

Nation of the second chance

1. Match the words taken from the text with the corresponding definition, synonym or translation:

ludicrous (5) - deterrent (49) - custody (51) moyen de dissuasion - absurd - detention

.....
2. Whose opinion is analyzed in the article?

3. Define the subject in your own words:

4. What are the two different ways of coping with crime advocated in the article?

a)

b)

5. Identify the event which contributes to worsening the situation.

6. Pick out the three reasons justifying the "second chance" policy.

a)

b)

c)

7. Pick out three expressions showing that the country has to face social inequalities.

a)

b)

c)

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Prison population hits record high

1. Match the words taken from the text with the corresponding translation:

2.

remand (16) - looting (19) - custody (27) - slew (77) - on the rampage (80) - amenities (108)

pillage - détention préventive - se déchaîner - locaux - détention - un grand nombre de...

.....
.....

2. Identify the event which revealed the problem:

3. Define the subject in your own words:

4. What are the three ways to increase capacity:

a)

b)

c)

5. Pick out two main reasons explaining the rise:

a)

b)

What are the two diverging opinions on the present situation?

a)

b)

Note down the alternative solutions advocated by Juliet Lyon:

.....

We must become 'nation of the second chance', says Iain Duncan Smith

Work and pensions secretary says more must be done to rehabilitate people who become involved in a justice system that has 'ludicrous' reoffending rates

James Meikle

guardian.co.uk, Tuesday 6 September 2011 10.14 BST

England has to become "the nation of the second chance" to rehabilitate people who have been forced by fear into embracing gang culture and become involved in a justice system that has "ludicrous" reoffending rates, the work and pensions secretary, Iain Duncan Smith, has said.

Lawbreakers must be punished but also offered a way out of their present situation, said the minister, who is considering reducing benefits and rights to social housing for families of those responsible for violence and looting.

Duncan Smith's remarks, on BBC Radio 4's Today programme on Tuesday, came after the justice secretary, Kenneth Clarke, writing in the *Guardian*, blamed last month's riots in England on a "broken penal system".

Clarke said a hardcore of the rioters were known troublemakers but added that the coalition government had a renewed mission in "addressing the appalling social deficit that the riots have highlighted".

Duncan Smith said there must be "strong punishment but sensible punishment". He said: "The idea the length of the sentence is going to solve the problem is simplistic nonsense." But he insisted: "No one is beyond help. I have never believed that; I

have always believed in the nation of the second chance."

The ministers' interventions in the debate about the causes and consequences of the riots follow David Cameron's promise that the government would review every aspect of its work "to mend our broken society" and came as the Commons home affairs select committee prepared to examine police tactics during the riots.

Duncan Smith, who has already said the country should not "arrest its way" out of social breakdown, said troublemakers had to see there was an alternative to criminal activity.

"What we have is a system that had been far too often just a reactive system and what it has to recognise is that once you arrest someone as a deterrent, and you punish them, once you've got them in custody you have to do something with them.

"What has so much gone missing inside the criminal justice system is that the reoffending rates in the UK are ludicrous and what we end up doing is arresting and re-arresting and re-re-arresting the same people for different crimes."

Prison population hits record high

By Wesley Johnson Friday, 16 September 2011 The Guardian

The prison population in England and Wales reached a record high for the second week in a row today.

The total number of prisoners hit 87,120, 278 higher than last week's record high of 86,842 and about 1,600 short of the usable operational capacity of 88,747, Ministry of Justice figures showed.

The rising prison population has been fuelled by tough sentences for those involved in last month's riots, with more offenders than usual being held on remand, but the Government has insisted there will be enough jail places for anyone sentenced to custody as a result of the violence and looting.

A Prison Service spokesman said: "We are managing an unprecedented situation and all the staff involved should be commended for their dedication and hard work during this difficult time.

"We currently have enough prison places for those being remanded and sentenced to custody as a result of public disorder.

"We are developing contingencies to increase usable capacity should further pressure be placed on the prison estate."

No places are currently activated under Operation Safeguard, which would involve using cells at police stations as accommodation for prisoners.

Other contingency plans could involve bringing on new accommodation early, using extra places in the public and private estate, or reopening mothballed accommodation.

The usable operational capacity is the total number of prisoners that the jails in England and Wales can hold, taking into account control, security and the proper operation of the planned regime, less 2,000 places.

This reflects the constraints imposed by the need to provide separate accommodation for different prisoners, perhaps because of their sex, age, security category, conviction status, or because of a single cell risk assessment.

It also reflects the geographical distribution of the places, the Prison Service said.

Two-thirds of the 1,715 people who have appeared before the courts over the riots have been remanded in custody, compared with just one in 10 of those charged with serious indictable offences last year, the latest figures show.

Some 315 have been sentenced so far, with more than one in two (176) being jailed with an average custodial sentence of 11.1 months.

Sentences were tougher too, with those involved in the riots being jailed for an average of 10.4 months for violent disorder, compared with an average of 5.3 months last year.

