

ACTION REVIEW
2021

National Mechanism
for the Prevention of Torture
and other Cruel, Inhuman
or Degrading Treatment or Punishment



*National Mechanism
for the Prevention of Torture
and other Cruel, Inhuman
or Degrading Treatment or Punishment*



Review on the Mechanism's Action
for the year 2021

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2. Introductory Note



Respect for human rights and the total prohibition and abstinence from practice and actions that are equivalent to torture and inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment are the constituent elements of a Rule of Law.

The right of a person not to be subjected to torture and to inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, is a right fully protected in every democratic society and the only right that does not admit of any limitation, characterized by international law as a crime against humanity.

In this context and in view of the continued restrictions during 2021, due to the ongoing pandemic of COVID-19, our actions as the National Mechanism for the Prevention of Torture have focused on safeguarding the rights of all persons deprived or likely to be deprived of their liberty.

Therefore, we continued our visits to places where people under restriction live or are accommodated, to prevent any reductions in their rights due to the pandemic, to protect them from any inhuman or degrading treatment and to maintain appropriate and dignified living conditions in these places.

Focusing on preventing and safeguarding the rights of persons deprived of their freedom, we are in open dialogue with the competent

authorities. In this direction, in November 2021, we proceeded, on the basis of the Commissioner's competences as the National Mechanism for the Prevention of Torture and the National Human Rights Institution, in the publication of the Guide of Prisoner's First Contact, in collaboration with the Association of Prisoners and Released Persons, a useful information tool of newly admitted prisoners on the rights, obligations and rules of safe cohabitation in prison.

This Guide is essentially a tool for informing newly-entered prisoners about their rights, obligations and the rules for staying safely inside the prison. It is written in simple and comprehensible language and is intended to inform new inmates so that they are as prepared and informed as possible regarding the rules and conditions prevailing within the Central Prisons.



Maria Stylianou-Lottides

Commissioner for Administration
and the Protection of Human Rights

National Preventive Mechanism


3. Legal Framework/Responsibilities


In 2009, the Ombudsman's competences were further strengthened, with his/her selection as the National Agency for the Prevention of Torture.


Specifically, the Republic of Cyprus, in addition to ratifying the United Nations Convention against Torture, also ratified the Optional Protocol with Law L. 2(III)/2009, of March 27, 2009. The purpose of the Optional Protocol was to create a system regular visits, at international and national level, to places of deprivation or restriction of personal freedom, with the main aim to prevent torture.


At the international level, a ten-member Subcommittee on the Prevention of Torture was created, in which member states must allow visits to places of deprivation of liberty and provide all necessary information, while the Subcommittee has the task of advising and supports national prevention mechanisms.


At the national level, the National Mechanism for the Prevention of Torture was established, which was entrusted to the Ombudsman, due to the independence of the Institution. In particular, based on Law L. 2(III)/2009:


 The Ombudsman is designated as the national visiting Body and is authorized to freely visit, at regular intervals, the places of detention, with or without written notification, in order to check compliance with the provisions of the Convention. During his/her visits, the Ombudsman is entitled to have free access to all premises and facilities of each place of detention and to have confidential one-on-one interviews with any person he/she deems appropriate.

 The competent State Authorities are required to provide the Ombudsman with the information referred to in the Protocol.

-  The Ombudsman may submit, to each Authority responsible for a place of detention, recommendations and reports, while subsequently the competent Authority must submit a report on the measures taken on the basis of the report or recommendations submitted to it.

-  The Ombudsman is authorized to submit suggestions for improving the legislation and to express opinions in the House of Representatives during the examination of relevant bills.


-  The Ombudsman must bring to the attention of the Attorney General of the Republic and the Independent Authority to Investigate Allegations and Complaints against the Police, any allegations of human rights violations by detainees.


-  It is foreseen that the Ombudsman has the necessary staff in accordance with the provisions of the Laws on the Commissioner for Administration or any additional staff. The qualifications and terms of service of the officials are determined in Regulations approved by the Council of Ministers and the House of Representatives.


