Protecting human rights of prisoners

Sanou Ardiouma Brice and Yé Lossi Clementine Noel are UN Volunteers in Burkina Faso. They are Legal Assistants and contribute to the protection of the human rights of prisoners – a fundamental part of social justice.

Sanou Ardiouma Brice is 42. He is a national UN Volunteer with UNODC in Burkina Faso and serves as a Legal Assistant for prison affairs at the Bobo Dioulasso Prison and Correctional Facility in the Hauts Bassins region.

He educates detainees on criminal law, assesses their conditions of detention and supports their access to health care.

Sanou helped interview 220 prisoners – of which, four were women, 27 were minors and 189 were men. He gave them information on their legal rights – legal representation and a fair trial, basic human rights with healthcare and dignified prisoner treatment, and the right to meet family
He also prepared 50 legal aid applications to provide inmates with the services of a lawyer, 30 of those applications were successful.

“...I contribute to an increase in the efficient coordination of legal services in Burkina Faso. One of my most memorable encounters was with a detainee who had been held illegally for weeks. Through my coordination and liaison with the prison and judicial authorities, I was able to get him released in 24 hours." Sanou says.

Yé Lossi Clementine is 32. She is a national UN Volunteer with UNDP in Burkina Faso and supports the Social Cohesion, Security and Rule of Law (CoSED) programme. Yé Lossi’s service for a peaceful and inclusive environment and the protection of human rights has a gender-sensitive approach. The criminal and legal hearings that she assists with bring respite to detainees who have lost hope of getting legal representation or a trial due to the financial constraints of the country's legal system.

“...As part of CoSED, we improve access to justice for vulnerable populations through legal clinics. These are set up by civil society organizations for support, advice and legal assistance to the population and victims of human rights violations." Yé Lossi says.

In 2022, a total of 16,742 people, including 5,251 women and 2,286 young people, participated in awareness-raising sessions on various topics. These included – the right to security, the rights of internally displaced persons,
the rights of detainees, and the prohibition of summary and extrajudicial executions in the Eastern and Cascade regions, Hauts-Bassins, Boucle du Mouhoun and Sud-Ouest.

A total of 776 people received legal support in cases of arbitrary detention, summary and extrajudicial executions, labour law, family law, land problems, paternity suits, child custody, and civil status documents in the East, Cascades, Hauts-Bassins, Boucle du Mouhoun and South-West regions.

“Yé Lossi Clementine has made an enormous contribution to the achievement of the Agency’s results in the field of justice and human rights. Her contribution has helped the government to meet its international obligations on treaty body reporting. Similarly, in the area of justice, her support has enabled the Superior Council of the Judiciary to become more operational. Her work has also brought justice closer to the most vulnerable.” -- Losseni Cissé, Governance and Sustainable Peace Programme Officer at UNDP.

In the Cascades region, 310 displaced persons received legal aid, of these 91 were women, 66 were men and 153 were children. While 24 people in Banfora received legal aid, 10 of these were women.

In 2022, 166 UN Volunteers served in 11 UN agencies in Burkina Faso, including 130 national UN Volunteers, 40 per cent of these were women.