

TRANSGENDER PRISONERS

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Summary. The subject is theoretical review of position of transgender persons serving prison sentences. The text aims to raise the level of knowledge about the existence of high exposure to violence and sexual abuse of that group and to offer answers to some of the issues of crucial importance, for example, once when in prison, where they are supposed to be placed, among women or men, and could they upon request, change sex while in prison. The text presents and argues possible legal solutions, relying on legal comparative answers to basic questions of prison accommodation of transgender prisoners: in accordance to their acquired (desired, or wished) rather than to their anatomical, biological gender. How to protect them of violence, how to answer to demands of transgender people to continue hormone treatment started before serving a prison sentence, as well as on their request to begin with the process of gender reassignment process while in a prison. In situation where there is a significant lack of research data documenting involvement of trans issues in the contemporary security studies, it opens a lot of room for improvement in that area. Although it seems easy to continue ignoring penological aspects of transgender issues, failure to discuss raising level of respect for human dignity in the prison system of Serbia would be irresponsible. Especially given that this group, while becoming visible in our society after legalized process of gender reassignment within the health system of the Republic of Serbia, financed by the health funds, at the same time becomes subject of further discrimination and violence.

Key words: Transgender prisoners, gender identity, sex reassignment surgery, hormone treatment, sexual violence, human dignity

INTRODUCTION

All people - including the convicted persons serving prison sentences in prison - have right to a life free of violence, including the ability to live their authentic lives. The fact is that transgender persons¹ face a high level of violence and threats when they are in prison because they often experience harassment and various dangers in the whole system, more often than others prisoners. When it comes to trans people, it can be generally concluded that all types of detention and prison institutions pose a serious threat to their lives, human dignity, physical and mental integrity, and the general welfare.

The terms transgender people and trans people² are both used to refer to a diverse range of people who find their gender identity does not fully correspond with the gender they were assigned at birth. In addition to changing name and social gender role, gender reassignment may also involve using hormones and/or surgery to alter the person's physical body.

Social gender is the gender in which a person lives their day to day life. Where a person has transitioned to change their social gender role, then it may also be referred to as their acquired gender or new gender.

- trans men: female-to-male (FTM) transsexual people who have started living permanently as men as part of a process of gender reassignment. They may or may not have undergone any genital surgery;
- trans women: male-to-female (MTF) transsexual people who have started living permanently as women as part of a process of gender reassignment. They may or may not have undergone any genital surgery;

¹ The term "transsexualism" The World Health Organization (World Health Organization) defines in its International Classification of Diseases (International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems (Tenth Revision), ICD 10) as "the desire to live and be accepted as a person of opposite gender, which is usually accompanied by a feeling of discomfort and maladjustment with their anatomical sex, and desire to be assisted by surgery and hormonal therapy to achieve the greater physical correspondence with the desired sex."

² All terms are explained in Scottish Prisoner Gender Identity and Gender Reassignment Policy

- non-reassigned trans people: transgender people who have not permanently changed the gender in which they live. They may propose to undergo future gender reassignment but at present are still continuing to live predominantly as the gender they were assigned at birth. Additionally, this group can also include:
 - transvestite / cross-dressing people who occasionally wear items of clothing traditionally associated with the other gender without proposing to undergo gender reassignment;
 - gender-variant / non-binary-gender people who have highly complex gender identities and don't identify clearly as either men or women;
 - intersex people who have been born with aspects of their chromosomes, internal reproductive systems or external genitals which are not clearly male or female. Historically, intersex people were referred to as hermaphrodites but this is now an out-dated term.

Or as is explained at the theoretical level, the gender nonconformity means a person whose gender expression, role and identity are different from the expectations of the culture of a particular sex. Transgender indicates³ a spectrum of individuals whose identity or lived experiences do not conform to the identity or experiences historically associated with sex at birth: those with intersex conditions; non-, pre-, and postoperative transgender individuals; cross-dressers; feminine men and masculine women; and people who live as a gender other than that assigned to them at birth.

