

Guantanamo Bay

Guantanamo Bay is a U.S. controlled naval station in Cuba. After September 11, 2001, the base became the main 'secret prison' or 'black site' for detainees who were suspected of having ties to Al Qaeda and the Taliban. Since 2001, 780 suspected 'terrorists' have been held at Guantanamo Bay. Human Rights Watch highlights that of this figure, 731 have been 'released without charges, many after being detained for years' (www.hrw.org).

The treatment of the detainees has been a matter of grave concern for human rights groups around the world. Concerns have also been raised about Ireland's involvement in this. Since 2001, Irish governments have allowed U.S. aircrafts, suspected of carrying detainees, to stop-over at Irish airports.

Imprisonment

Punitive Justice is at the heart of criminal justice systems in many countries. It centres on punishing individuals who have committed a crime. Imprisonment is one of the most common forms of punitive justice. In Ireland there are 13 prisons and places of detention. Most of these are closed institutions with both internal and perimeter security.

In 2016, there were over 3,600 people in prison custody in Ireland. The Irish Penal Reform Trust highlights that some 60% of people serving sentences for 6 months or less are poor and are often homeless. They also add that the majority of Irish prisoners have never sat a state exam; over half left school before they reached 15 years of age. In 2015, the average cost of a 'staffed prison space' was just under €70,000 per year (www.iprt.ie).

The Death Penalty

Punitive Justice is at the heart of criminal justice systems in many countries. It centres on punishing individuals who have committed a crime. Capital Punishment (death penalty) is one form of punitive justice given to people convicted of serious crimes (such as murder) in some countries. Those in favour of the death penalty argue that it deters others from committing serious crimes.

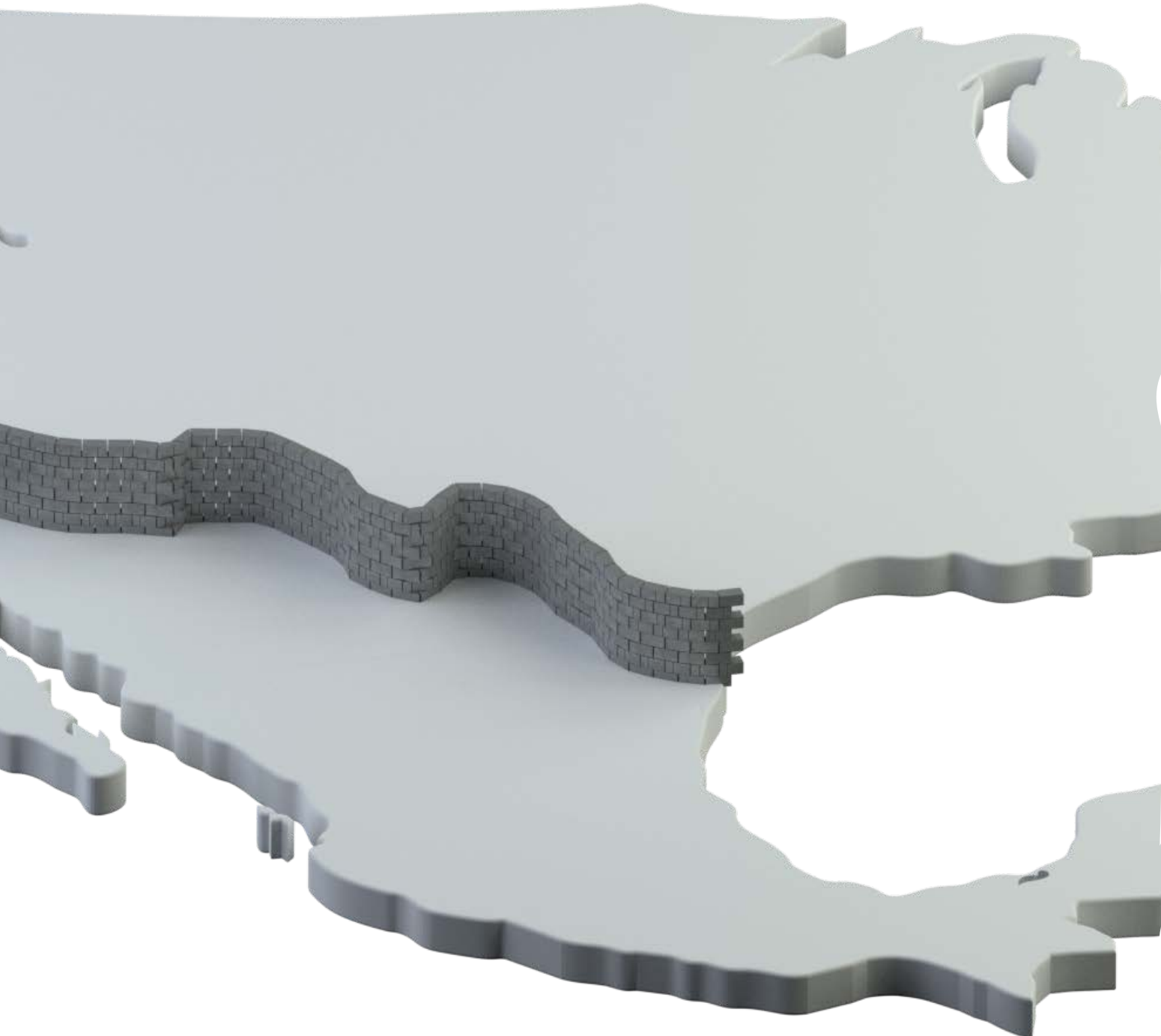
As figures from certain countries are hard to obtain, it is difficult to determine how many people are executed each year around the world. Researchers from the Cornell Law school in New York estimate that in China alone some 2,400 people were executed in 2015. This, is more than the rest of the world put together (www.lawschool.cornell.edu). Other countries where people were executed are Iran, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Pakistan, and the U.S..