In 2020 following the Ombudsman's initiative and efforts to align with the recommendations of the Committee for the Prevention of Torture of the Council of Europe (CPT), the House of Representatives passed Law L. 3(III)/2020 which amended Law 2(III)/2009 and the Ombudsman may now conduct visits freely, unhindered and unannounced to any place or places of detention of his/her own choice.


It is therefore noted that until the application of the above-mentioned amendment of Law 2(III)/2009, all visits by the Ombudsman and/or the Officers of his/her Office under his/her authority as the National Mechanism for the Prevention of Torture, without exception, are again carried out freely in practice and without the prior notification/information of the competent authorities.


4. Main Actions in 2021


 On March 3, 2021, a visit was made to the Aradippou Police Station.


 Intervention dated March 3, 2021, regarding the detention of a third-country national in the Aradippou Police Detention Center, until his return to his country of origin.

 Intervention dated April 20, 2021, in relation to taking measures to deal with the spread of the COVID-19 disease at the Athalassa Psychiatric Hospital.


 In June 2021, an Officer of the Office participated in a series of online meetings regarding the creation of an international training center for the National Mechanisms for the Prevention of Torture (with the support of the Council of Europe), in order to train the mechanisms involved, for training and specialization staff for more efficient visit/survey methodologies and exchange of information/experiences.


 Intervention dated June 26, 2021, on the occasion of the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture.


 On June 29, 2021, Officers of the Office participated in a meeting held at the Directorate of Mental Health Services at the Athalassa Hospital, for the amendment of the Law on Psychiatric Hospitalization.


 In September 2021, an Officer of the Office participated in a web conference organized by the European NPM Forum

and the European Court of Human Rights Enforcement Division regarding the role of National Mechanisms for the Prevention of Torture in the effective implementation of the judgments of the European Court of Human Rights and the recommendations of the European Commission for the Prevention of Torture (CPT) and addressing police ill-treatment and ensuring effective investigations.

 *On September 20, 2021, a visit was made to the Detention Center for Prohibited Immigrants in Mennogeia (HOKAM).*

 *On November 8, 2021, a Press Conference was held during which the Actions of the National Mechanism for the Prevention of Torture and the National Mechanism for Monitoring Forced Returns, as well as the Guide of Prisoner's First Contact, were presented.*

 *Report dated December 31, 2021, regarding the visit dated September 20, 2021 to the Detention Area for Prohibited Immigrants in Mennogeia (HOKAM).*

 *Throughout 2021, the Commissioner and Officers of her Office had a series of meetings with the Lawyer of the Association for the Protection of the Rights of Prisoners and Released Persons.*

5. Major Reports & Interventions

Ex-officio Intervention regarding the detention of a third-country national in the Aradippou Police Detention Center, until his return to his country of origin¹

The reason for the ex-officio Intervention was complaints about the administrative detention of a third-country national for almost four months, in the Aradippou Police Detention Center, until his return to his country of origin and pending examination of the application he had submitted for asylum.

From the visit, it was established that the person in question was in a very bad psychological state, which had been further shaken due to his prolonged detention in Aradippou Detention Center.

As noted in the Intervention, based on the Police Chief's Directives, all deportable third-country nationals should be transferred to the Detention Center for Prohibited Immigrants in Mennogeia, unless they are to be deported soon and especially within 48 hours, except in exceptional cases and after the approval of the Assistant Chief.

Therefore, it was pointed out that the Committee for the Prevention of Torture, in its Report in relation to its visit to Cyprus in 2017, had underlined that Police Stations are not suitable places for hosting prisoners of third-country nationals and efforts should be made to the reduction to a minimum of the period of time they remain in such facilities.

In view of the above, as well as the relevant jurisprudence of the ECtHR, it was noted that the detention of a person, namely an administrative prisoner, for a long period of time in Police Detention Centers, which

¹ AYT. 3/2021 & EMΠΤ. 1/2021 dated March 3, 2021

have not been declared Prisons and do not meet the minimum standards for decent treatment, does not consistent with the provisions of the Constitution and international standards.

