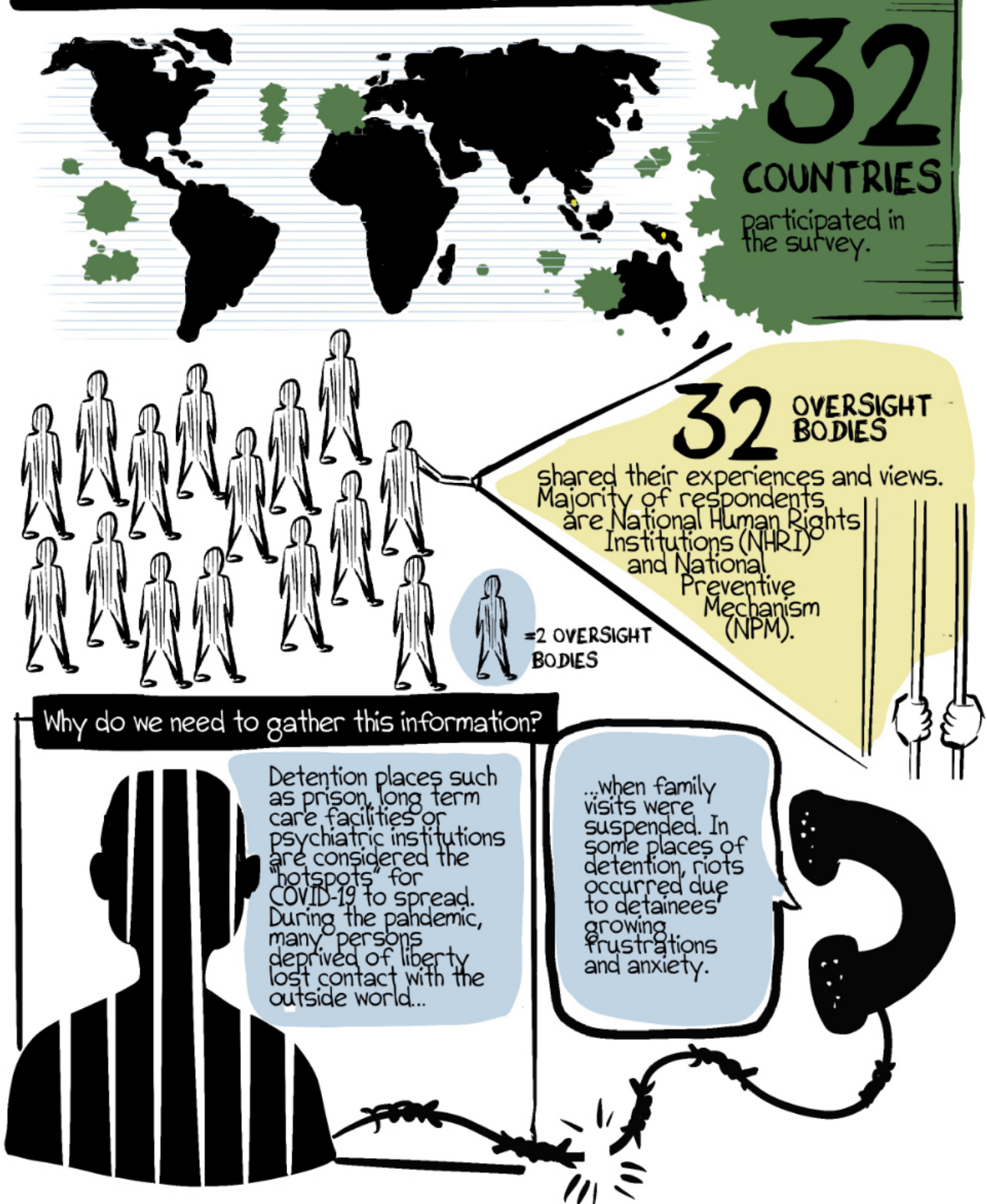


DETENTION MONITORING IN TIME OF COVID-19

A DATA COMIC BY
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FOR ASSOCIATION FOR
PREVENTION OF TORTURE
(APT)

In 2020, the Association for Prevention of Torture conducted a survey to understand how oversight bodies across the globe are adapting to the challenges of monitoring places of detention during the COVID-19 pandemic.

