

Models of Aftercare for Released Prisoners in Arab Countries

Khalida Ouldgouail ^{1*}

¹ Akli Mohand Oulhadj University, kh.ouldgouail@univ-bouira.dz

ORCID : 0000-0003-4596-4631

Received: 04/05/2026

Accepted: 17/05/2026

Published:30/06/2026

.....

Abstract:

The research paper aims to uncover the most significant aftercare models in Arab countries by presenting the following Arab experiences: Algerian, Egyptian, and Lebanese. It explores various service programs they offer, analyzes them, and identifies the challenges they face.

The findings indicate that these programs vary between governmental efforts, where the state provides support to released individuals ensuring psychological and social care, and non-governmental initiatives, such as those provided by civil society organizations.

Keywords: aftercare, aftercare services, released individuals.

*المؤلف المرسل

1-INTRODUCTION

Numerous studies in sociology, criminal justice, and psychology have examined the transitional phase experienced by released individuals and the various repercussions they face upon reentering society after serving their sentences. These challenges include legal issues, such as the recording of their criminal record, which can hinder job opportunities, and supplementary sanctions, like residence restrictions. Social and economic problems add to the stigma attached to their past, often stripping them of social trust, respect, and value, which prevents them from reintegrating smoothly into society and resuming their social roles within their families, communities, and local society. Given these challenges, support is essential, both from official institutions and non-governmental organizations, to aid them in navigating the outside world before and after their release from prison.

Thus, the goal of aftercare aligns with the objectives of the social defense movement, as proposed by Grammatica (F. Grammatica) and Ancel (M. Ancel). This approach seeks to protect society from the risk of recidivism by reintegrating the released individual as a productive citizen, thereby reducing repeat offenses. Additionally, it aims to preserve the benefits of the rehabilitation programs that inmates undergo during their sentences. In reality, however, no matter how effective rehabilitation and correctional programs within institutions may be, they are insufficient alone and must be accompanied by a comprehensive aftercare system that supports individuals both before and after their release.

Arab countries face significant challenges in providing aftercare for inmates, with the quality of health and psychological services for released individuals varying according to the type and quality of programs available. Accordingly, the research seeks to answer the following questions: What are the primary aftercare models for released individuals in Arab countries? What service programs do they provide for released individuals? What challenges do these programs face?

2. Defining Aftercare Concepts and Objectives

In this section, we will clarify several concepts related to aftercare, as well as its implications and objectives.

2.1 The Concept of Aftercare:

Examining various attempts to define aftercare reveals no unified definition, as it varies depending on the scientific discipline (sociology, social work, law, psychology, etc.). Some view it as monitoring and guiding released individuals, while others see it as a corrective process for released inmates, as defined by the Arab Social Defense Organization. However, there is general consensus that it complements punitive treatment methods by providing assistance and support to released individuals.

In social work, the term "aftercare" corresponds to the American "After-care," the English "Follow-up," and the French "Pour Suivre." Initially, it referred to helping patients and convalescents (Abdel Fattah, 1988). According to Altschuler and Armstrong (2013), aftercare is the provision of integration services outside juvenile care centers to prepare them for reintegration into society through designated services and supervision. Aftercare is also defined as "providing support to the released individual from

correctional institutions, either to complete a rehabilitation program initiated within the institution or to reinforce that program in the face of social challenges post-release" (Ishaq, 2009).

2.1 Implications and Objectives of Aftercare

Sociological theories on crime and recidivism within the structural-functional approach emphasize the relationship between social environment and crime. For instance, theories such as anomie (Durkheim, Merton, and later, Robert Agnew) link crime to disparities between legitimate means and goals. Similarly, the Chicago School highlighted the influence of social environment and subcultures on crime, which is why aftercare emphasizes the social context of released individuals.

Ma'n Khalil Omar describes aftercare for released individuals as follows (Ma'n, 2006):

- Aftercare signifies a therapeutic complement to vocational rehabilitation within correctional and therapeutic institutions.
- It assists released individuals in adjusting to and reintegrating into society by providing employment, which is essential for successful reintegration.
- Ensures the released individual's satisfaction with their new reality.
- Fosters community acceptance without imposing criminal or deviant labels on the individual.
- Avoids reliance on force or coercion within aftercare institutions, instead offering a healing environment that provides diverse

psychological, social, and vocational support, free from social stigmatization, which could otherwise lead to renewed aggression toward society. Aftercare objectives include: (Mustafa, 2014):

2.1.1 Humanitarian and Social Objectives: In accordance with the minimum standards for the treatment of prisoners, both governmental and non-governmental aftercare agencies should work to socially reintegrate released individuals, helping them attain personal identification documents and basic necessities such as clothing, housing, and suitable employment, as well as support in social, educational, and health matters.

