



## Mental Disorders in Prisoners: A Study at Bali Narcotic Prison

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### KEY WORDS

Mental Disorders, Law  
Violations, Behavioral  
Analysis, Forensic  
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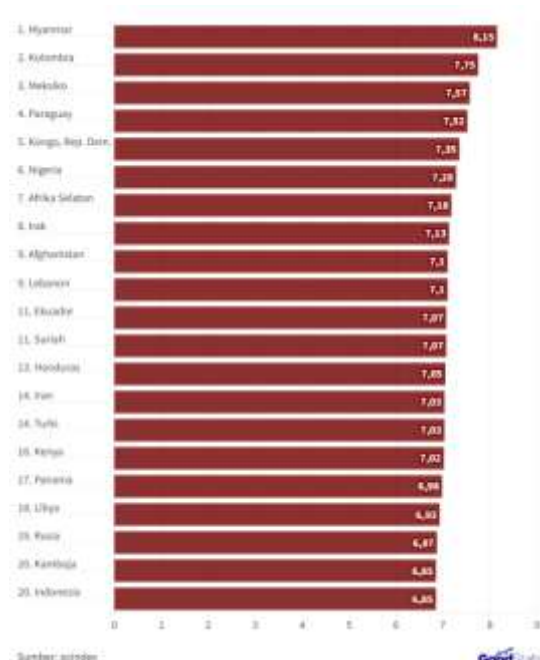
### A B S T R A C T

Mental disorders in Indonesian prisons are a serious problem. Individuals with mental health problems struggle to control their behavior, emotions, and thoughts, which increases their risk of breaking the law. These violations often stem from their character, personality, and mental state. Correctional facilities, which should focus on rehabilitation, now also function as health institutions for people with mental disorders. In Bali, overcrowded prisons exacerbate tensions, leading to riots and discontent, forcing officers to impose strict rules on inmates. As a result, inmates experience restricted movement and are forced to wait in crowded conditions, further damaging their mental health. The vision of creating a supportive forensic correctional environment in Bali has yet to be realized. This case study examines a prisoner sentenced to life for drug possession.

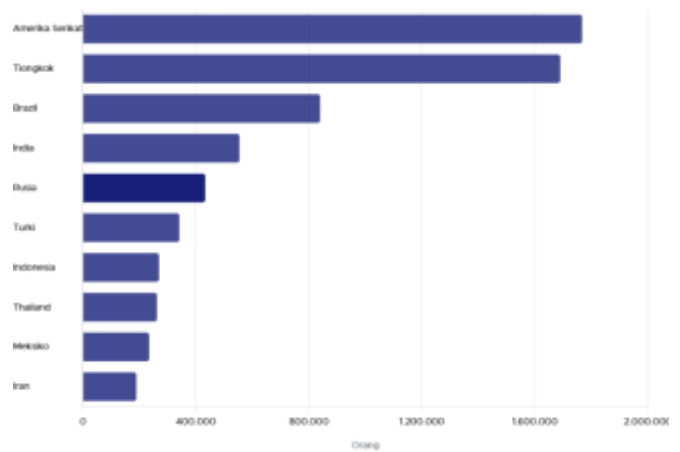
## 1. Introduction

Indonesia ranks 20th among 193 countries on the crime index, alongside Cambodia at 6.85 points, indicating a high crime rate. This index evaluates crime based on type, frequency, and social impact, accounting for both incidents and public safety perceptions. Countries with elevated crime rates often grapple with serious issues like violent crime, theft, fraud, and organized crime. Most countries in the highest crime rate category are from Latin America, Africa, the Middle East, and Asia, where economic inequality, political instability, and weak law enforcement drive these rates. Indonesia's ranking underscores the urgent need to address its crime challenges.

Picture 1. The Highest Crime Index in The World, 2023



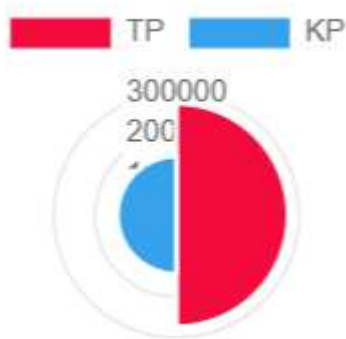
Indonesia's ranking of 20th highlights the urgent need to address its crime rate. According to the World Prison Brief (WPB), Indonesia has the 7th largest prison population globally, with 269,275 inmates as of October 2023, up from 249,056 in 2020. The United States leads with 1,767,200 prisoners, followed by China with 1,690,0001.