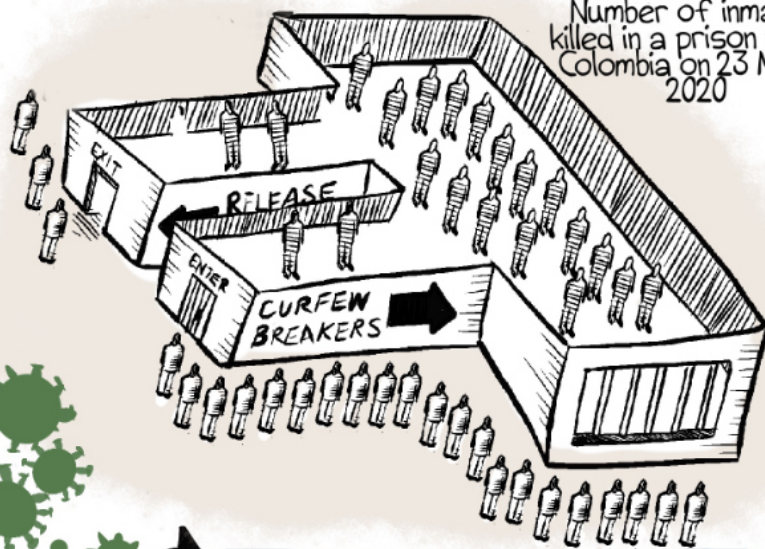




During the pandemic, prison riots and violence were reported to take place across the globe in countries such as France, Italy, Sri Lanka and Thailand, Brazil, Argentina and Colombia.



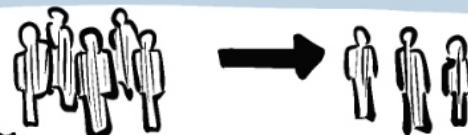
Meanwhile, persons who breached national curfew or lockdowns around the world were imprisoned by authorities causing severe overcrowding in prisons. These emerging issues demand independent oversight. The question is to what extent can oversight bodies monitor detention places during the pandemic?



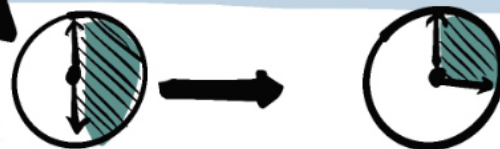
Number of inmates killed in a prison riot in Colombia on 23 March 2020

The survey found that 26 oversight bodies continued to monitor detention during the pandemic. However, they had to adapt their monitoring ways to the current situation.

