REGIONAL SNAPSHOT 3

PRISON POPULATION

Central ASIA

Key finding

In Asia and the Pacific, Central Asia has recorded the **highest imprisonment rate** from 2000 to 2018. Nevertheless, it is the only region where the rate has gradually **decreased**.

Prison population

- The prison population of Central Asia in 2019 was about 129,000, **declining** from 144,000 in 2000.
- The **decrease** in the prison population was witnessed **only in Central Asia** among the Asia-Pacific subregions.

Imprisonment rate

- In 2019, **177 persons per 100,000** total population of Central Asia were **detained** in prison.
- Considering **260 prisoners per 100,000** population in 2000, the **highest** compared to other subregions in Asia and the Pacific, this number has significantly **decreased**.

Unsentenced detainees (SDG 16.3.2)

- More than **15,000 detainees** out of 129,000 prisoners had not received a sentence in 2019.
- The Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) indicator 16.3.2, unsentenced detainees as a proportion of overall prison population, was **11.7%**, the lowest in Asia-Pacific regions as of 2019.
- Historically, the share of unsentenced detainees **decreased** by 2.5 percentage points from **14.2% in 2000** to **11.7% in 2019**.
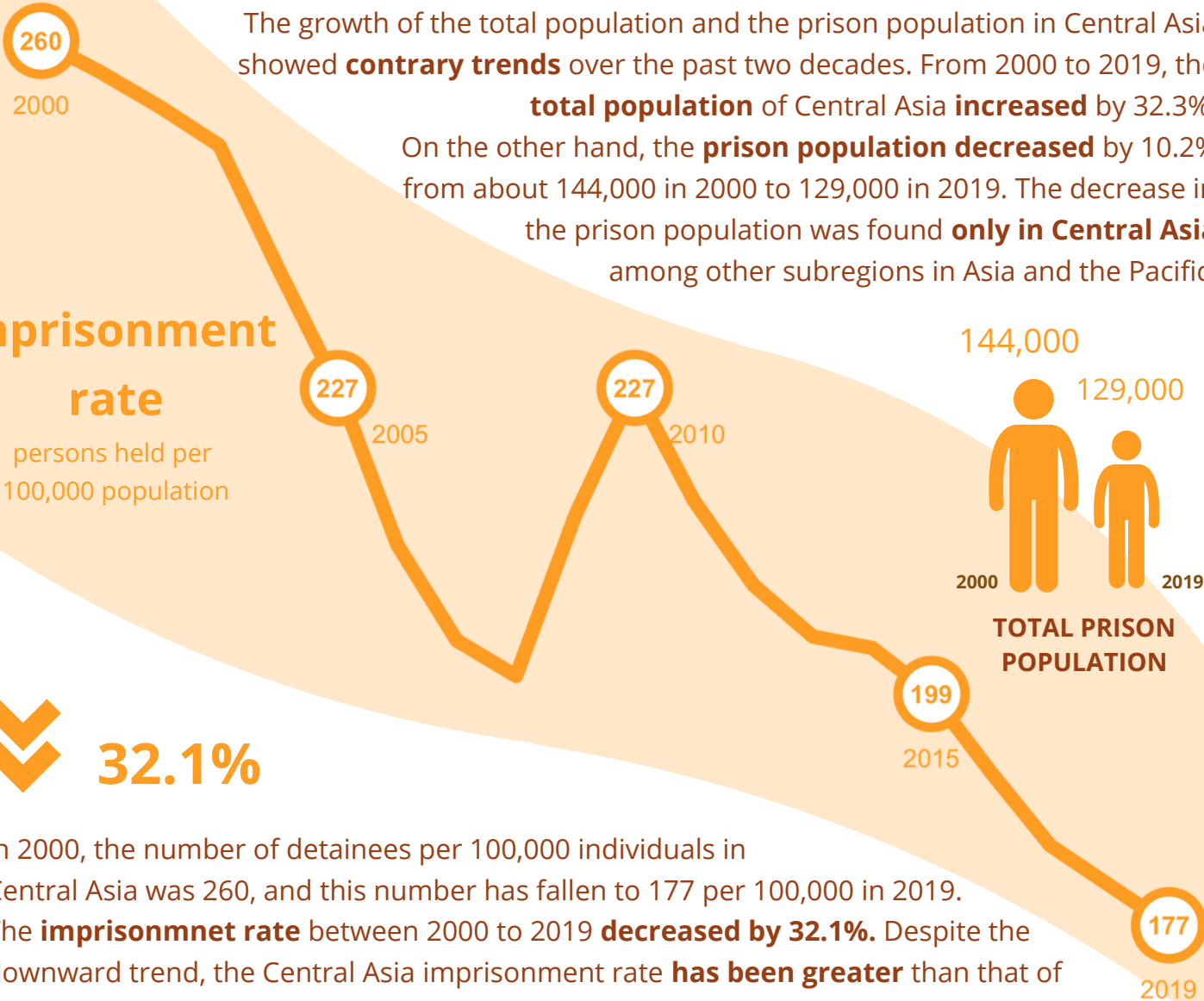
HISTORICAL TRENDS | Imprisonment rate