When it comes to the needs of transgender people in prison, UN Yogyakarta Principles⁴ explicitly state that States are required to ensure adequate access to health care and psychological counseling, which recognizes the special needs of the convicted person, whether it be their sexual orientation or gender identity, including the use of hormones or other forms of therapy, as well as the ability to gender reassignment if the convict wants it. UN Office on Drugs and Crime has recommended that a responsible person should meet the special needs of LGBT convicts as well as to provide them with access to treatment for gender dysphoria, such as, for example, hormonal therapy or surgery to gender reassignment if it's available in the community (state).

The conditions in detention centers and prisons, not only can be traumatic for trans people, but these are often dangerous places with threatening situations and relationships, especially for transgender persons and those who are gender non-compliant (whose sex and gender are not in consent).⁵ Everywhere transgender persons police more often stops, legitimizes, checked and examined than other, ordinary citizens, because their daily struggle for survival includes frequently sex work (prostitution) or any other criminal acts, such as, related to drug traffic, property crimes, etc., due to which they are faced with an increased risk to find themselves behind bars.

Being a transgender person or a person whose gender and sex conflicting in any detention or prison often means daily humiliation, physical and sexual abuse, with the constant fear of retribution if you use legal means to solve problems with violence. Other convicts believe that, "if they have a penis, then they are only one kind of gay." A transgender prisoners allege that they were discriminated against not only from other prisoners but also by prison staff who does not accept their lifestyle, does not understand their needs and treats them with open contempt.⁶ They share space stigmatized within these institutions, along with other "socially undesirable", such as various types of sex offenders, for example, pedophiles, child molesters, rapists, prisoners with mental disabilities and informers. Most often it is assumed that transgender women homosexuals, and despised by other prisoners and prison staff.

This is known prison administrations, which therefore apply as the most common security measure for trans people apply their isolation and separation from other prisoners.⁷ Therefore, many transgender persons placed in solitary confinement or similar separate regimes serving a prison sentence for months or even years, just because of their transgender.

Prisons are organized in accordance to their historical foundations as strictly divided into separated facilities for women and for men: as such they represent the most gender segregated institutions of the modern era. Until the last decade of the twentieth century, the division of the prison by sex was the least contested prison practices / policies in all geographic regions, by all governments, at all levels, prison institutions, as well as their own prison

³ Simopoulos Eugene F., Khin Khin Eindra, 2014, Fundamental Principles Inherent in the Comprehensive Care of Transgender Inmates, *Journal of American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law Online* 42:1:26-36 (March 2014)

⁴ http://www.yogyakartaprinciples.org/principles_en.htm

⁵ Stohr Mary K. 2015. The hundred years' war: The etiology and status of assaults on transgender women in men's prisons. *Women & Criminal Justice* 25:120-29.

⁶ Jenness Valerie, Fenstermaker Sarah, 2016, Forty Years after Brown Miller Prisons for Men, Transgender Inmates, and the Rape of the Feminine, *Gender & Society* February 2016 vol. 30 no. 1 14-29.

⁷ TransGender Law Center: Prisons and criminal justice.

population. In short, the institutional manifestation of the prison culture of gender binary division is taken as indisputable facts specified that defines a prison in all its aspects. There are very few exceptions to the dominant practice that transgender women are not placed in a male prison on the basis of their gender acquired by birth, so it is all an open question how to solve this obvious contradiction between their official gender and their appearance, sense of gender identity and gender aspirations.

SCOTLAND

In Scotland, in October 2013 was adopted the Prison policy document on gender identity and gender adjustment, which is one of the most comprehensive policy document of its kind in Europe and globally.⁸

This policy aims to ensure that all persons who identify themselves as transgender, or who intend to start or have already made the transition gender adjustment, at any time, be treated fairly and with respect by the Scottish prison service. Rubdown and body searches should be carried out in accordance with the gender in which the prisoner is currently living, rather than their physical characteristics. Confidentiality must be maintained.