Source: World Prison Brief (WPB)

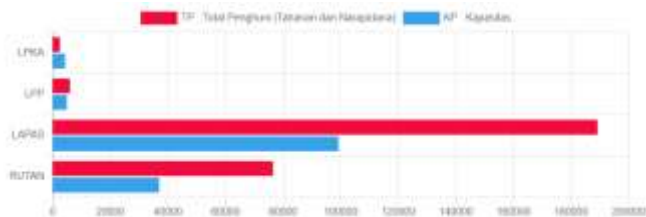
The Director of Services and Management at the Ministry of Law and Human Rights (Kemenkumham) stated that correctional institutions in Indonesia are inhumane, because their capacity is far smaller than the number of inmates. In September 2022, the level of overcrowding reached more than double. Bali prisons are notoriously overcrowded, operating at 200-300 percent capacity. Inmates fear the isolation room, known as the Rat Cell, used for punishment due to violations or fights.

Picture 2. Comparison of Detention Room Capacity and Number of Inmates



Occupant Capacity	Sum
TP : Total Residents (Prisoners and Inmates)	274,128
KP : Capacity	145,340

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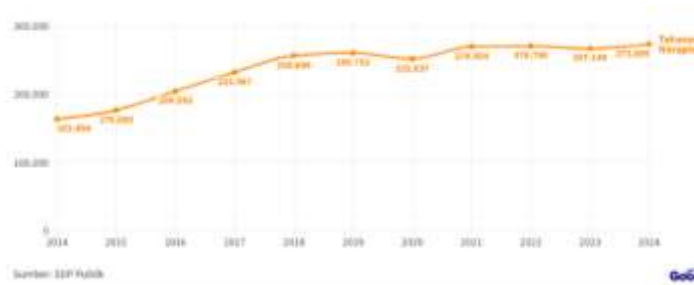
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Occupant Capacity	LPKA	LPP	LAPAS	BOX
TP : Total Residents (Prisoners and Inmates)	2,500	5,970	189,154	76,504
KP : Capacity	4,285	4,918	99,184	36,953

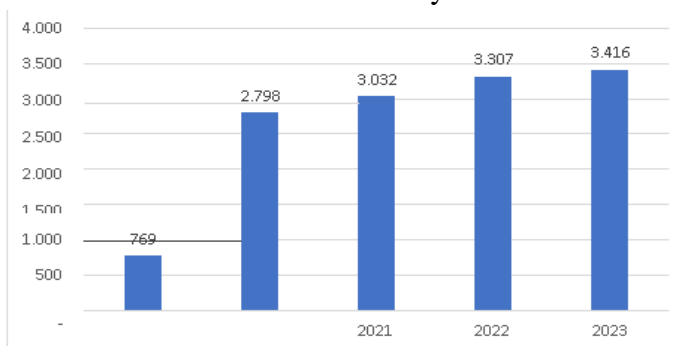
Prisons have two purposes: to improve public safety by isolating criminals and supervising those who remain in the community, and to “correct” inmates’ behavior so that they do not reoffend. However, these goals are difficult to achieve due to prison capacity constraints and overcrowding, and many inmates suffer from mental disorders that may have developed before or as a result of their sentence.

Over 70 percent of prisoners are incarcerated for drug offenses, facing sentences from several years to life. Some have sought leniency, appealing for clemency to the President of Indonesia. Due to the absence of clear legal guidelines, unclear norms, many conflicting norms, or non-implementation even though there are regulations in force, the prison situation has become very unfavorable. Those who are only users are forced to live with drug dealers in one prison.

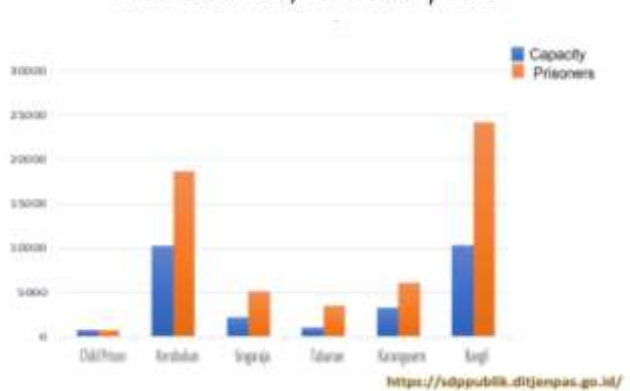
Picture 3. The number of detainees and prisoners in Indonesia over the past 10 years



Prisoners in Bali 5 years



Prisoners in Bali, 29 February 2024



## 2. Methodology

This study uses a case study approach to examine the condition of a prisoner sentenced to life imprisonment for drug possession, with a focus on mental health issues in prisons. This approach allows the researcher to explore in-depth the individual's experiences within the context of overcrowded detention and the lack of adequate rehabilitation facilities, as well as its impact on the prisoner's mental health. The study aims to analyze the mental state of prisoners within a correctional system that lacks support, examine the challenges

faced by prisoners, and identify the need to create a more supportive correctional environment.