Migrant Crisis

In 2015, more than 1 million migrants and refugees (mainly from Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq) entered Europe; the majority of those making the dangerous sea-trek across the Mediterranean sea. That year, the International Organisation for Migration (www.iom.int) determined that 3,770 migrants died making this journey. A year later over 5,000 migrants died making the same journey. Once they made it to Europe, migrants continued on an arduous journey hoping to get into EU countries like Germany and Sweden. Temporary borders (left) were set up to stop migrants and refugees entering certain EU countries. Permanent border barriers have since been built in Hungary and Slovenia.

The EU's response towards the crisis was judged inappropriate and delayed. Since the conflict began in Syria in 2011, Turkey alone has taken in over 2.7 million refugees from Syria.



Trump's Wall

President Donald Trump continues to work to make good on his first campaign promise of building a wall between the U.S. and Mexico. The wall, over 1,600 km long will be between 10 and 12 metres high. It is estimated that the wall will cost in excess of US \$10 Billion. This physical construct is a cornerstone of Trumps' tough stance on immigration. Trump also issued restrictions on immigrants coming from certain countries in the Middle East.

In 2006, as Senator, Barack Obama supported the Secure Fence Act (2006) which authorised the Bush administration to build a 1,100 km barrier between Mexico and the U.S. At the time he said, 'better fences and better security along our borders' would 'help stem some of the tide of illegal immigration in this country' (www.bostonglobe.com). During his time as President, Obama deported some 2.5 million people from the U.S.

Garlic Man

In March 2011, Paul Begley was jailed for avoiding customs duty. This is a tax paid to the state on imported goods. Between 2003 and 2007, the fruit and vegetable importer labelled garlic coming from China as apples. At the time he made huge savings as the import duty on apples was less than that on garlic. Following an investigation in 2007, Begley co-operated with revenue and agreed to pay back the outstanding €1.6 million tax bill. However, this was not considered by the Judge who sentenced him to 6 years jail.

In 2013, following an appeal to Court of Criminal Appeal, Begley's sentence was reduced from 6 to 2 years. In March of that year he was released. The 3 judges of the CCA concluded that the judge failed to consider Begley's willingness to pay back the debt he owed the state when handing down his initial sentence.

Stolen Generation - Australia

Between 1910 and 1970, government policies in Australia sanctioned the forcible removal of indigenous (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island) children from their families. This policy was driven by a view that 'whites' were superior to 'blacks'. It was proposed that Australia's indigenous population should 'die out' naturally and, where possible, children should be taken and assimilated into the white community.

In the 1990's, an independent report, *Bringing Them Home*, estimated that 100,000 children were removed. The report highlighted the inhumane and harsh treatment children experienced in the institutions they were sent to. Many children were told that their families did not want them or that their parents died. This, they hoped, would stop them from wanting to return to their Aboriginal culture. In 2008, Prime Minister Kevin Rudd made an official apology to the Stolen Generation and the indigenous population.





Access to Education

UNICEF estimates that some 61 million children of primary school age (6 – 11 years) do not go to school. Another 60 million of 12 – 15 year olds do not attend secondary school. More than half of the children in the world who do not go to school are in Sub-Saharan Africa. There are many barriers preventing children from going to school; barriers which exist well before a child is even born. They include location, conflict, violence, gender, and poverty. Many children do not go to school because they have to work to help with securing life's basic needs.

Having no access to education denies children around the world an opportunity to flourish and to live life to the full (www.unicef.org).

Feast or Famine

In March 2017, the UN declared that 20 million people were facing the threat of starvation as famine swept through Somalia, South Sudan, north-east Nigeria and Yemen. Meanwhile, every year between 30 to 40 percent of food grown in the United States is thrown away or left to rot. This is around 60 billion kilograms of food; more than enough to feed the millions of people worldwide who face hunger every day.

In Ireland we are also guilty of food waste. The Stop Food Waste campaign estimates that around one-third of the one million tonnes of food thrown away each year comes from households. This means that each person in the country is throwing around 80 kg of food each year.



The Birmingham Six

In 1974, the Provisional IRA set off two bomb attacks in Birmingham killing 21 people and injury 182. Shortly after the attack six people were arrested, including Paddy Hill (pictured).

They were all sentenced to life imprisonment for their part in the attacks. In May 1991, after 16 years in prison, all six men were released. The Court of Appeal heard that during the investigation the police fabricated evidence and then suppressed key evidence from the trial. All six men noted that they were beaten until four of them signed confessions. Those responsible for framing six innocent men have never been prosecuted.