For burglary, the average for those involved in the riots was 14.1 months, compared with 8.8 months last year.

The figures also showed that three-quarters of all rioters had a criminal record, but two-thirds of these had never been to jail despite having a slew of previous offences.

Justice Secretary Kenneth Clarke said the statistics confirmed that "existing criminals were on the rampage" last month.

He said the courts had delivered "swift and firm justice, which stopped the riots spreading further", but admitted he was "dismayed to see a hardcore of repeat offenders back in the system".

Frances Crook, chief executive of the Howard League for Penal Reform, warned that the record high was "a sign of failure, not success".

"It shows that we are still not solving the problems that lead to crime in the first place," she said.

"As the prison population reaches an all-time high, it is more important than ever to address our failing penal policy.

"People leave prison more dangerous than when they first entered, having learnt criminal tricks of the trade in our colleges of crime.

"Every week we cram hundreds more men, women and children into our already bulging jails, awash as they are with drugs, violence and arson."

She went on: "The prison service has to focus on security and maintenance of basic amenities, rather than resettlement and rehabilitation.

"The answer to rising prison populations is not to build more failing jails but instead to tackle the underlying causes of crime."

Juliet Lyon, director of the Prison Reform Trust, said: "It's one thing sweeping people off the streets but quite another stopping crime and disorder in future.

"It is reassuring that the Prison Service can cope in a crisis. "Now can the Ministry of Justice provide enough supervised, unpaid community workplaces, and proper restorative justice, so that the courts can require offenders to pay back for the harm caused and make amends to victims?"

Evicting rioters' families from their homes? There's a horrible logic to it

This kind of collective punishment fits into a wider housing agenda of pushing the poor out of profitable inner cities.

Owen Hatherley

guardian.co.uk, Tuesday 16 August 2011 14.05 BST

Ponder, for a moment, the second-most unequal country in Europe. Its prime minister, who failed to win an outright majority, heads a government whose cabinet contains several millionaires, and embarks upon an ideologically driven economic policy against almost all international and professional advice. It has just faced its largest strikes for decades. Its lawmakers were recently found fiddling their mortgages en masse. Its press was caught phone tapping hundreds of private citizens and politicians, with little hindrance from the police.

Meanwhile, members of that police force had killed a bystander at one protest, and were criticised for violence and intimidation at another. Then, they shot a man, it was wrongly claimed that he'd shot at them first, and young people across the country rioted, setting fire to police cars, attacking police stations, looting high streets and retail parks. After that, courts worked through the night; in Manchester, a mother-of-two got five months for accepting a looted pair of shorts from a friend and a young man got six months for pinching a bottle of water. Finally, these young people's families started to be issued with eviction orders from their social accommodation; a form of housing which said government had already committed itself to dismantling. The prime minister claimed this would help break up criminal gangs.

Put like that, the UK sounds much like what the rest of the world must surely see us as, by now - akin to some post-Soviet Republic about to undergo a "colour revolution" maybe, or a Mediterranean ex-dictatorship convulsed by civil unrest.

Imagine the fundraisers and the Facebook declarations of solidarity were it so.

Yet instead, disturbingly, all these events have been disassociated in many people's minds, with the all-encompassing and highly public corruption and violence of the last few years forgotten (or worse, forgiven) after four days of hardly unconnected, albeit incoherent and indiscriminate, unrest. Yet, even if we acquiesce in the claim by the government and many others that last week's rioting was solely a bizarre, inexplicable explosion of "pure criminality", we should note that criminals are still subject to the rule of law. In a democratic country, if a youth is convicted (let alone suspected) of burgling a shop, it would be all-but-unprecedented for his or her family to be made homeless as punishment. Yet that is what is happening, with Wandsworth council starting the ball rolling and many other councils promising to follow suit.

On one level, it exemplifies that failure of the most basic social understanding that at least helped trigger these riots. The idea seems to be that those in social housing could just find somewhere else, they could just walk into private housing. Like the similar proposals for taking away housing benefit from miscreants, it is based on an inability to imagine what poverty is like, to think for a second what might happen to a family when it loses its income or its home. Given that the riots were largely concentrated in areas where extreme wealth and poverty rub up against each other - from Clapham to the Thames Valley, from Manchester to Bristol - it shows the total mutual incomprehension that we have for our literal neighbours. On another level it is of dubious legality -

for a council tenancy to be rescinded, the tenant has to have been convicted of an offence on or near the premises, not always the case in these highly mobile riots; and given that so many of the rioters were minors, their parents will be those being evicted. There's a term for this - collective punishment. It is illegal under international law.

It fits very neatly, however, into a wider agenda on public housing, which is already an emergency remnant of a once-proud institution. The coalition sets time limits on council tenancies and freezes the already meagre levels of social housebuilding; Labour councils embark on massive demolition programmes of large estates and their replacement with

developer-led mixed private and supposedly affordable estates. Both have much the same effect - removing the "undeserving" poor from highly profitable inner-city sites.

