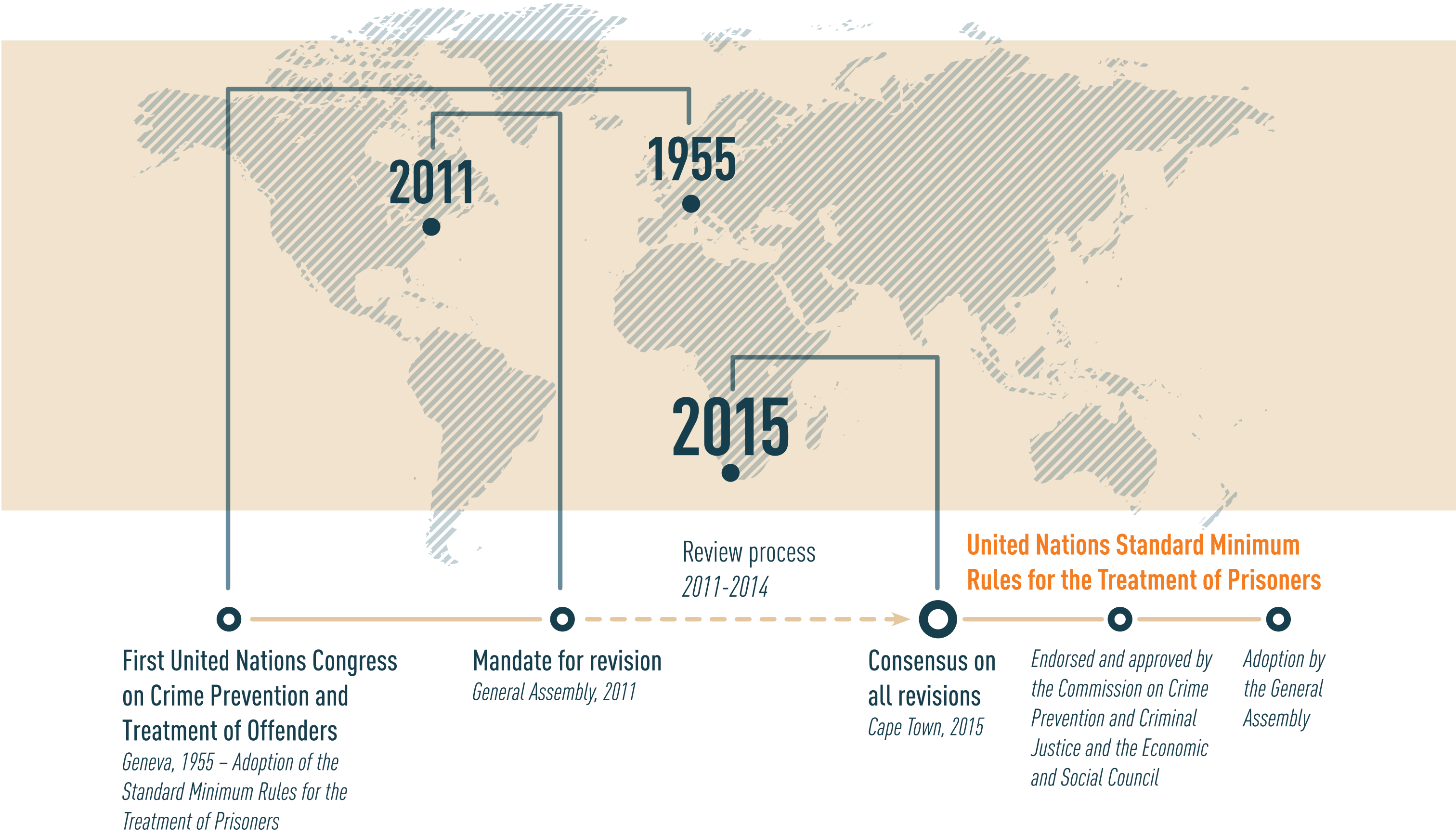


The Nelson Mandela Rules

The United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners



Nelson Mandela

“It is said that no one truly knows a nation until one has been inside its jails. A nation should not be judged by how it treats its highest citizens, but its lowest ones.”

Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela



Nelson Mandela International Day

To honour the legacy of Nelson Mandela, who spent 27 years in prison, the rules are known as **the Nelson Mandela Rules**.

