









Research Article

Detained but not Convicted: A Psychosocial Inquiry into Pre-Trial Experiences at Masvingo Remand Prison

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Abstract

This study focused on examining the psychosocial challenges faced by pre-trial detainees at Masvingo Remand prison. It was noted that the continuous decline in the psycho-social support system in Zimbabwe was affecting pre-trial detainees mental well-being. The study adopted a qualitative research approach, a case study research design and the sample for the study was comprised of 10 participants who are on pre-trial detention. In addition, to the participants 1 lawyer, 2 prison officers and 2 court officers from Masvingo Magistrates Court who are stationed at Masvingo Remand Prison made up the key informants. Furthermore, key informant interviews and in-depth interviews were used for data collection. Thematic analysis was then used for data analysis. The findings reveal that pre-trial detainees face significant psychosocial challenges affecting their well-being. Many experience mental health problems such as depression and anxiety, often worsened by limited access to mental health services. Social isolation is common, as detention separates individuals from their families and support systems, leading to strained relationships. Participants also reported the negative effects of stigma, which lowers self-esteem and increases feelings of shame. In addition, uncertainty about legal outcomes contributes to emotional stress and trauma. Limited access to legal representation further prolongs detention and deepens psychological distress. Participants emphasize the importance of accessible and comprehensive mental health services in correctional settings, as they play a crucial role in addressing detainees' mental health needs and promoting their overall well-being. The study also explored social support systems available to detainees in pre-trial detention. This included examining the extent and effectiveness of existing support programs such as support groups, family visitation programs, and peer support networks. Such programs can significantly contribute to detainees' psychosocial well-being.

Keywords

Psychosocial Support, Mental Health, Prison, Detainees

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1. Introduction and Background

The decision to detain a person before he is found guilty of a crime is one of the most draconian a state or individual can make. A decision made in an instant by the arresting officer can have a severe, lasting, and adverse impact. Whether or not it is justified, and regardless of whether due process is followed, the arrest is likely to have a traumatic effect on the detainee and those who love and depend on him. Pretrial detention is one of the worst things that can happen to a person: the detainee immediately loses his freedom, and can also lose his family, health, home, job, and community ties. Moreover, pre-trial detention does not reduce crime or improve public security. This is a study on the examination of psychosocial challenges faced by detainees on pre-trial detention at Masvingo Remand.

On an average day, one out of three prisoners or some 3.2 million people are in pre-trial detention worldwide [1]. In parts of the globe pre-trial detainees outnumber convicted prisoners. Collectively, the roughly 3.2 million detained today will spend 640 million days in pre-trial detention [1]. Some will spend only a few days in detention but many will languish for weeks, months and even years before their trials are finalized or charges dismissed. A surprising characteristic of many pre-trial detention populations is that they are primarily composed of persons accused of minor offences. For example, in England and Wales a jurisdiction where pre-trial detention is used relatively sparingly over half of all pre-trial detainees are eventually given a non-custodial sentence because of the relatively trifling nature of the offences for which they are convicted [2]. There are also concerns that pre-trial detention results in inadequate living conditions within remand facilities in mostly developing nations.

Regionally, in most African countries, there are reports of challenges such as overcrowding, poor sanitation and limited access to healthcare adversely faced by pre-trial detainees [3]. These conditions not only compromise physical health but largely contribute to psychological distress and a sense of dehumanization. Studies highlight that the influence of cultural and regional factors on the psychosocial impact of pre-trial detention. In the context of Zimbabwe, limited research has directly focused on the psychosocial challenges faced by detainees on pre-trial detention. However, literature suggests that detainees in Zimbabwe encounter similar issues as those observed globally. Study emphasizes the need for further exploration of the specific challenges faced by detainees in Zimbabwean prisons. A study on the Zimbabwean criminal justice system's inefficiencies, such as lengthy pre-trial detention periods and overcrowded remand prisons contribute to heightened psychosocial challenges for detainees. These challenges may include increased levels of stress, anxiety and a diminished sense of justice [4].

Lack of comprehensive psychosocial support services in Zimbabwean remand prisons can exacerbate detainees' mental health issues, hindering their ability to actively participate in

legal proceedings and perpetuate a sense of injustice [5]. This study focuses on challenges faced by detainees in pre-trial detention at Masvingo Remand Prison. Masvingo remand prison is chosen from the researcher's background knowledge that it does not offer any psychological support services and there is a backlog of court cases at Masvingo Magistrates court which is contributing to prolonged pre-trial detention.