Information about a prisoner's gender reassignment should only be shared with other staff without the prisoner's permission where this is essential to manage the risk of crime. Staff must not reveal information about a prisoner's gender reassignment to other prisoners. Prisoners should be allowed access to items such as clothing, prosthetics, chest-binders, hair-pieces/wigs and other equipment needed to facilitate their gender reassignment and express their gender identity. Prisoners who are already undergoing gender reassignment must be allowed to continue receiving gender reassignment hormone treatment which began prior to imprisonment.

Prisoners who are seeking to undergo gender reassignment must be allowed to access specialist assessment and treatment via the NHS Scotland Gender Reassignment Protocol. Prisoners must be allowed access to gender reassignment hormone treatment, hair removal and/or surgeries they have been medically approved.

PRISON RAPE ELIMINATION ACT

Attention to the problems transgender prisoners serving prison sentences in the United States⁹ is directed since 2003, when was adopted the Prison rape elimination act (PREA)¹⁰, which marked prevention of prison rape as a leading national priority that requires federal intervention. Time has made historical progress since the first time when attention to rape trans people behind bars happened.

PREA is a comprehensive set of federal regulations that regulate all aspects of correctional institutions relating to the prevention, detection and response to abuse. It is important to emphasize that PREA contains special provisions relating to "lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and gender non-compliant prisoners." Among the most important measures of protestation is the initial beginning evaluation and classification: in all prisons must be at the reception determined location only after the assessment of the risk of experiencing violence or abuse, including the identification of those who may be at risk because of their transgender, gender nonconformity, sexual orientation or intersex condition. Net individual's perception of the existence of vulnerabilities are also required consideration.

Individuals cannot be punished if they hide facts during the evaluation and failed to report the facts related to their gender identity, sexual orientation, intersex status, disability status, or previous experience of sexual abuse. Prison institutions must use this information to make appropriate decisions about individual security and classification of the individual and their accommodation.

THE KOSILEK CASE

The most important is the sentence of the case *Kosilek against Spencer in 2012*¹¹ by which the District Court of Massachusetts ordered the prison authorities to ensure the gender reassignment surgery of transgender convict of the type "a man into a woman". Since in prison, Kosilek attempted suicide twice and once to castrate himself.

⁸ Scottish Prisoner Gender Identity and Gender Reassignment Policy

⁹ Jenness Valerie, Fenstermaker Sarah, 2016, Forty Years after Brownmiller Prisons for Men, Transgender Inmates, and the Rape of the Feminine, *Gender & Society* February 2016 vol. 30 no. 1 14-29.

¹⁰ LGBT People and the Prison Rape Elimination Act JULY 1, 2012.

¹¹ https://scholar.google.com/scholar_case?case=4986521262718791593&q=Kosilek+v.Spencer&hl=en&as_sdt=2006&as_vis=1

Although it is so far the only successful legal proceedings, the courts continue to attempt to define the medical needs of prisoners as well as to find answers to them. In *Kosilek against Spencer*, the district court in Massachusetts ruled that the law violated Kosilek because the only way to ensure the right of the Eighth Amendment adequate treatment of his serious medical needs that consists in the operation of gender reassignment surgery. This is the first precedent judicial decision ordering the state to ensure this surgery to a convicted person. Massachusetts Administration of Prison facilities challenged that judgment finding that the refusal to allow gender reassignment surgery does not constitute inadequate medical care. Prison authorities have many times reiterated the existence of security risk if allowing Kosilek to be operated on, as this will create him a target of sexual assault by other prisoners in the men's prison. The Court nevertheless supported Kosilek whom surgery is a medical necessity rather than a frivolous desire to change his exterior. Everyone has the right to meet health needs, were in jail or at liberty. Convicted persons who have a heart, hips or knees problems get surgery to repair their health. Medical needs of transgender persons are not less important than the need of any other prisoners who have the same right to health protection based on the constitution. Decisions to undertake gender reassignment surgery are serious decisions that can make medical professionals in accordance with the patient and not the prison authorities.

