

ADDRESSING THE GLOBAL CRISIS OF MASS INCARCERATION OF WOMEN: OPTIONS FOR DRUG POLICY REFORM AT TIMES OF COVID-19

ONLINE SIDE EVENT - #CCPCJ30

REGISTRATION: bit.do/women-mass-incarceration

Thursday, 20th May 2021, 14:10 - 15:00 (CET - Vienna)

Organised by AWID, Centro de Estudios Legales y Sociales, Dejusticia, International Drug Policy Consortium, Penal Reform International and Washington Office on Latin America

Globally, 20% of people incarcerated are deprived of their liberty for drug offences – a proportion that rises to 35% for women in prison. Punitive drug policies are a major driver of women's incarceration, in particular in Latin America and Asia, and have contributed to prison overcrowding in many parts of the world. The COVID-19 pandemic has underscored how the criminal legal system is unable to protect the health and rights of women deprived of liberty. As of today, at least 538,000 people in prison have tested positive for COVID-19, and at least 3,900 have died from it. Transmission rates are five times higher than amongst the general population.

As the United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders (the 'Bangkok Rules') reached their 10-year mark in December 2020, it is time to rethink the role of the criminal legal system in responses to drugs. This side event will discuss the various issues associated with the mass incarceration of women for drug offences, and propose a series of recommendations for reform, from a gender and feminist perspective.

Speakers:

- **Leigh Toomey**, Chair, UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention
- **Triona Lenihan**, Policy and International Advocacy Manager, Penal Reform International
- **Justine Moore**, Director of Training, National Council for Incarcerated and Formerly Incarcerated Women and Girls
- **Fenya Fischler**, Resourcing Feminist Movements Coordinator, AWID

Moderator: **Luciana Pol**, Senior Fellow in Security Policy, CELS (Argentina)