2. Statement of the Problem

The prolonging of pre-trial detention has translated into serving sentences before trial has probed the researcher to evaluate its effect on detainees. It is within the detainees right to have access to effective psychosocial support systems which prioritize their mental well-being as well as ensure a fair and just judicial process [6, 7]. The continuous decline in the psycho-social support system in Zimbabwe is affecting detainees mental well-being. In Zimbabwe and particularly Masvingo Remand prison, there are people who have been on pre-trial detention for more than 3 months despite the fact that section 50(6) of the Zimbabwean Constitution (2013) says that people who are accused of a crime and are waiting for their trial cannot be held in detention for an unreasonable amount of time. Section 50(2) and (3) and section 32(2) of the Criminal Procedure and Evidence Act (9.07) (CPEA) provide that an arrested person must be released within 48 hours after their arrest unless they have been released earlier or brought before a court. Individuals who are arrested should not be held in custody for long periods without trial. However, delays in police investigations and a shortage of magistrates often prolong pre-trial detention. As a result, detainees suffer the most, experiencing separation from their families, loss of income, and mental distress. This highlights the need to examine the psychosocial challenges faced by pre-trial detainees.

3. Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

3.1. Social Ecological Theory

The application of Social Ecology Theory to the study allows for an examination of the psychosocial impact of pre-trial detention through various levels of analysis, considering the dynamic interactions between individuals and their social contexts [8]. The study draws upon this theoretical framework to explore the influences of different systems on the well-being of individuals in remand, providing a comprehensive understanding of the psychosocial challenges they face. Social Ecology Theory provides a framework for examining the psychosocial impact of pre-trial detention at multiple levels of analysis. It recognizes that individuals are embedded within various interconnected systems, ranging from their immediate

environment (microsystem) to broader societal factors (macrosystem) [9]. By considering these different levels, the theory allows for a comprehensive understanding of the influences and interactions that shape individuals' experiences in pre-trial detention. Furthermore, it recognizes the influence of external factors such as the legal system, policies, and broader social attitudes (exosystem and macrosystem) on the experiences of those in pre-trial detention. Social Ecology Theory recognizes the importance of considering the cultural and contextual factors that shape individuals' experiences. In the study on pre-trial detention, applying this theory enables researchers to explore the influence of cultural norms, societal values, and regional variations (macrosystem) on the psychosocial well-being of individuals in different locations. The fifth system of the theory is chronosystem. The chronosystem refers to the dimension of time and how it influences an individual's development and experiences within various systems. It recognizes that social and historical changes over time can have an impact on individuals and their environments [8, 9].

3.2. Global Overview

There are several countries that offer reputable psychosocial support services for detainees on pre-trial detention from around the first world countries. Norway, Serbia, UK, Germany and USA renowned for its progressive and compassionate approach to the criminal justice system, particularly with regards to psychosocial support for pre-trial detainees. The Norwegian Correctional Service has established a comprehensive system that prioritizes the well-being and rehabilitation of detainees [10]. Detention facilities in Norway provide a range of psychosocial support services, including individual counseling and therapy sessions led by licensed psychologists and mental health professionals. These professionals work closely with detainees to address their specific mental health needs, such as trauma, substance abuse, or anger management [11].

Finland has gained recognition for its innovative and humane approach to psychosocial support services for pre-trial detainees. The Finnish Criminal Sanctions Agency is committed to providing detainees with comprehensive support and preparing them for successful reintegration into society [12]. The Netherlands has implemented a comprehensive system of psychosocial support services for pre-trial detainees. The Dutch Custodial Institutions Agency endeavors to create a rehabilitative environment that prioritizes detainees' well-being [13].

Germany recognizes the importance of psychosocial support for pre-trial detainees and has implemented various initiatives to provide comprehensive services. The German Federal Ministry of Justice and Consumer Protection emphasizes the well-being and rehabilitation of detainees [14]. German detention facilities offer individual counseling and group therapy sessions conducted by trained psychologists and social workers [15].