This is an intensification of that already existing agenda. Knowing that many of the thousands of young people who rioted were living on estates, their expulsion can free up some more space, clear that overstretched waiting list a little. It will make our cities even more Balkanised and unequal, and it will make the young even more dispossessed and angry. Brutal as these proposals may be, they are hardly inconsistent. Like the long-predicted riots themselves, they have not come out of the blue.

Evicting rioters' families

1. Match the words taken from the text with the corresponding translation:

ponder (1) - outright (3) - fiddling their mortgages (11) - hindrance (14) - looting (23) - tenancy (85)
pillage - considérer - obstacle - nette - contrat de location (immobilier) - engagé dans des combines immobilières -

.....
.....

2. Which country is concerned?

3. According to the journalist, what are the main flaws of the present government.

From a political point o view:

from an economic point of view:

from a social point of view:

4. the government's reactions to the riots:

.....

Mention the two reasons why the journalist find the government response inadequate:

a)

b)

According to the journalist what is the motive underlying the government's decision:

.....

A two-speed penal justice system?

The four day summer riots have highlighted the dismal state of the penal system in UK. Most of the rioters - two-thirds, according to the Guardian - being repeat offenders, the violent spree blatantly exposed the government's difficulties to cope with crime. Although the response is widely thought to have been adequately swift and harsh, it has mainly resulted in clogging prisons and fueling resentment over what may appear as a two-speed justice system.

Indeed, recent figures tend to show that in front of the sudden upsurge of violence, the government has decided to crack down on offenders : on the one hand, criminal courts have worked night and day issuing sentences that are far above those given for similar offenses in previous years. As a result, the number of people held in custody has broken a new record high in UK, pushing back the limits of accommodation facilities. As a result, the government is currently planning to increase the number of available places to cope with the rising number of convicts.

What's more, courts have gone so far as to order eviction from public housing estates for people taking part in the riots extending the punishment to the families of underage first-timers involved. The measure is so radical that the government is suspected to take advantage of the troubles to further develop what some journalists consider as a discriminatory policy aiming at "removing the "undeserving" poor from highly profitable inner-city sites".

However, even in the ranks of the majority in power, a few voices tend to question the choices operated by the government, like Juliet Lyon, Director of the Prison reform Trust who underlines the need for prevention and rehabilitation: "It's one thing sweeping people off the streets but quite another stopping crime and disorder in the future."

Without questioning the harshness of the penal policy, Iain Duncan Smith, Work and Pensions Secretary, also pleads for "a second chance" to fight against the unusually high number of repeat offenders in England. Indeed, he recently underlined the necessity to restore hope otherwise offenders will go on committing crimes again and again.

The government seems to have won wide support for its unflinching attitude following the violent episode England went through this summer. However, the people in charge should take good care not to give the impression their reaction is based on ideology. In other words, unless the penal system becomes more proactive rather than reactive, they run the risk of initiating a cycle of violence and repression.

424 words

Plan possible

I. Introduction (problématique)

Context: summer riots in England

- violence, looting, vandalism.
- Swift and harsh punishment.

II. The government response:

- longer sentences
consequence: jail overcrowding.
- Evictions
increased poverty (homelessness...)

III. Discordant voices:

- Juliet Lyon / Frances Crook:
need for prevention and rehabilitation.
- Iain Duncan Smith:
the country needs to restore hope. (second chance)

IV. Conclusion:

- The government response seems to be influenced by ideology.
Possible consequences: discouraging the poorer classes of society; fueling resentment, anger and hopelessness. High rate of repeat offenders = more violence to come?

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Synthèse de documents

400-500 mots.

Durée : 4h Quelques documents en langue étrangère sont proposés au candidat (au minimum trois).

Titre obligatoire.

La synthèse devra faire apparaître les arguments clefs de chaque article et faire émerger les lignes de force sans introduire de biais. Le but est de réaliser un exposé objectif des idées présentées par chaque document, de façon que le lecteur de la synthèse puisse se faire sa propre opinion du sujet, sans avoir à consulter les documents originaux. Les candidats ne devront donc en aucun cas introduire de commentaire personnel.

La forme de la synthèse est totalement libre. En particulier, il n'est pas demandé de respecter la structure des documents proposés, ni de citer les auteurs ou les ouvrages d'origine, sauf bien sûr si cela permet d'apporter un éclairage particulier au propos. Le jury considère toutefois qu'une bonne synthèse doit commencer en introduisant la problématique retenue. L'utilisation littérale d'extraits des documents proposés est à proscrire, si toutefois les candidats souhaitent citer un passage, ils doivent suivre pour cela les règles habituelles (par exemple, l'utilisation de guillemets).

Les copies seront évaluées suivant 4 critères :

Titre et problématique introductive

Restitution des éléments clefs

Mise en cohérence de l'argumentation

Qualité de l'expression (critères linguistiques et stylistiques)

Les candidats devront donner un titre à leur synthèse. Il est attendu de ce titre qu'il soit informatif et précis. En effet, son rôle n'est pas d'inciter le lecteur à lire le reste du document mais d'indiquer le plus clairement possible le thème abordé.