CALIFORNIA

California is a home to one of the largest correctional systems in the Western world and is an ideal site for collecting data on transgender prisoners. When data collection began in 2008, approximately 160,000 adult prisoners were incarcerated in California's 33 prisons. Well over 90 percent of California state prisoners are housed in 30 prisons for adult men. Among these prisoners, there are more than 300 transgender inmates in prisons for men estimate that there are approximately 750 transgender prisoners in the United States is correct, California is home to nearly half of all transgender prisoners in the United States.¹² Because transgender prisoners do not conform to the dictates of an extremely heteronormative and hyper masculine environment,¹³ corrections officials perceive transgender prisoners as a potential source of in-prison disorder and attendant management problems. Corrections officials and prisoners alike share an understanding of transgender prisoners as prisoners failing to "man-up" in prisons for men. In addition to being incarcerated, transgender prisoners are drastically and disproportionately marginalized along other dimensions of social status and health and welfare. When examined along the lines of employment, marital status, mental health, substance abuse, HIV status, homelessness, sex work, and victimization, the transgender prisoners in this study are more precariously situated than no incarcerated and/or incarcerated no transgender populations. For example, transgender prisoners are *13 times* more likely than their no transgender counterparts to be sexually assaulted in prison.

California is the first state to allow prisoners gender reassignment surgery while serving a prison sentence as it accepted to provide them with a paid surgery treatment by adopting a separate document¹⁴ entitled, Guidelines for review of requests for sex reassignment surgery.¹⁵ The document has been entered into force in October 2015, when California became the first US state to legally allow prisoners the process. Previously in California in 2014, agreed to regularly paid to treatments which include hormonal therapy and surgery change of biological sex of prisoners. Directions issued the California Department of correctional institutions who oversees the mental health of prisoners. Thus California established a model for the rest of the country to ensure that prisoners while serving prison sentences can use life necessary medical care.¹⁶

In any case, the adoption of this Guide did not constitute a "raising the dam" and there was not a flood of requirement for that surgery, because many transgender prisoners simply are not interested in such an operation or

¹² Jenness Valerie, Fenstermaker Sarah, 2014, Agnes Goes to Prison Gender Authenticity, Transgender Inmates in Prisons for Men, and Pursuit of "The Real Deal". *Gender Society* February 1, 2014 28: 5-31

¹³ Rosenberg Rae &Oswin Natalie, 2015, Trans embodiment in carceral space: hypermasculinity and the US prison industrial complex. *Gender, Place & Culture: A Journal of Feminist Geography*. Volume 22, Issue 9.

¹⁴ California sets policy for inmate sex reassignment. 15 October AlJazeera, 2015,

¹⁵ GUIDELINES FOR REVIEW OF REQUESTS FOR SEX REASSIGNMENT SURGERY

¹⁶ One of the first two convicts who have used this right, Norsworthy said she was beside herself with pride that it was part of the movement that led to the adoption of this policy. She was living under stress and suffering from anxiety due to gender dysphoria but she realized that she needed gender reassignment surgery only when she was in the prison. She states that she has suffered for decades because her identity, her medical needs and its very humanity were denied by the people and the system responsible for taking care of her.

do not meet the requirements of the Guidelines which many describe as restrictive and conservative.¹⁷ One of the conditions is that the rest of the convicted person to serve a minimum of two more years in prison.¹⁸

REGULATION OF THE SPECIFIC SITUATION OF TRANSGENDER CONVICTS

Treatment of transgender convicts serving a prison sentence requires detailed regulation of specific situations which differ from similar where there are other persons serving a prison sentence. It is necessary regulations relating to any deprivation transgender people of liberty, as certain specifics occur during the arrest, and continued when it comes to detention.