2.1.2 Security and Preventive Objectives: Recognizing society's role in an individual's deviance, it bears a degree of responsibility in facilitating their reintegration post-punishment, which is essential for the security and safety of both the nation and its citizens.

Furthermore, various studies (e.g., Irfan Zaidan, 1987; Mohamed Mahmoud Mustafa, 1994; Michelle Waul and Jeremy Travis, 2002) have highlighted the social and familial challenges faced by released individuals, including difficulty in finding employment, social stigma, and family rejection.

Reducing crime and recidivism requires a sound social and criminal policy founded on scientific principles and modern methods to protect society from crime and the criminal from self-destructive behaviors. Measures such as activating informal social controls, improving living standards, reducing unemployment, promoting equal opportunities, implementing alternative sanctions, and supporting rehabilitation and

reintegration will decrease recidivism and give meaningful purpose to post-release life (Mahdi, 2014).

Many countries have prioritized inmate care, as evidenced by the United States' efforts starting in the 18th century and later in other countries like Britain and France, which developed relevant legislation and institutions. International and UN conferences have also addressed these needs. Arab countries have not been isolated from these international efforts, holding conferences such as the Cairo Conference of 1964 and establishing national institutions, like those in Saudi Arabia, Syria, Egypt, and Algeria, that offer services for released prisoners and sometimes even their families.

This research aims to explore the aftercare experiences of Algeria, Egypt, and Lebanon.

3. The Algerian Experience in Supporting Released Prisoners

This section discusses the Algerian experience in providing post-release support, the entities responsible for this care, and the various aspects of post-release care. This analysis aims to benefit from the experiences of other nations that have advanced in this field.

International attention to post-release care for former prisoners has led to recommendations encouraging criminal justice systems to adopt community-based rehabilitation approaches outside of correctional facilities. Following this trend, Algerian legislation has embraced post-release care as a responsibility and obligation of the state toward released individuals, considering it a complement to in-prison rehabilitation and reform programs.

This approach is reflected in complementary regulations to the Prison Organization Law, the external services of prison management, and the Interministerial Committee for the Coordination of Prisoner Rehabilitation and Social Reintegration Activities (Jabbari, 2016).

3.1 External Services for Assisting and Supporting Released Individuals

These services were established by the Prison Organization and Social Reintegration of Prisoners Law, under Article 113. They are tasked with cooperating with judicial authorities, local entities, and other relevant state services and public institutions to implement social reintegration programs for released prisoners. Executive Decree No. 07/67, dated 19/02/2007, defines their organization and operations as follows:

- Supervising individuals under various statuses, particularly conditional release, partial liberty, or temporary suspension of sentence enforcement.
- Ensuring the continuity of social reintegration programs for released individuals, upon their request.
- Implementing specific measures to facilitate social reintegration for those in their care and providing necessary information to the judiciary to help in making appropriate decisions.
- Monitoring individuals subject to judicial control obligations, conducting social investigations, and supervising those sentenced to

alternative penalties (General Directorate of Prison Administration and Reintegration, 2020).

3.2 The Interministerial Committee for Coordinating Prisoner Rehabilitation and Social Reintegration Activities

Established by the Prison Organization and Social Reintegration Law (Article 21), this committee is tasked with addressing delinquency and organizing social defense. Under Article 21 of Law 04/05, it plays a dual role: preventive and therapeutic. Initially, it coordinates with various sectors to prevent crime and continues to work post-crime to improve and humanize prison conditions. It then prepares rehabilitation and reintegration programs, extending its role to post-release care and support for former prisoners (General Directorate of Prison Administration and Reintegration, 2020).

3.3 Algerian Civil Society Organizations

The role of civil society in post-release care remains limited, largely confined to support provided by associations such as the Algerian Red Crescent and certain charities aimed at helping those in need, rather than specialized support for released prisoners. An exception is the National Organization for the Care and Integration of Prisoners, established in 2003, which managed to reintegrate 1,200 former prisoners within five years by providing material and moral support, such as employment in security roles across various institutions. However, the organization faces significant challenges due to limited resources, such as those needed for school re-entry support (Al-Hiwar Daily, 2008).

4. . Examples of Post-Release Care Models in Some Arab Countries

4.1 The Egyptian Experience in Supporting Released Prisoners

Egypt's approach to social care for released prisoners extends beyond governmental efforts to include private and non-governmental institutions.

4.1.1 Government Efforts

Egypt's Ministry of Social Affairs adopts a "social defense" concept to shield society from deviance by certain groups. Social defense encompasses the care of prisoners, released individuals, and their families, aiming to prevent recidivism (Al-Fawzan, 2014). This is achieved through supervisory and guiding care, including vocational training for former prisoners and their families, as well as providing social support and assisting them in solving their problems in collaboration with associations.