3.3. Regional and Local Overview

In the African context, South Africa, Kenya, Rwanda and Ghana are some of the reputable countries with a justice system that have comprehensive psycho-social support services for detainees and pre-trial detention [1]. Rwanda has made significant strides in providing psychosocial support services for pre-trial detainees. The Ministry of Justice has prioritized mental health within detention facilities [17]. Detainees in Rwanda have access to individual counseling sessions facilitated by qualified mental health professionals [18]. South Africa has also demonstrated a commitment to improving psychosocial support services for pre-trial detainees. The Department of Correctional Services has implemented comprehensive programs that address detainees' mental health and social needs [18]. Professional counselors and psychologists provide individual counseling sessions to detainees, focusing on trauma recovery, anger management and addiction treatment [19].

Ghana has made efforts to enhance psychosocial support services for pre-trial detainees. The Ghana Prisons Service recognizes the importance of addressing detainees' mental health and social well-being [20]. Qualified counselors and social workers provide individual counseling sessions to detainees, focusing on trauma recovery, emotional support, and personal growth. Furthermore, Kenya has also shown commitment to improving psychosocial support services for pre-trial detainees. The Kenya Prisons Service has implemented initiatives that prioritize mental health and social well-being within detention facilities [21]. Experienced counselors and therapists offer individual counseling sessions to detainees, addressing mental health concerns, promoting emotional resilience, and facilitating personal growth [16].

These sessions aim to equip detainees with coping mechanisms and support their overall well-being. Group therapy programs are also available, providing detainees with a platform for peer support, sharing experiences, and developing interpersonal skills [21]. Educational programs and vocational training opportunities within correctional facilities aim to equip detainees with practical skills for their successful reintegration into society.

3.4. Research Gap

Most of the identified literature is focusing on examining the psycho-social challenges but little or no effort has been done to explore the coping mechanisms. This study aims to fill in that gap by looking at the coping mechanisms and solutions to challenges identified. The other research gap is that most studies have been focusing on mono-methods in data collection of which this study looked to fill in that gap by triangulating responses from in-depth interviews and key informant interviews. By using both methods, we can get a more complete understanding of the problems faced by pre-trial detainees, their coping mechanisms, and the perspectives of key stakeholders involved in the criminal justice system.

4. Methodology

This study adopted a qualitative research approach. Qualitative research is a methodological approach that focuses on exploring and understanding the complexities and nuances of human experiences, behaviors, and social phenomena. Case studies provide a holistic understanding of the psychosocial impact by considering the unique contextual factors specific to the detention setting [22]. This design allows researchers to explore the microsystem, macrosystem, exosystem and mesosystem elements that shape individual's experiences in pre-trial detention. Cresswell argue that case study research design allows for the collection of data from multiple sources such as interviews, observations and document analysis [22].

4.1. Sample and Study Population

The study population comprises of detainees and prison officers stationed at Masvingo Remand Prison, participants on pre-trial detention and court officers from Masvingo Magistrates Court. The sample of the study comprised of 10 participants on pre-trial detention, 1 lawyer, 2 prison officers and 2 court officers from Masvingo Magistrates Court who are stationed at Masvingo Remand Prison. This makes the sample 15 and this small sample is justified because according to In qualitative research, there is no fixed number of participants. Instead, sample size is guided by the idea of data saturation this is the point where no new information or themes are emerging from the data [22]. This study adopts purposive sampling and convenience sampling. Purposive sampling allows researchers to specifically select individuals who possess the necessary characteristics or experiences relevant to the research objectives [8].

4.2. Data Collection Methods

This study adopts interviews as a data collection method. The use of interviews in this study is justified because in-depth interviews allow the researcher to gather rich and detailed data directly from the participants, providing a comprehensive understanding of their experiences, perspectives, and emotions [22]. This study adopts key informant interview guide and in-depth interviews guide as research tools.

4.3. Credibility and Transferability

In the current research, member checking and use of multiple eyes was used as validation procedures, thereby enhancing the credibility of the study. Member checking is regarded as one of the most effective techniques in ensuring the credibility of the data [23]. The method encompasses taking analyzed data, interpretations and conclusions back to the participants so that they can determine the authenticity of the transcribed data. Transferability was enhanced through using thick descriptions of data gathered and this form offers a platform,

which can be repeated. In addition, the use of purposive sampling and case study design in recruiting the actual participants means that data collected was relevant to the study.

4.4. Ethical Consideration

Informed Consent: The researcher obtained informed consent from all participants, ensuring that they fully understand the purpose, procedures, risks and benefits of the study.

Confidentiality and anonymity: The researcher safeguarded the confidentiality and anonymity of participants by assigning unique identifiers instead of using personal identifying information in data collection, analysis and reporting.