Furthermore, the detention of the person in question in Police Detention Centers was not the least burdensome or the mildest measure possible, but a prohibited measure, given that detention beyond 48 is not permitted.

At the same time, the emotional burden of the person in question, which had worsened due to his prolonged detention in the specific area, caused concern, which may have made him a vulnerable person who needed immediate and specialized support.

Based on the above, a recommendation was made to the Minister of Justice and Public Order and the Chief of Police to immediately provide the person concerned with the appropriate specialized support and to take all appropriate measures to prevent any unpleasant incident, as well as to remove of his detention at the Aradippou Police Detention Center.

Compliance

After the submission of the above ex-officio Intervention, the Minister of Justice and Public Order mobilized immediately to implement the above suggestions and the person concerned was transferred to HOKAM within 48 hours. The Police sent a proposal to the Ministry to amend the relevant legislative framework in order to also allow the detention of asylum seekers at HOKAM.

Intervention in relation to taking measures to deal with the spread of the disease COVID-19 at the Athalassa Psychiatry²

The reason for the Intervention were the reports/complaints in relation to the living conditions of the patients of the Acute Men's Clinic at the Athalassa Hospital.

Specifically, relatives of a patient who was hospitalized at the Athalassa Psychiatry in March 2021, on the basis of a court order, addressed to the Office and submitted a complaint regarding his confinement in the clinic in question and, in particular, about his living conditions, as well as about the strict measures taken to prevent the spread of the virus, after a case was detected in the specific area.

As noted, in times of emergency it is inevitably required to take legal measures to prevent the further spread of the coronavirus and in places where people are under restraint. The competent authorities are obliged to take, at the same time, actions that ensure the respect of the rights of these individuals, especially in psychiatric facilities, where the patients are already in a state of incarceration, due to compulsory hospitalization, which may lead to a recurrence of the mental illness.

It was also pointed out that the measures of physical distancing and avoidance of crowding between individuals, which the World Health Organization sets as a basic measure of protection against the coronavirus, obviously cannot be applied in the case of the Athalassa Hospital, due to the inappropriateness of the outdated building facilities.

Furthermore, any measures that may be taken in the context of trying to limit the spread of the coronavirus in the hospital premises, should be for a limited period of time and with a view to protecting the rights

² ΕΜΠΒ 2/2021 & Α/Π 564/2021, dated 20 April 2021

of patients, so that they do not result in inhumane or degrading treatment. The "locked doors" measure violates articles 3 and 14 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), while the ban on the use of mobile phones and internet access violates article 10 of the same Convention.

In the Intervention, after reference was made to the protection and prevention measures to deal with and manage confirmed or suspected cases of COVID-19 (Hospital Operating Framework in relation to the disease) and to the recommendations of the Committee for the Prevention of Torture of the Council of Europe (CPT) on protection of the rights of persons under restraint, the following recommendations were included:

- The management of the Athalassa Hospital to ensure that every mental patient placed in confinement due to the virus (quarantine) is confined to conditions consistent with respect for human dignity and that the manner of applying the restrictive measures does not subject the sufferers to a test that exceeds the unavoidable level of suffering associated with the restraint and the health of the mentally ill patient is adequately safeguarded.
- To ensure as much as possible contact with people every day. The management of the Hospital should ensure that it immediately finds ways so that the people who are in quarantine do not lose human contact, given that during the confinement stage (restriction to the quarantine rooms) they cannot socialize with their relatives or with other residents, the fact that which further worsens their already burdened health.
- The absence of contact with the outside world and the ban on visitors should be compensated "by increased access to alternative means of communication (such as the telephone, video calls, or access to the Internet).

- The right of daily access to an open space for at least one hour should be ensured in every way.
- Patients receive full information about any measures being taken to stop the spread of the COVID-19 disease.