Government agencies involved in post-release care include the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Ministry of Religious Endowments (offering financial assistance through alms or zakat), the Ministry of Housing (providing vocational training in construction), and the Ministry of Industry (training in fields like air-conditioning maintenance, driving, and metalwork) (Mostafa, 2014).

4.1.2 Private and Non-Governmental Organizations

4.1.2.1 Associations for the Care of Prisoners and Their Families

The first prisoner support association was established in Cairo in 1954. Today, there are about 19 associations across Egypt's provinces. The General Law No. 132 of 1964 regarding associations for prisoner support highlights their key roles:

- Supporting released prisoners by helping them return to their former jobs or find new ones, creating economic projects for self-sufficiency, providing financial aid, and establishing temporary housing for newly released individuals.
- Conducting studies and making recommendations on post-release care, addressing any legal, social, or financial challenges that may drive individuals back to crime.
- Coordinating with prison authorities to prepare inmates to be productive citizens.
- Raising public awareness of the issues faced by former prisoners.

4.1.2.2 The Federation of Prisoner Support Associations

Founded in 1969, this federation includes all prisoner support associations, aiming to achieve various objectives:

- Planning social care and crime prevention programs.
- Conducting research in the field and sharing findings with associated organizations.
- Setting standards for social services and their costs within the national policy framework.

- Developing technical and administrative training programs for association members to improve their performance.

4.1.2.3 The Hayat Foundation for Development and Community Integration: "Toward the Rehabilitation and Community Integration of Prisoners, with a Focus on Female Inmates"

Established in May 2015 by a team of eight individuals in Abu Hammad, where many former prisoners reside, this foundation operates with the support of the Drosos Foundation and was approved by Egypt's Ministry of Solidarity in August 2016. The project targets 300 former prisoners, focusing on women from various prisons across regions including Al-Sharqia,, Qalyubia, Beheira, and Alexandria. During the reporting period, services were provided to support, rehabilitate, and reintegrate 93 released individuals. The organization collaborates with various government and non-government entities, including the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Social Solidarity (Hayat Foundation for Development and Community Integration, 2019, p.3).

The foundation's objectives include providing comprehensive developmental services to underserved groups, with 75% women and 25% men, including former prisoners, to improve their social, health, and economic conditions. Additionally, the organization aims to facilitate the rehabilitation of former female prisoners and reduce the stigma against them. It is also committed to combating all forms of violence against women within the local community. The foundation has established partnerships with key stakeholders and signed a cooperation protocol with the General Directorate

for Post-Release Care and the Human Rights Sector within the Ministry of Interior to provide inclusive developmental services (Hayat Foundation for Development and Community Integration, 2019, p.3).

4.1.2.3 .1Activities Conducted by the Foundation:

As outlined in the fifth quarterly report from January 1 to July 30, 2019, the foundation carried out several activities for the benefit of released prisoners, including:

- Updating and sharing information with prison staff and administration on the outcomes of the reintegration program.
- Assessing and researching prisoners' needs to develop a transitional service plan post-release, arranging 2-3 pre-release meetings for discussions (facilitated through lawyer visits).

-Conducting home visits by social specialists to family members to develop family reunification plans, achieving 100 visits over three years.

Providing legal assistance services as needed to facilitate prison releases, with support provided for 100 cases over three years.

Table 1. Activities Conducted by Hayat Foundation

	Indicators Results / Outputs	Targeted	Achieved
	General Objective: improving the psychological and social well-being of male and female prisoners in the prisons of Port Said, Damanhour, Banha, and Zagazig to prevent recidivism and facilitate social reintegration, with a special focus on women.		
1	The percentage of former prisoners who joined the program and successfully reintegrated into society without reoffending, or who committed a	65%	96,7%

	less severe offense, during the project's lifespan		
Specific Objective 2: Provide psychological and social support, facilitate access to justice and legal services, and offer referrals for social and healthcare services.			
2-1	Number of released prisoners who received social support, access to justice, legal services, and referrals for social and healthcare services.	200	90cases over the past 7 months, with a total of 419 cases
Specific Objective 3: Improve the employment skills of released prisoners and place them in employment programs.			
1-3	The percentage of participants in on-the-job vocational training who secured jobs with stable salaries.	86%	A total of 230 cases participated in on-the-job training and secured stable employment, with the distribution as follows: 15 as hairdressers, 66 as cleaners, 15 as seamstresses, 25 in air conditioning, 10 in lantern making, 7 in leatherwork, and 3 in glass painting.
2-3	The percentage of income-generating project owners from the total number of participants in the project management skills training (Gatahead)	5 %	103individuals joined the training, with 42 cases divided into vegetable and fruit trade,