Respect for autonomy and voluntary participation: The researcher also ensured that participation in the study was entirely voluntary and that participants had the freedom to decline or withdraw at any time without facing negative consequences.

5. Findings

Themes emerged that emerged from the study - Psychological well-being, Social isolation, Failure to access legal representation, Access to mental health services and Social support systems, Collaboration with external organizations Legal reform, Rehabilitation programs, Awareness campaigns, Policy changes.

5.1. Psychosocial Wellbeing and Social Isolation

Pre-trial detention is a critical phase in the criminal justice process, and understanding the psychosocial experiences of individuals during this period is crucial for identifying their needs and developing effective interventions. Findings suggest that individuals in pre-trial detention often experience mental health challenges, such as depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder. The responses from participants align with the existing literature on the psychological well-being of detainees in pre-trial detention. Studies highlighted similar experiences of anxiety, depression, and psychological distress among detainees even in developed nations like Germany [24, 25]. The uncertainty, fear, and loss of personal freedom inherent in pre-trial detention contribute to these negative psychological effects. The participants' responses reflect the psychological challenges faced by detainees in pre-trial detention, including anxiety, depression, distress, boredom, and self-esteem issues. These findings are in line with the existing literature, highlighting the need for comprehensive psychosocial support services to address the mental health and well-being of detainees in pre-trial detention.

The loss of social support networks mentioned by the participants is consistent with studies conducted in Bangladesh and in Namibia, which emphasize the strain on relationships and the reduced emotional and practical support available to detainees during pre-trial detention [17, 25]. Moreover, the

participants' mention of the challenges in reintegrating into society after release aligns with findings from research in Cameroon highlighting the long-lasting impact of social isolation and stigma on individuals' ability to rebuild their lives post-detention [17].

Overall, the participants' responses shed light on the social consequences of pre-trial detention, including social isolation, stigma, strained relationships, and challenges in reintegrating into society. These findings are in line with the existing literature, emphasizing the need for interventions that address social support, stigma reduction, and successful reintegration to mitigate the negative psychosocial effects faced by detainees in pre-trial detention.

5.2. Failure to Access to Legal Representation

The participants' mention of communication issues with their legal representative aligns with the findings from research conducted in Georgia, which highlight the importance of effective communication between detainees and their legal representatives for informed decision-making and reduced distress [25]. Moreover, the participants' mention of difficulties in understanding legal processes and feeling rushed during consultations aligns with the findings from research in Ghana and Namibia, which emphasize the need for clear explanations, sufficient time, and accessible language to ensure detainees' comprehension and participation in their own legal defence [16].

Additionally, the participants' mention of doubts about the advocacy provided by their legal representative resonates with the findings from previous researches which highlight concerns about the quality and dedication of legal representation in pre-trial detention settings [14, 15]. Participants' responses shed light on the challenges related to access to legal representation faced by detainees in pre-trial detention, including finding available lawyers, communication issues, comprehension difficulties, and doubts about the quality of advocacy. These findings align with the existing literature, emphasizing the need for improved access to legal representation and the importance of effective communication and comprehension support for detainees in pre-trial detention.

5.3. Access to Mental Health Services

These interview responses highlight the urgent need for increased resources and qualified mental health professionals in Masvingo Remand Prison to address the mental health needs of detainees in pre-trial detention. The findings align with existing literature, emphasizing the importance of allocating more resources, including staff and funding, to enhance the availability and accessibility of mental health services in correctional settings.

The interview responses shed light on the challenges faced by detainees in accessing mental health services and the frustrations experienced by prison staff due to limited resources.

The findings align with previous studies, emphasizing the need for increased resources, staffing, and funding to improve the availability and effectiveness of mental health support services for detainees in pre-trial detention. Addressing these issues is crucial for ensuring the well-being of detainees during their time in Masvingo Remand Prison.

5.4. Social Support Systems

The mention of group therapy sessions by the prison staff interviewee aligns with the literature on the benefits of therapeutic interventions in promoting social support. Studies in Ghana emphasize the importance of group therapy as a means for detainees to connect with others facing similar challenges and build a supportive network [16]. The detainee interviewee's positive experience with group therapy further emphasizes the value of these sessions in providing a sense of belonging and support. The recognition of family visitations as a crucial aspect of social support echoes existing studies. Boyle (2018) highlight the significance of maintaining connections with loved ones during pre-trial detention, as it can alleviate feelings of isolation and provide emotional support. The emphasis on family visitations as a means of social support is consistent with the literature's emphasis on the importance of maintaining social ties during incarceration.