- Promote humane conditions of imprisonment
- Raise awareness about prisoners being a continuous part of society
- Value the work of prison staff as an important social service





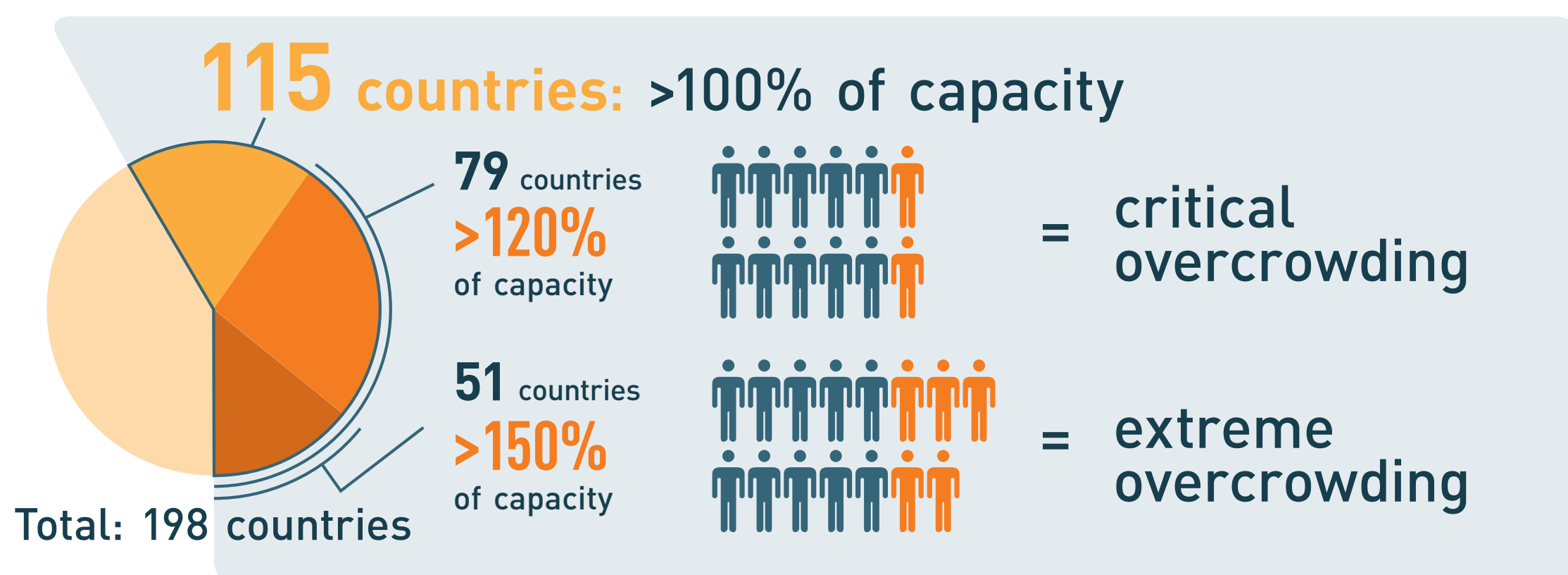
A crisis in prisons

A large number of prison systems around the world are at a stage of crisis, with serious effects on prisoners, their families and societies as a whole.

The ultimate purpose of imprisonment—the protection of society from crime—is undermined in prisons, which are overstretched and poorly managed.



Prison overcrowding



Source: United Nations Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (E/CN.15/2016/10, 2016).

Core challenges

Continuous growth of prison populations and prison overcrowding

Severe (financial and socio-economic) costs of imprisonment

Failure to ensure safe, secure and humane custody of prisoners

Global Prison Challenges Programme

As custodian of the Nelson Mandela Rules, UNODC is mandated to provide technical assistance to Member States in the field of penal reform. In order to further enhance its technical assistance following the adoption of the Nelson Mandela Rules, a new **Global Programme on Addressing Prison Challenges** has been launched.

Focus areas

UNODC will focus its technical assistance on three strategic areas:



“In our efforts to make societies more resilient to crime and to promote social cohesion..., we cannot disregard those in prison. We must remember that prisoners continue to be part of society, and must be treated with respect due to their inherent dignity as human beings.”

Yury Fedotov, Executive Director, UNODC