The growth of the total population and the prison population in Central Asia showed **contrary trends** over the past two decades. From 2000 to 2019, the **total population** of Central Asia **increased** by 32.3%. On the other hand, the **prison population decreased** by 10.2% from about 144,000 in 2000 to 129,000 in 2019. The decrease in the prison population was found **only in Central Asia** among other subregions in Asia and the Pacific.
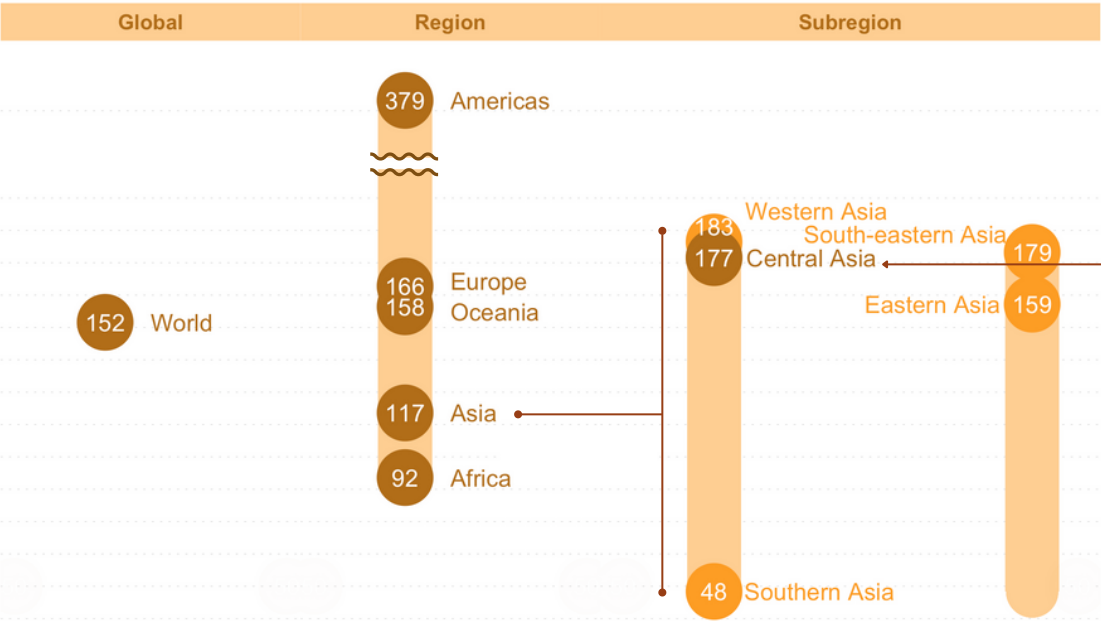
260 2000

227 2005

227 2010

199 2015

177 2019

Imprisonment rate

persons held per 100,000 population

144,000

129,000

2000   **2019**

TOTAL PRISON POPULATION

32.1%

In 2000, the number of detainees per 100,000 individuals in Central Asia was 260, and this number has fallen to 177 per 100,000 in 2019. The **imprisonmnet rate** between 2000 to 2019 **decreased by 32.1%.** Despite the downward trend, the Central Asia imprisonment rate **has been greater** than that of other subregions in Asia and the Pacific **until 2018**.