The interview responses highlight the implementation of various social support systems within Masvingo Remand Prison, including the buddy system, therapy sessions, and family visitations. These findings align with existing literature, emphasizing the value of peer support networks, therapeutic interventions, and maintaining connections with loved ones in promoting detainees' psychosocial well-being during pre-trial detention. These social support systems play a critical role in alleviating feelings of isolation, fostering a sense of belonging, and providing much-needed support to detainees in a challenging environment.

5.5. Rehabilitation

The interview responses reflect a range of perspectives on addressing the challenges of pre-trial detention through rehabilitation and reintegration programs. The findings from the literature support these suggestions. For instance, research in Rwanda emphasizes the importance of vocational training and educational opportunities for detainees, aligning with study findings [8]. This suggests that equipping detainees with skills and knowledge can enhance their reintegration prospects. Literature also highlights the significance of mental health support in rehabilitation. Studies by Sneider (2019) in Netherlands emphasize the need for counselling and therapy services to address the emotional and psychological aspects of detainees' experiences. This supports findings, which emphasizes the importance of providing mental health support within the prison setting.

Furthermore, the importance of community collaboration in

reintegration is supported [8]. They emphasize the need for partnerships between correctional facilities and community organizations to provide post-release support. This aligns with findings, which suggest establishing partnerships to offer support and resources during the reintegration process. Research in Turkey highlights the role of peer support programs in facilitating successful reintegration [12]. This supports findings, which emphasizes the importance of connecting detainees with individuals who have gone through similar experiences.

5.6. Awareness Campaign

Legal empowerment programs can be instrumental in addressing the challenges of pre-trial detention. Furthermore, partnerships between legal aid organizations and correctional facilities can enhance access to legal representation and ensure that detainees receive the necessary support. To address the challenges of legal representation and access to justice, we need to ensure that detainees have timely access to legal counsel. This can be achieved by providing free or affordable legal aid services within the prison, ensuring that detainees are informed about their rights and have the necessary support to navigate the legal processes. Evaluating and monitoring the quality of legal representation is crucial. Implementing mechanisms for oversight and accountability, such as regular assessments of lawyers' performance and adherence to professional standards, can help identify areas for improvement and ensure that detainees receive effective representation.

5.7. Policy Changes

In the context of family support and visitation, research emphasizes the importance of regular visitation opportunities and technology-based communication platforms, supporting. The literature also stresses the role of community-based support programs and financial assistance, as highlighted in responses above and supported by many studies [11].

Furthermore, studies emphasize the need to consider the holistic well-being of detainees' families, supporting Interview Understanding the psychosocial needs of families and conducting research in this area can inform the development of effective support programs [8]. In conclusion, the interview responses and the supporting literature provide valuable insights into addressing the challenges of legal representation, access to justice, family support, and visitation during pre-trial detention. Implementing these suggestions, such as providing legal aid services, promoting legal empowerment, establishing family support programs, and addressing financial barriers, can work towards a more equitable and supportive pre-trial detention system.

6. Discussion and Analysis

The examination of the psycho-social effects of pre-trial de-

tection has revealed various experiences, with both commonalities and distinctions between male and female detainees. On the one hand, the study identified a shared set of psycho-social challenges that permeated the detention experience regardless of gender. Feelings of isolation, loss of personal autonomy, and uncertainty about legal proceedings and their eventual fate were pervasive concerns that took a significant toll on the mental health and overall wellbeing of all detainees. The sheer stress and anxiety of navigating the criminal justice system, coupled with the lack of privacy, personal space, and access to coping mechanisms, manifested in symptoms of depression, panic attacks, and even suicidal ideation among both male and female prisoners.

However, the research also highlighted distinct psycho-social impacts that disproportionately affected female detainees, stemming from their unique roles and responsibilities within the family and community. The sudden separation from young children and the disruption to maternal caregiving duties proved to be a profound source of anguish and distress for many women, as they grappled with the loss of intimate bonds and the inability to fulfill their roles as primary nurturers. Similarly, the upheaval of familial responsibilities, including the care of elderly relatives and disabled dependents, compounded the psychological burdens faced by female detainees, who were the emotional anchors within their support networks.