Models of Aftercare for Released Prisoners in Arab Countries

			sewing and embroidery projects, and poultry farming.
Result 3-3: Employing former prisoners or supporting them in establishing small businesses.			
	The percentage of prisoners able to manage their financial affairs (e.g., having a savings book, paying bills, etc.).	24	...%50 = 93/105 %161.2 during the report preparation.
Specific Objective 4 : Establish a care home in Sharqia to provide transitional accommodation for released female prisoners and their children when needed.			
	The number of women who stayed in the care homes monthly.	60 women annually.	Database reports: 44 cases.
Objective 6 : Encourage the community to reduce stigma.			
	The number of media activities to be conducted to reduce stigma.	conference2.	conference 1

Source: Hayat Foundation for Development and Social Integration, "Fifth Quarterly Report from January 1 to July 30, 2019," pp. 40-44.

4.2 Lebanese Experience:

Several attempts have emerged to adopt some models of aftercare, as seen in Lebanon, through services provided by official institutions such as the Social Welfare and the Social Assistance Office affiliated with the Ministry of Social Affairs, or through certain security institutions that

monitor the prisoner, or through private organizations such as the Union for the Protection of Juveniles, which is overseen by the Reform Institute and Observation Houses, focusing on the juvenile during their stay in the institute and after their release. It also involves the Coordination Committee for Prisoner and Prison Care Services. However, these efforts are considered insufficient in the field and require specialized human resources and capabilities. (Jafar Mohammed, 2003).

5. CONCLUSION

Through the presentation of various models of aftercare in Algeria, Egypt, and Lebanon, some experiences and efforts were highlighted. The following conclusions were reached:

- The institutions and agencies created strive to meet the specific needs of community protection and security by providing social, health, and psychological services to those released and others, with the aim of reducing recidivism.
- Some services focus on assisting women, as they are more vulnerable due to social and physical weaknesses and stigma, which was a prominent goal of the Egyptian experience, alongside the goal of reducing recidivism.

Accordingly, aftercare in Arab countries needs a project and a plan based on scientific principles and comprehensive studies that give great importance to the pre-release and post-release phases, as well as the characteristics, classifications, problems, and needs of those released. Aftercare also requires additional material resources

and cooperation between various sectors of society, coordination between governmental and non-governmental agencies, and active participation from civil society. It also demands a specialized and integrated human team to achieve the goals of aftercare. The focus should not only be on guidance and advice but also on eliminating the root causes of crime, whether material or moral.

5. Bibliography List :

1. Abd al-Fattah, Ali Ahmed. (1988). *An Arab model for juvenile aftercare*. Riyadh: Naif Arab Academy for Security Sciences.
2. Al-Fawzan, Mohammed Bin Badr. (2014). *Prison, detention, and control regulations: A comparative study*. Riyadh: Law and Economics Library.
3. Al-Hiwar Daily. (2008, September 10). *We succeeded in reintegrating 1200 prisoners and seek to establish an Arab organization to care for prisoners*. (Ali Hamdani).
4. Ben Ubayd, Samira. (2017, October). *Post-release stress and the role of aftercare in reintegrating released prisoners into society*. *Journal of Islamic Sciences and Civilization*, 6, 381.
5. Directorate General for Prison Administration and Reintegration. (2020, January 11). Retrieved from dgapr.mjustice.dz
6. Hayat Foundation for Development and Social Integration. (2019). *Fifth quarterly report from January 1 to July 30, 2019* (p. 3). Hayat Foundation for Development and Social Integration.
7. Iskak, Ahmed Mohammed. (2009). *Summary in the science of punishment and crime*. Algeria: University Press Bureau.
8. Jabbari, Mohammed. (2016). *Aftercare for released prisoners and its impact on reducing their dangerousness*. *Afāq Journal*, 4, 110.
9. Jaafar, Mohammed. (2003). *The disease of crime: Policy, prevention, and treatment*. Beirut: Majd University Institution for Studies, Publishing, and Distribution.

10. Mahdi, Ahmed. (2014, June). *The role of aftercare for released prisoners in the success of criminal policy*. *Ansanah Journal for Research and Studies*, 9, 233.
11. Musa, Mohammed. (2016). Amman: University Book Center.
12. Mustafa, Mohammed Maher. (2014). *Rehabilitation of accused and convicted individuals as victims of terrorism (Vol. 1)*. Amman: Academics for Publishing and Distribution.
13. S. V. (2013). *Aftercare service: Juvenile justice bulletin*. U.S. Department of Justice.
14. Umar, Mohammed Khalid. (2006). *Professional specialization in the field of aftercare*. Riyadh: Naif Arab Academy for Security Sciences.