WORLD COMPARISON | Imprisonment rate in 2019

Global	Region	Subregion

379 Americas

183 Western Asia
177 Central Asia
South-eastern Asia

179

166 Europe
158 Oceania

152 World

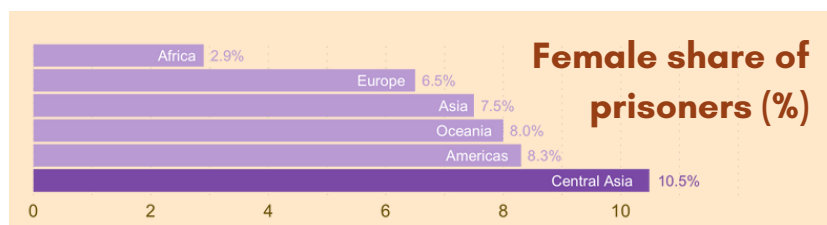117 Asia

Eastern Asia 159

92 Africa

48 Southern Asia

In 2019, the **imprisonment rate** of Central Asia was relatively **high** compared to the global rate of 152 and the other regions.
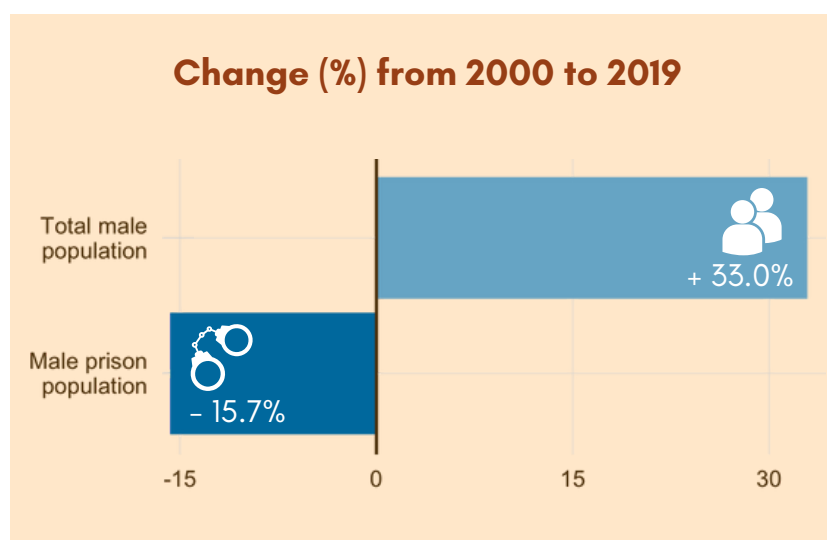
Figures have been rounded, and all percentages have been calculated using unrounded figures.