Basic situation characteristic of the situation of transgender persons in prisons as widely viewed can be grouped into three areas: accommodation, management and medical treatment. Accommodation, treatment and medical treatment of transgender convicts presents three complex processes that coordinate the needs of transgender prisoners with prison rules and safety requirements but also the needs of other prisoners.

ACCOMMODATION

Appropriate institution is the one of their social gender, i.e. the gender in which a prisoner lives at least two years.¹⁹ If there occurred a need to gender reassignment surgery while serving a prison sentence, it is possible to transfer to a gender-appropriate institution. On accommodations /changed accommodation is be decided at a case conference where will take into consideration all relevant facts and the need to transgender convicts to enable him normal functioning but also, of the prison community, for example. joint training, communication, work and other activities with other prisoners, communication with staff, etc. Not acceptable solutions are permanent accommodation in the prison hospital departments, permanent isolation and separation. Convicted / detained person shall also require accommodations swapping. It should bear in mind, for example. that trans people, "a woman into a man" who owns the vagina, may not feel safe in the men's prison, and that he might look for accommodation in an prison institution for women because of the increased risk of sexual violence and men's prison environment. In any case, it is necessary to take into account all the specifics of each particular transgender persons in the prison environment and the dangers that can happen, and accordingly conduct an assessment and find the most appropriate solution. Previous criminal acts of sexual violence is a fact that will be taken consider the conference a case when deciding on accommodation.

MANAGEMENT

Prevention of all forms of sexual and other, by transphobia motivated violence, is one of the main priorities in order to achieve security of physical and mental integrity and respect for the human dignity of transgender persons in prisons. The accommodation of such persons automatically practiced earlier was in isolation (solitary cells) or ghettoization (in special, separated space devoted to LGBTI prisoners) are not adequate solutions and represent a further punishment of these people, not only for their deeds, for they have done, but because of their identity. Isolation and segregation contribute in addition to poor mental and physical health of the population, which is usual, due to the enormous traumatization, violence and discrimination faced by elevated risk of self-harm and suicide. Therefore, these should be used as little as possible, just in case of emergency, urgent prevention of violence that last for as short as possible, and that should be ended as quick as possible and replaced by other solutions decided by the case conference.

Rub down and tap of bodies and personal belongings must be carried out in accordance with the role of social gender i.e. social gender identity in which the arrested / detained / convicted trans person lives rather than anatomical characteristics of that person. If the gender affiliation is unclear, it is through discussion with that person

¹⁷ One study of the Williams Institute, which is considered as the think tank of California University for LGBT issues, stated that 42 percent of the surveyed persons stated that they had an operation, including those defined by the ministry as a cosmetic. Therefore, the refusal of such an operation is considered a restrictive measure.

¹⁸ This guide is added with respect to the case of Norsworthy who is released from prison one day before a federal Appeal court accepted her claim that her prison system would pay gender reassignment surgery, what raised the question of the expediency of such costs.

¹⁹ National offender management service: THE CARE AND MANAGEMENT OF TRANSEXUAL PRISONERS PSI 07/2011 March 2011 till March 2015.

to come to a mutual agreement of which sex should be the officials involved in the search of bodies and personal belongings. The Agreement shall be in writing and signed by both parties, which a case conferences will confirm or revise. If no agreement is reached, the decision is to be made by hierarchically highest ranked official in a particular institution, taking into account the assumed social gender in particular trans persons deprived of their liberty.

Alternative (adapted local conditions where it is difficult to assume that someone will enter into agreements with arrested persons): A person deprived of liberty shall be signed written request that the body and personal rub down and pat is to be carried by official whose gender affiliation is in accordance with the social gender identity in which arrested / detained / convicted transgender person lives but not in accordance with the anatomical characteristics of that person.

