PRISONS AS TORTURE CHAMBERS: AN ACCOUNT OF THE STRAINED RELATIONSHIP OF PRISON STAFF AND FEMALE INMATES IN CAMEROON

LINONGE-FONTEBO, Helen. N

1Department of Women & Gender Studies, Faculty of Social & Management Sciences
University of Buea, Cameroon

ABSTRACT

Despite the shift in punishment in modern day penitentiary regime “prison as torture chambers” is a commonplace discourse in Cameroon detention centres and prison cells. The relationship between prison staff and female inmates is not always cordial due to torture inflicted on female inmates; they turn to look for ways to exercise agency and revenge against prison staff. Whilst the human rights organisations in Cameroon have condemned corporal punishment and all forms of inhuman treatment meted on inmates, torture still manifest in subtle ways and not only involves the male inmates but female inmates as well. This has overarching consequences on inmates’ adaptation in prison for torture is used as a means of surveillance by prison staff and inmates themselves torture each other with little or no consequences. There is therefore need for a concerted effort between the government of Cameroon and prison authorities to eradicate torture and ensure respect for human rights in prison.

Keywords: Prisons, Torture Chambers, Prison Staff, Female Inmates, Cameroon.

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