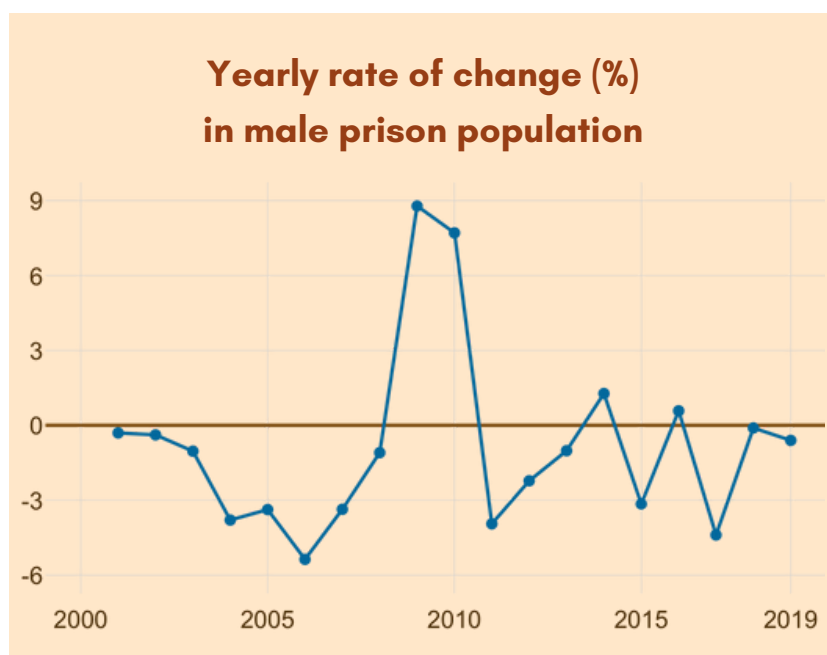# GENDER COMPARISON| Share of prison population

Based on the 2019 data from Central Asia, **males** made up approximately **89.5%** of the total prison population, and **females** comprised **10.5%**. The 2019 female share of prisoners in Central Asia showed a **relatively high figure** compared to the global share of 7.2% and the other world regions.

Female share of prisoners (%)

Region	%
Africa	2.9%
Europe	6.5%
Asia	7.5%
Oceania	8.0%
Americas	8.3%
Central Asia	10.5%

Share of prison population

10.5%♀
Female share of total prison population

89.5%♂
Male share of total prison population

as of 2019

HISTORICAL TRENDS | Prison population

Change (%) from 2000 to 2019

Total male population: + 33.0%

Male prison population: − 15.7%

♂ The male population has grown by 33% from 2000 to 2019 in Central Asia. However, **the male prison population** showed **a decline of 15.7%** in the same period. Such decreasing trend in the male prison population was **observed** only in Central Asia in Asia and the Pacific. The female prison population trends could not be estimated due to limited data availability.

Yearly rate of change (%) in male prison population

Overall, the male prison population showed a downward trend from 2000 to 2019. However, this average hides significant **differences between years**. Year-on-year changes (%) suggest that while in **most years** the male prison population in Central Asia **decreased**, in a few years (e.g. 2009 and 2010) this trend was **reversed.**
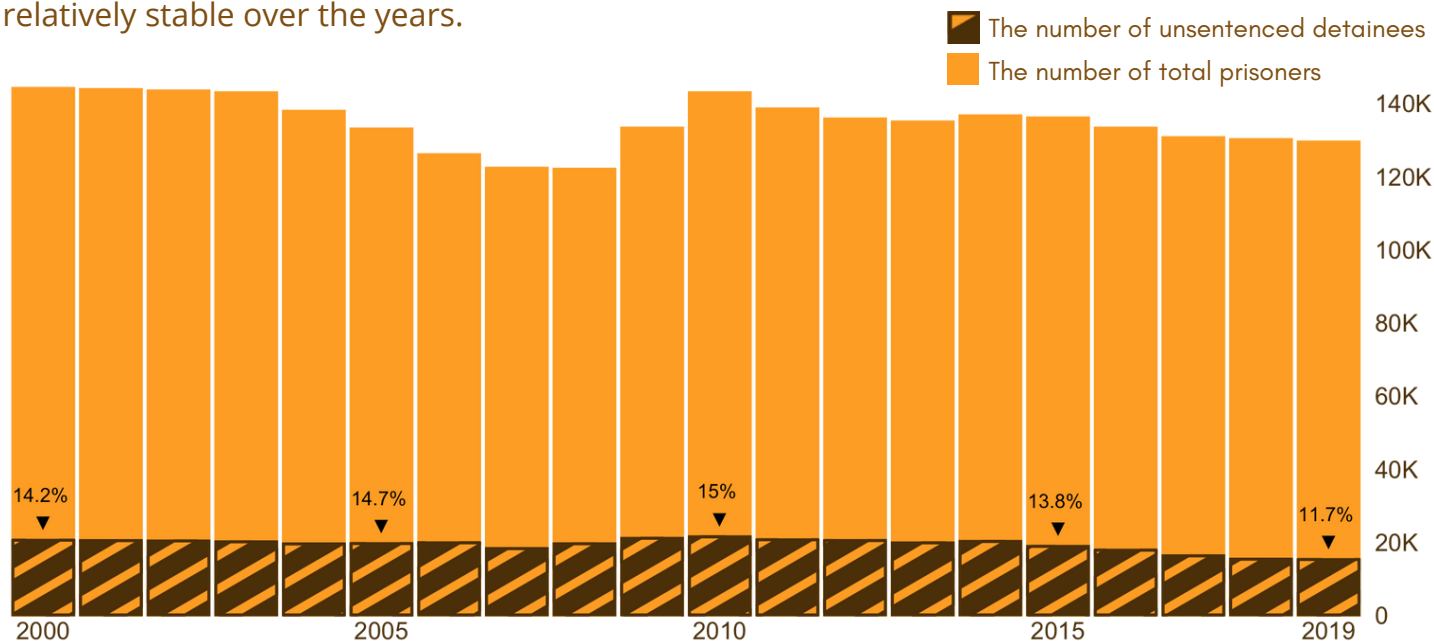
Figures have been rounded, and all percentages have been calculated using unrounded figures.

