

# New jails a priority to relieve overcrowding

YOU report (October 14, page 4) that the Western Cape has yet again the highest overcrowding in prisons. Pollsmoor Medium B is crammed with prisoners at 200% capacity.

That means half of all criminals and awaiting trial prisoners must sleep on the cement floors. The squalor has in the past prompted reports on a rat-borne disease causing deaths in that prison. This squalor is also textbook breeding grounds for drug-resistant TB to spread among the inmates.

Months ago, a social movement flooded newspapers and digital media with demands for life sentences with no parole, and no bail for serious crimes. However, not one of their letters took up the overdue need to build more jails to relieve overcrowding – still less the further overcrowding that would be the inevitable consequence of their demands.

It is the responsibility of MPs of all parties, especially those on the parliamentary portfolio committees for correctional services, justice, and public works, to give priority to the long-overdue building of new prisons.

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