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Here are some current issues in criminal justice, Human Rights, prisons and social problems. Follow the links (with control and click) for fuller information. Do print or forward **PSAP News** for other Unitarians and friends.

1 Supreme Court not to be changed after all The unanimous ruling that the Prime Minister's prorogation of Parliament was unlawful brought forth several suggestions that Supreme Court judges should be appointed by MPs, as in the USA. The Attorney General, Geoffrey Cox, and Robert Buckland, the Lord Chancellor, have now both announced that such changes would be unsuited to the UK's constitution. See <https://www.lawgazette.co.uk/law/attorney-general-us-style-supreme-court-not-in-uks-interests/5101681.article>

2 Rise in prison suicides finds Ombudsman The first report of the new Prison and Probation Ombudsman, Sue McAllister, announces a 27% rise in prison suicides and a repeated failure in many prisons to bring about reforms. There is increasing use of drugs despite improvements. See <https://www.ppo.gov.uk/news/ombudsman-disappointed-at-continued-failure-to-implement-agreed-recommendations>

3 Drug-related deaths rising throughout Europe UK is not the only country with growing drugs problems. Overdoses and addictions to what the UK describes as prescription drugs, only available with the authority of a doctor, are reported to be rising throughout Europe as well as in the USA and Canada. See http://www.emcdda.europa.eu/news/2019/latest-update-on-drug-related-deaths-and-mortality-in-europe_en

4 And is the UK bothered? Heroin and crack cocaine were the major cause of the UK record of drug-related deaths in 2018. Here are facts and a commentary suggesting that politicians are not to blame but the general lack of concern among the electorate is. See <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/drug-death-toll-england-wales-record-high-overdose-poisoning-substance-a9059296.html>

5 Mega jail expansion starts with Yorkshire Planning permission for the addition to the Category A and B prison at HMP Full Sutton of a C wing for 1400 prisoners has been granted by Yorkshire County Council. The approval by the Conservative Council has been welcomed by the Prisons Minister Lucy Frazer. The expansion will create the first "mega" prison will a total of more than 2000 prisoners in the face of objections from local residents. Further such expansions are proposed for HMP Wetherby and HMP Lindholme. See <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-humber-49681744>

6 Remaining IPP prisoners may still be in UK prisons for a further decade Indeterminate sentences for public protection were made unlawful in 2012 but left about 6,500 already sentenced. There are now about 2,500 prisoners waiting for release by the Parole Board often many years after the "tariff" of the sentence considered appropriate by the original judge has expired. To sign a petition to bring

this notorious system, originally designed for a “few hundred prisoners”, to an early end, See <https://you.38degrees.org.uk/petitions/free-the-remaining-ipp-prisoners>

7 Campaign in 2014 for books for prisoners faltering The Howard League reports that the success of the campaign by many, including the Unitarians, to ensure books are available to all prisoners is again being restricted in many prisons. See <https://howardleague.org/news/books-for-prisoners-five-years-on-people-in-prison-are-still-struggling-to-receive-books-and-use-libraries/>

8 Unduly Lenient Sentence Scheme extended The list of sex offences in the scheme for review of sentences has been added to by the Ministry of Justice. A further 14 sex offences, including stalking and harassment, can now be reviewed by the Court of Appeal. The Criminal Law Bar points out that the increasingly strict minimum and maximum sentencing guidelines do not always allow judges to sentence justly. See <https://www.lawgazette.co.uk/news/unduly-lenient-sentence-review-scheme-extended-further-/5101459.article>

9 Facial recognition “epidemic” in UK Are you being watched? Big Brother Watch, a lobby group about personal privacy, is suggesting that the uncontrolled use of facial recognition is becoming widespread in public places in UK. It is clearly a concern of many MPs, as in Congress in the USA. For a commentary, see <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/facial-recognition-kings-cross-shopping-centres-law-epidemic-privacy-a9062956.html>

10 Criminal investigations and court cases delayed by Forensic Science hacking The major Forensic Science firm in the UK, Eurofins, suffered a major cyberattack in June in which it paid a large ransom. The company’s seven laboratories deal with 50% of the samples required to be tested by UK police forces. The suspension of their testing was lifted in August but only after major delays in many courts and police services. See <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/cyber-attack-ransomware-eurofins-forensics-police-backlog-delays-a9062901.html>

11 Government plans for photo IDs in elections Despite misrepresentation of voters being a very small problem in UK elections, only one person was prosecuted in cases arising from the last general election, the Government intends to require all voters to produce photo evidence of identity. The proposal has met with immediate criticism not least because 3.5 million registered voters do not have photo IDs and mainly belong to groups that are unlikely to vote in favour of the current Government. See <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-50044539>

12 And finally good news... Cheap drug found to help in brain injuries The London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine has established that tranexamic acid can now be used successfully in preventing the breakdown of blood clotting in head injuries. See <https://www.theguardian.com/science/2019/oct/14/common-drug-could-prevent-thousands-of-head-injury-deaths>

13 Please Send Your News for PSAP News Send it with a link to fuller information to bruce_chilton@hotmail.com

Social responsibility is religion in action