SDG 16.3.2 | Unsentenced detainees

16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS

The proportion of unsentenced detainees is a key SDG indicator to monitor the rule of law and equal access to justice for all.

In 2019, approximately 15,000 persons out of 144,000 prisoners in Central Asia had not received a sentence. The share of unsentenced detainees was **11.7%**, which was **less than the global share** of 31.5% as well as **the other regions** ranging between Europe at 15% and Africa at 34%. Considering the entire period of 20 years, from 2000 to 2019, the share of Central Asia unsentenced detainees **has been the least** among the Asia-Pacific subregions and remained relatively stable over the years.

The number of unsentenced detainees
The number of total prisoners

The Nelson Mandela Rules | Treatment of prisoners

Nelson Mandela International Day **18 July 2022**

"It is said that no one truly knows a nation until one has been inside its jails. A nation should not be judged by how it treats its highest citizens, but its lowest ones."

Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela

#DignityUnlocked #MandelaRules

The **Nelson Mandela Rules** are minimum standards to treat prisoners with the respect for their **inherent dignity** and **value as human beings**. The Rules provide generally accepted principles and practices in the treatment of prisoners and prison management.

The Rules in the section on **Prisoner file management** suggest recommendations on which personal and case information might be recorded to the system and how to be managed to **generate reliable data** for **evidence-based decision-making**.

Through the United Nations Survey on Trends and the Operations of Criminal Justice Systems (UN-CTS), Member States can compile **valid and internationally comparable data** on crime and the operation of criminal justice systems. The survey results provide **statistical evidence** to measure the efficiency of the criminal justice system, to identify areas for procedures improvement and resources management and to monitor relevant SDGs.

The Regional Snapshot 3 - Prison Population in Central Asia was prepared by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and Statistics Korea (KOSTAT) Centre of Excellence for Statistics on Crime and Criminal Justice in Asia and the Pacific (CoE).

Methodological note

Data
The data used for this document was collected by Member States via the United Nations Survey of Crime Trends and Operations of Criminal Justice Systems (UN-CTS) and the World Prison Brief. Subregional estimates were developed by UNODC. The dataset is publicly available at the UNODC data portal (dataunodc.un.org).

Geographic classification
For subregional classification, the analysis used the United Nations M49 system.

Acknowledgements

Disclaimers