## 3. Result and Discussion

### Case of SA, which results in life imprisonment

SA, 39 years old man, was arrested by Indonesian police before turning 20 while attempting to fly from Bali to Sydney with 2.9 kilograms of heroin hidden under his clothes. He was lured by a promise of AUD 10,000 for delivering the drugs, despite earning AUD 1,600 a month. As a hyperactive teenager, SAR had a history of smoking and using marijuana and amphetamines, for which his doctor prescribed Ritalin. Although he was drug-free at the time of his arrest, he became addicted to heroin while in prison, spending over AUD 1,000 weekly on the drug. In 2017, he entered a rehabilitation program with Methadone therapy.

His life took a drastic turn when the Denpasar District Court sentenced him to life imprisonment. This was later appealed to a death sentence by the High Court, but the Supreme Court reverted it back to life. SAR has now served 19 years in prison, and his family and legal team are seeking a review to reduce his sentence to 20 years.

The prison environment has led to his frustration, highlighting the serious issues of mental health among inmates in Indonesia. Those with mental health challenges often struggle to control their behaviour, leading to legal violations. The riots in early 2019 resulted in new regulations limiting prisoners' outdoor time to 2 to 3 hours a day, staggered to prevent overcrowding. Bali's prisons, housing over 24,000 inmates in facilities designed for only 10,000, face significant challenges, including frequent unrest and the need for separate policies to manage the situation.

## Discussion

SA's routine now includes cleaning the church hall where inmates worship, sweeping the yard, and general cleaning. He takes daily antidepressants to stabilize his mood and manage suicidal thoughts. After nearly 20 years in prison, he feels his sentence is unjust, as he is not a corruptor, murderer, or rapist—his only mistake was succumbing to stupidity by carrying narcotics at someone else's request. His family is fighting for justice against Indonesia's narcotics laws, while SA remains focused on worship and fulfilling his responsibilities. Due to his lengthy sentence, SA has been entrusted as a tamping, a prisoner responsible for caring for others. His Indonesian language skills have improved, and his experiences have enabled him to learn faster than his peers.

Every day, SA takes medication to manage suicidal urges, depression, and sleep disorders that have developed during his imprisonment. Monthly visits from psychiatrists and psychology volunteers provide counselling and psychotherapy for him and other inmates diagnosed with mental disorders.

Originally intended for rehabilitation, the prison has become a health institution for those with mental issues. The rule requiring prisoners to be locked up for about 21 hours a day exacerbates their mental health problems. There is a need for a hospital and forensic prison for inmates with mental disorders. The hope for a forensic prison in Bali remains unfulfilled<sup>7,8,9</sup>.

SA has been transferred several times, having previously lived in Kerobokan Prison, then Karangasem Prison, and for the past seven years, he has been in the Narcotics Prison. Transfers often result from rule violations in prison, such as drug use, smuggling mobile phones, possessing weapons, fighting with other inmates, or attempting to escape. SA was diagnosed with a mental disorder after multiple suicide attempts, including self-injury with sharp objects, strangulation, and ingesting collected medications.

After years of imprisonment, he has become depressed and attempted suicide multiple times but has always been saved. He is grateful that the Australian government is covering his medical expenses, and his debts will be paid off in installments upon his release. SA has lost track of his debts, which total billions.

## 4. Conclusion

Caregivers play an indispensable role in supporting elderly independence through the concept of aging in place. As the global population continues to age, the demand for caregiving, particularly informal caregiving provided by family members, is increasing. However, despite the essential role they play, caregivers face significant challenges, including financial strain, emotional stress, and physical exhaustion. These challenges are exacerbated by the lack of comprehensive policies that specifically address caregiver needs. Without proper support, caregivers are at risk of burnout, which can negatively affect both their well-being and the quality of care they provide to elderly individuals.

The existing gaps in policies related to caregiver support underscore the need for comprehensive reforms. Financial compensation, access to healthcare, and the provision of respite care are crucial elements that can alleviate the burden on caregivers. Furthermore, caregiver education and training programs are necessary to equip them with the skills to provide effective care, especially for those dealing with complex medical conditions. Gender-sensitive policies are also needed, as women disproportionately bear the burden of caregiving responsibilities, often facing greater economic and social challenges as a result.

Policymakers should prioritize the development of caregiver-centered policies that provide financial compensation for informal caregivers, ensuring that they do not face long-term financial instability. Additionally, access to healthcare and mental health services should be made available to caregivers, recognizing the physical and emotional toll of their responsibilities. Respite care services must be



expanded to provide caregivers with necessary breaks, which will improve their mental health and allow them to continue providing quality care.

Moreover, education and training programs should be implemented to improve the competency of caregivers, helping them manage the complexities of elderly care more effectively. Finally, public awareness campaigns should be launched to highlight the importance of caregiving and encourage the development of community-based support networks. By implementing these recommendations, societies can better support caregivers, thereby enhancing the sustainability of aging in place and improving the quality of life for both caregivers and elderly individuals.

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