates' movements and even physiological signals, allowing for a more proactive and data-driven approach to prison management. These tools can ease the workload of officers while improving safety within facilities.

However, the true potential of AI may lie in rehabilitation; an area that remains underdeveloped in many prison systems. Digital platforms can expand access to education, vocational training, and psychological support, tailored to individual needs. Emerging tools such as virtual reality are already being used in some countries to help inmates develop social skills, manage emotions, and prepare for reintegration into society. For Mauritius, where rehabilitation is a stated priority, such innovations could help address resource constraints and modernise service delivery.

Crucially, the conversation is no longer abstract. Innovation is already happening around us. The Smart Prison System developed by students at Middlesex University Mauritius is a compelling illustration of how technology can be applied in a way that promotes both efficiency and respect for human rights. When the Commission had the opportunity to visit and engage directly with the students behind the project, what stood out was not only the technical ambition of their work, but the values embedded in it: transparency, dignity, and the responsible use of data in institutional settings. That a group of students should be driving this conversation and that it should spark meaningful dialogue about the future of detention in Mauritius speaks to the real-world impact that academic innovation can have on society.



TRIBUNE

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Yet caution is essential. The use of AI in prisons raises significant ethical and legal concerns. Over-reliance on surveillance technologies risks undermining privacy and human dignity, particularly in environments where safeguards may be limited. There is also the danger that increased automation could reduce meaningful human interaction, which is a cornerstone of effective rehabilitation. Experiences from other countries have already highlighted risks related to excessive monitoring, data misuse, and negative psychological effects on detainees.

Mauritius therefore faces a delicate balancing act. AI should not be deployed merely as an instrument of control, but as a tool to support a more humane and transparent correctional system. This will require a robust legal framework, strong oversight mechanisms, and sustained investment in staff training and institutional capacity.

Ultimately, the question is not only technological but philosophical. The adoption of AI in prisons forces us to reconsider the very purpose of incarceration. If approached thoughtfully, it offers an opportunity to move beyond a purely punitive model towards one centred on rehabilitation, dignity, and reintegration. In doing so, Mauritius could align its prison system with modern standards of justice and social progress.

LAVI APRE PRIZON

Interview of an ex-detainee - "Mone sorti dan l'enfer"

Interviewed by Michel Vieillesse

Mo ena 40 ans, mone faire environ 7 fois prison. Banne offenses la ti soit vols, soit possession la drogue, ou pane paye l'amende. Mo ena mo madam, nou reste dan le nord dan NHDC, mo en retard lor mo ban paiement lacaz, delo, la limier. Mo ena trois zenfants, enn grand tifi marie dans le sud, enn garcon qui pa traville, enne zen tifi kine ena deux zenfants, enn ki ena 2 mois, zot tou reste are nou. La vie pas facile mo travail gramatin mo manze tanto. Doucement doucement mone gagn ban kamouad kot nou met enn nisa pou blie tracas. Dernier case monn gagne c'est larceny a caus mo ti fine tome dan l'addiction. Dans prison toule tan mo ti ena enn bon comportement mo ti essaye arrete are la drogue et letan mone reentre prison mone demand pou alle Prison Richelieu kot pas pou gagne ban traffic endan, li pli facil pou mo arrete.




Mone gagn bocou crise craving mais mone manz are li, mone pren douche froide souvent 3 ou 4 fois par jour. Asoir souvent pas dormi pendant plis ki 2 mois, souvent gagn la fièvre, roule en bas. Seulement ban officiers ti conne mo pe faire bocou zeffor et zot ti comprend moi. Zot ine alle koz pou moi et ine encourage moi. Kan mo alle guet infirmier li dire moi pas capave donne medicament pou ca sinon to pas pou capav rest dan sa prison la, ici pas pou ban dan ladiction. Zot ine garde moi dans sa prison la et mo kapav occupe enn journee are travail et pas rest en place.

Letan mo sorti prison dan lepok fete, mo pas alle dan baz kot ena la drogue, pas frequente ban camarade la. Mone alle tras enn travay. Avant mo ti travay sofer camion, mo sarie ros, later, marchandises tou, et mo pas ti ena permis mais mo ti bisin travay. Mo ti gagn tigit casse parski banla exploite moi mais mo bisin soign mo fami. Coumsamem mone gagn bocou l'amendes ziska faire prison. Aster mo senti moi inpe pli fort pou combat la drogue. Depi mo sorti en desam mo pane touche nanrien. Mo bisin surveille mo garcon pou li pas tombe ladans et alle faire prison. Mone ramasse inpe casse et mone gagn laide pou alle appranne conduire bien et passe mo test. Mo faire lot travail macon toujours mais mo gagn bocou difficile. Tant ki mo pas gagn sa permis la mo pou toujours exploite.





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