

Man spent five years too long in prison

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An administration error in the prisons system in Samoa resulted in a man being incarcerated for five years longer than he was sentenced to serve. Sio Agafili, 45, should have been released from prison in December 2015 after serving

two concurrent jail terms. In November 2008, Mr Agafili was convicted of burglary and theft and sentenced to seven years in prison. A month later he was found guilty of other misdemeanours and slapped with a five-year sentence. The default procedure in Samoa's criminal justice system is that a convict with two sentences must serve them concurrently and not consecutively. The error was spotted recently by a judge when Mr Agafili appeared in court on another charge.

In an interview with the Samoa Observer newspaper, Agafili described his anguish at spending too long behind bars. He said: "It's broken me into a million pieces. No one told me when my jail term would end. I lost count of the days. I don't remember much about when I should be out. I just know I had to serve my time behind bars." Mr Agafili's lawyer Muriel Lui spoke to reporters about the injustice suffered by her client. She said: "He's been imprisoned unlawfully. I've heard of other cases of a similar nature. This is not the first of this type." She added: "His right to liberty has definitely been breached." Ms Lui said that she would be seeking compensation for her client.

Sources: rnz.co.nz / theguardian.com / samoaobserver.ws

Writing

Prison is not a good punishment. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

error / incarcerated / sentence / jail / burglary / theft / guilty / criminal / judge / interview / anguish / count / behind bars / lawyer / reporters / nature / compensation

True / False

- A man was put in prison in Samoa for the wrong reason. T / F
- The man should have been released from prison earlier this year. T / F
- The man was found guilty of burglary and theft. T / F
- In Samoa, two prison sentences must be served one after the other. T / F
- The man said he spent a long time in front of bars. T / F
- The man said he lost count of the days he spent in prison. T / F
- A lawyer said it is the first time she has heard of unlawful imprisonment. T / F
- The lawyer will try to get compensation for her client. T / F

Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. error | a. freedom |
| 2. incarcerated | b. wrongdoing |
| 3. released | c. pain |
| 4. misdemeanours | d. set free |
| 5. concurrently | e. unfairness |
| 6. anguish | f. mistake |
| 7. injustice | g. damages |
| 8. cases | h. simultaneously |
| 9. liberty | i. imprisoned |
| 10. compensation | j. examples |

Discussion – Student A

- What do you think of prisons?
- How would you feel about going to prison?
- Do you think prison is the best way to punish people?
- How would you feel if you were the man in this story?
- What should be the punishment for burglary?
- What do you think of your country's criminal justice system?
- Should two prison sentences be served consecutively?
- What advice do you have for Mr Agafili?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|--|----------------------|
| 1. An administration | a. a million pieces |
| 2. incarcerated | b. of burglary |
| 3. convicted | c. another charge |
| 4. serve them concurrently and | d. nature |
| 5. Mr Agafili appeared in court on | e. compensation |
| 6. It's broken me into | f. for five years |
| 7. I had to serve my | g. been breached |
| 8. other cases of a similar | h. error |
| 9. His right to liberty has definitely | i. time behind bars |
| 10. seeking | j. not consecutively |

Discussion – Student B

- What do you think about what you read?
- What kind of anguish do you think Mr Agafili felt?
- How would you count the days in prison?
- How tough should prison be?
- What would you do on your first day out of prison?
- Do you think you would be a good judge?
- What kind of compensation should Mr Agafili get?
- What questions would you like to ask Mr Agafili?

Spelling

- An nimtdiaoitnras error
- a man being ieandccartr for five years
- serving two oenrcnutrc jail terms
- convicted of ugrrlaby and theft
- The default pedreourc
- not csilyonvceteu
- Agafili described his suaghin
- the niuctjes suffered by her client
- He's been imprisoned unawfllyul
- His right to telriby has
- definitely been edeabrhc
- seeking oocaennpsimt for her client

Answers – Synonym Match

| | | | | |
|------|------|------|------|-------|
| 1. f | 2. i | 3. d | 4. b | 5. h |
| 6. c | 7. e | 8. j | 9. a | 10. g |

Role Play

Role A – Prison

You think prison is the best form of punishment. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their forms. Also, tell the others which is the least effective of these (and why): fines, house arrest or capital punishment.

Role B – Fines

You think fines are the best form of punishment. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their forms. Also, tell the others which is the least effective of these (and why): prison, house arrest or capital punishment.

Role C – House Arrest

You think house arrest is the best form of punishment. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their forms. Also, tell the others which is the least effective of these (and why): fines, prison or capital punishment.

Role D – Capital Punishment

You think capital punishment is the best form of punishment. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their forms. Also, tell the others which is the least effective of these (and why): fines, house arrest or prison.

Speaking – Punishments

Rank these with your partner. Put the best at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- | | |
|-------------|-----------------------|
| • prison | • corporal punishment |
| • fines | • capital punishment |
| • education | • house arrest |
| • tagging | • community service |

Answers – True False

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| a | F | b | F | c | T | d | F | e | F | f | T | g | F | h | T |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.