Number of visiting team members reduced



Time spent on physical visits shortened

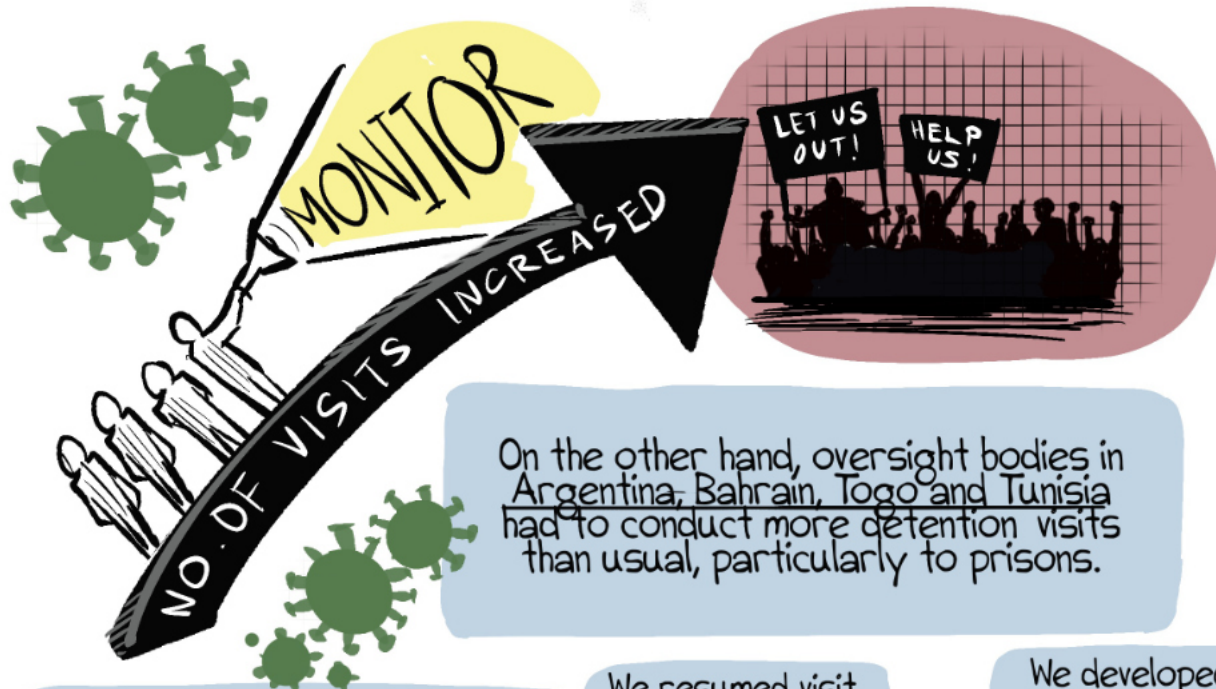


AND...



Some detention places were prioritised than others based on security and needs analysis





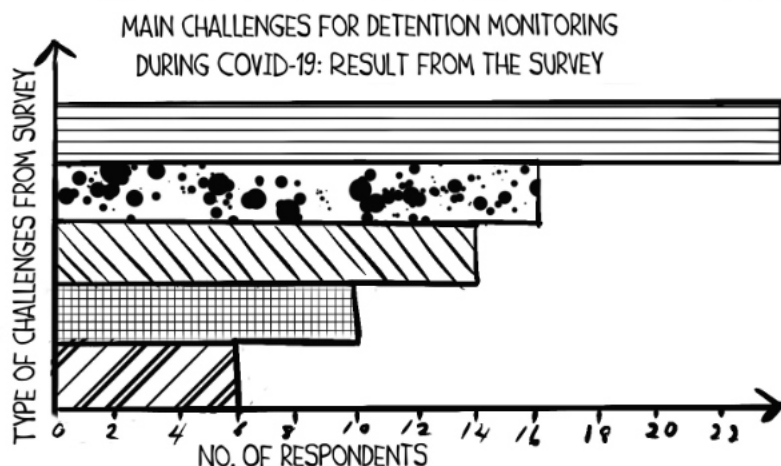
Furthermore, oversight bodies in Norway and Burkina Faso had to suspend their visits at the beginning of the pandemic to ensure the safety of their monitoring team, detainees and others they may be in contact with during the visit.

We resumed visit when COVID-19 cases are under control.

We developed suitable inspection protocol first.



This brings us to the next question that we asked in the survey; what are the challenges faced by oversight bodies in monitoring detention during COVID-19



- High risk of COVID-19 transmission
- National lockdown or state of emergency
- Lack of cooperation from authorities
- Lack of PPE/medical equipment
- Budgetary constraint

The survey also captured specific challenges faced by oversight bodies that are unique to the national context.

Oversight bodies in Norway and Australia attributed their challenges to the state-imposed lockdown. In Norway, the staff of the oversight bodies had to stay at home to take care of their children due to the lockdown while in Australia, the lockdown imposed logistical challenges for monitoring.