Organizing a case conference is a type of consultative meetings with the participation of, on the one hand, the representatives of the competent authorities of prison establishments and of the other hand, medical experts, advocate / lawyer of the convicted person, as well as experts on transgender issues. At the case conference may attend representatives of organizations for the protection of the rights of transgender persons to provide information about the current ways of protecting human rights of transgender people. The purpose of these meetings is making of specific decisions concerning the organization serving prison sentences for certain transgender person. Case conferences are held periodically in a regular schedule (monthly, quarterly, semi-annually), as well as urgently, whenever there are problems to be solved when the act urgently.

Possession of appropriate identification documents of transgender convicts is different from case to case. It is undisputed that all persons with identification documents issued in accordance with acquired gender should be treated accordingly in terms of accommodation, search, rubdown, security, ways of personal addressing etc.

Persons who have undergone gender reassignment process or are still in ongoing process, but they do not have identification documents in line with the newly acquired gender identity, have the right to require treatment in accordance with the acquired gender whose modalities are to be decided on a case conference. They, as well as persons who, while serving a prison sentence are in process of gender reassignment, have the right to request the name change, issuing the new identification documents with the change of a sex mark under the same conditions as persons at liberty. The ways of respect of these rights of convicted persons, shall be decided on a case conference.

The possession and use of specific items, such as powder, lipstick, depilation products, wigs, vests, corsets, prosthesis, hormone preparations etc. is approved.

Clothing that is appropriate to gender social gender roles in which the detained / convicted person lives, that suits also type of prison institution where that person is located is approved.

MEDICAL TREATMENTS OF TRANSGENDER CONVICTS

Possession and acquisition of specific hormonal preparations (creams, injections, tablets, gels, etc.), as well as their use as a continuation of this specific therapy that was previously prescribed, began before imprisonment is regularly performed, as well as any other previously initiated medical treatment. The prison medical service which controls any other use and procurement of necessary medicines shell be informed on all such treatments in advance.

Transgender inmates may be at different stages of the process of gender transition at the time of deprivation of liberty by arrest or committal to prison.

If the process was not started, the convicted person has the right to request the start of the treatment of gender dysphoria, the same manner and under the same conditions in using the health procedures that are carried out in accordance with the provisions of the laws and bylaws which are available to persons at large in the Republic Serbia in the same or similar situation.

If the process of gender adjustment started before sending to serve the prison sentence, i.e. is in progress, it is necessary to promptly and without any delay to enable the continuation of this treatment in prison.

If the process is completed before serving the prison sentence and the convicted person already lives in the role of the newly acquired gender, respect of this gender role continued in a prison facility, as well as all the necessary treatments.

Confidentiality of the existence of gender dysphoria and / or gender reassignment is one of the essential components of human rights, human dignity and the basic safety of transgender persons serving prison sentences. The history of the process of gender reassignment and the fact the process of gender reassignment happened while serving a prison sentence are considered as highly confidential data. These data are considered confidential and can be known / available only to officials when necessary to prevent the commission of crime or their investigation.

CONCLUSION

All prison systems everywhere are always complicated, and any changes face the expected barriers of deep-seated irrational fears or prejudices related to the primary imperative of organizing security in prisons. Requirements of time that go towards achieving a more equal and inclusive society, and gradually the prison environment too, no matter how justified, present a real challenge for all prison systems.²⁰ Comparative legal analysis, however, recently provide good practice models. In Europe, the most excellent example is Scotland and its Prison policy on gender identity and gender reassignment. In the United States is highlighted the example of California, and there is a whole history test sentences that allows medical treatment of transgender prisoners while serving prison penalties, as well as the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) PREA on the prevention of sexual violence in correctional institutions. Although it seems easy to continue ignoring penological aspects of transgender issues, failure to discuss raising level of respect for human dignity of transgender people in the prison system of Serbia would be irresponsible. Especially given that this group, while becoming visible in our society after legalized process of gender reassignment within the health system of the Republic of Serbia, financed by the health funds, at the same time becomes subject of further discrimination and violence. It is therefore necessary to introduce flexibility in accomodation of transgender prisoners, to allow upon the gender reassignment surgery, as well as all other necessary hormone treatment.

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