

Life on the Inside

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Gulaiym Ashakeeva reports from Kyrgyzstan's only prison for women, where many of the inmates are repeat offenders as they cannot adjust to life outside.

Despite efforts to provide rehabilitation services, many women are ill-equipped to cope when they are released, frequently because they cannot find a way of earning a steady living. Some also have alcohol problems which helped land them in jail in the first place.

Mothers with very young children keep them until they are three, after which they must go to relatives or into state care.

Ashakeeva interviewed one such mother whose story was different from those of most of her fellow-inmates.

She was one of two women imprisoned after unrest in the southern town of Nookat in October 2008, when a demonstration against the town council's refusal to allow celebrations for the Muslim holiday of Eid al-Fitr spilled over into violence. A wave of detentions of alleged ringleaders and supporters of the Islamic group Hizb ut-Tahrir ensued, and 32 people were convicted of offences including incitement to cause mass unrest, overthrow the authorities, and create ethnic or religious strife.

They received sentences of up to 20 years in prison. The women interviewed by IWPR got 15 years, but this was later halved on appeal, and she is hoping she will be released under a general amnesty in future, as female convicts often are.

Topic: [Kyrgyzstan](#)

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