These findings underscore the critical need for a gender-responsive approach to pre-trial detention, one that acknowledges and addresses the unique psycho-social vulnerabilities faced by both male and female detainees. By implementing tailored support services, improving access to essential healthcare, and facilitating the maintenance of family connections, detention facilities can mitigate the severe psychological impacts of incarceration and foster an environment that better facilitates the rehabilitation and reintegration of all individuals awaiting trial.

While some detention facilities do offer basic mental health services, counseling, and social support programs, the overall availability and quality of these services are often inadequate and inconsistent across different institutions. This suggests a lack of standardized and comprehensive psycho-social support for pre-trial detainees. The summary highlights a concerning dearth of specialized psycho-social support services tailored to the unique needs of female detainees. This suggests that the existing support system is not sufficiently equipped to address the distinct challenges and trauma experienced by women in pre-trial detention, particularly in areas such as maternal caregiving, reproductive health, and reintegration with family responsibilities.

The limited availability of female staff, including mental health professionals and social workers, within the detention system further exacerbates the challenges faced by female detainees in accessing appropriate and sensitive psycho-social support. This points to a systemic issue in the recruitment, training, and retention of gender-responsive caregivers in the pre-trial detention context. The assessment indicates that the

psycho-social support services available to pre-trial detainees are often hindered by limited resources, staffing shortages, and an inability to keep pace with the complex needs of the detainee population. This suggests a need for increased investment and a more holistic, well-resourced approach to addressing the mental health and social support requirements of individuals awaiting trial.

It is concluded that the availability and quality of psycho-social support services for pre-trial detainees were highly uneven and often inadequate across different detention facilities. While some institutions did offer basic mental health services, counseling, and social support programs, the overall system was found to be inconsistent and lacking in the standardized provision of comprehensive psycho-social care for this vulnerable population.

The assessment further concludes that there were significant gaps in the availability of gender-responsive psycho-social support services, particularly for female detainees. The unique challenges and needs of women in pre-trial detention, such as maternal caregiving responsibilities, reproductive health concerns, and reintegration with family, were not being sufficiently addressed by the existing support system. The study also concluded that there was a shortage of specialized personnel, including female mental health professionals and social workers, within the detention system, which further exacerbated the challenges faced by female detainees in accessing appropriate and sensitive psycho-social support.

Moreover, the conclusions drawn from the findings indicated that the psycho-social support services available to pre-trial detainees were often hindered by systemic under-resourcing, staffing shortages, and an inability to keep pace with the complex and diverse needs of the detainee population. This suggested a need for increased investment and a more holistic, well-resourced approach to addressing the mental health and social support requirements of individuals awaiting trial.

7. Conclusions and Implications

This study examined the psychosocial challenges faced by pre-trial detainees at Masvingo Remand Prison. The first chapter highlighted that the decline in psychosocial support systems in Zimbabwe is negatively affecting detainees' mental well-being. It was observed that some detainees had remained in pre-trial detention for more than three months, despite Section 50(6) of the Zimbabwean Constitution, which states that accused persons should not be detained for an unreasonable period without trial. This implies that individuals should not be held indefinitely without appearing before a court.

There is a need for government and policymakers to develop and enforce clear regulations governing pre-trial detention in order to safeguard the rights and well-being of detainees. Adequate resources should also be allocated to improve detention conditions, including infrastructure, sanitation, healthcare, and recreational facilities.

In terms of policy, prison authorities should prioritize improving living conditions by ensuring sufficient space, access to natural light, proper sanitation, and opportunities for physical exercise and recreation. The provision of comprehensive healthcare services, particularly mental health support, should be strengthened to meet the needs of detainees. Furthermore, rehabilitation and reintegration programmes focusing on education, vocational training, and life skills should be implemented to support successful reintegration after release.

Judiciary and legal authorities are encouraged to promote timely and fair legal processes to reduce prolonged pre-trial detention. It is also important to ensure that detainees have access to legal representation from the early stages, including quality legal aid services.

Correctional facilities and staff should establish systems that allow regular and meaningful communication between detainees and their families, including visitation and the use of technology. Additionally, there is a need to increase the number of social workers in correctional institutions to provide adequate psychosocial support. This would help improve detainees' mental health, emotional well-being, and overall adjustment during detention, while also contributing to better reintegration outcomes.

Abbreviations

OSJI	Open Society Justice Initiative
CPEA	Criminal Procedure and Evidence Act (9.07)
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Children

Author Contributions

Cynthia Chinengundu: Conceptualization, Project administration, Resources, Writing – original draft

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Data Availability Statement

The data is available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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