AUSTRALIA



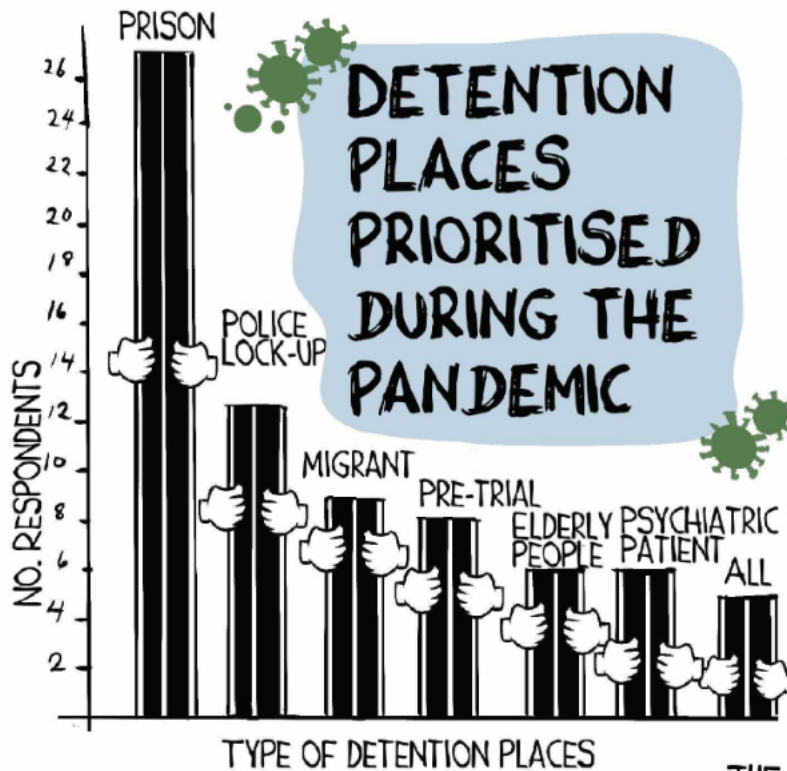
HOW DID THE OVERSIGHT BODIES OVERCOME THESE CHALLENGES?



The survey showed an emerging innovative trend among oversight bodies to utilise technology in detention monitoring. Seven out of the thirty oversight bodies used technology to communicate and conduct remote monitoring of detainees and authorities.

In Argentina, the oversight body used remote technology to assess the mental health of detainees. The NPM in Peru conducted interviews with female detainees and detaining authorities via video-conference.





**WE ALSO ASKED
OVERSIGHT BODIES WHICH
DETENTION PLACES ARE
PRIORITISED FOR VISITS?**

Most oversight bodies reported prioritising visits to prisons and police detention centres, followed by long-term care facilities for the elderly, pre-trial detention centres and psychiatric institutions.

Nine oversight bodies reported migrant detention centres as a priority for visits.

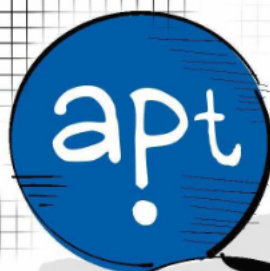
Additionally oversight bodies from Argentina, the Philippines, Serbia, Bulgaria and Moldova are of the view that all detention places should be monitored during the pandemic. The national human rights institutions of Malaysia and the Philippines also noted in the survey, their requirement to conduct visits based on complaints they received.

THE PHILIPPINES



MALAYSIA

WHAT IS APT'S MAIN CONCLUSION FROM THE SURVEY?



Oversight bodies have shown remarkable adaptability and dedication during COVID-19, despite the unprecedented challenges they have faced.

The APT will continue to provide useful guidances and resources to support the work of oversight bodies during the pandemic. Check out our knowledge hub at <http://www.apt.ch>