The Intervention was submitted to the Directorate of Mental Health Services, within the Commissioner's mandate as the National Mechanism for the Prevention of Torture and Other Forms of Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment or Punishment and as the National Human Rights Institution, with the recommendation that the above be implemented guidelines for the protection of human rights, in the context of taking measures to limit the spread of the coronavirus.



Intervention on the occasion of the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture³

In the Intervention, it was emphasized that the unwavering protection of the right of a person not to be subjected to torture and to inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, as an inalienable characteristic of every human being, and the absolute prohibition of such treatment or conduct, constitute the most "healthy" element of a democratic society.

In addition, a point of reference for a state of law and what distinguishes democratic from authoritarian regimes, is respect for human rights, namely, the complete prohibition and abstinence from practices that constitute torture and inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Therefore, and in order to strengthen the legal certainty that should be enjoyed by all citizens residing in the territory of the Republic of Cyprus, it becomes an absolute necessity to closely and systematically monitor places of detention or confinement to prevent torture and other forms of cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment. And this is because, any deviations in matters of torture and inhuman or degrading treatment cannot be justified under any circumstances, nor can the principle of proportionality be applied.

³ ЕМПТ 3/2021 dated 26 June 2021

Report dated 31 December 2021, regarding the visit on 20 September 2021 to the Menogeia Detention Centre for Irregular Migrants (MDC)⁴

The Visit took place in the context of Articles 4 and 5 of Law 2 (III) / 2009, by which Cyprus ratified the Optional Protocol to the United Nations Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, which they provide to the Commissioner for Administration and the Protection of Human Rights, the right to conduct freely, unhindered and unannounced visits to places where they are deprived or possibly deprived of their liberty.

In the Report was noted, inter alia, that, in accordance with international standards, in places where persons are deprived of their liberty for an extended period under foreign law, attention should be paid to their design and configuration "...to avoid as much as possible any sense of a penitent environment..." and a variety of activities should be provided to residents (outdoor exercise, access to radio / television, newsletters / magazines, board games, etc.). The longer people are kept, the more developed the activities provided to them should be.

In this case, however, several people lived in MDC for a long time, with all the subsequent cases that this brings to their mental health, but the creative activities in MDC have been suspended due to the pandemic, while the access of the residents to the open courtyard area is limited to one and a half hours per day.

In view of all the findings from the visit, the following suggestions were submitted:

- Examine the possibility of restarting, in compliance with all necessary health protocols, all or part of the creative activities that are no longer implemented at all and

⁴ E.M.Π. 2/13/3, dated December 31, 2021

- Promote the implementation of the CPT's recommendation in the courtyard time of tenants, so that residents now have unobstructed / free access to the outdoors during the day or at least more hours than today, by receiving the necessary security and protection measures to be yarded per wing.
- Installation in all of the wings, separate boxes for submission of complaints to my Office and relevant information to the residents in MDC.
- Take the necessary measures so that the residents of MDC can meet with their relatives in a safe environment that will not refer to conditions of incarceration and imprisonment.
- Consultation with the authorities of the Athalassa Hospital for the end of the suffering of the people who are forced to go to the Hospital every day for the administration of substitutes, so that these substances are administered by the medical staff of MDC.
- Immediate repair of plumbing in the bathrooms.
- Provision of all personal hygiene products to all residents at MDC.
- Accelerate, if not already done, the installation of new water coolers in all wings.
- Repair / replacement of the TV in the women's wing as well as any entertainment devices that are defective / damaged.
- Update of the announcements on the wing plates.
- Promotion of the decoration of the common areas to all of the wings, possibly with murals / paintings.
- Appropriate consultation with the Aliens and Immigration Service and / or other Services so that the persons transferred to MDC always have their personal belongings.

Compliance

After the submission of the Report, the following actions were taken to implement our recommendations:

- Purchase and installation of four new 32-inch televisions
- Purchase and installation of four new complaint boxes to our Office
- Update of the announcements on the relevant boards
- Under the guidance of the painting teacher, the prisoners, volunteers and police officers curated and artistically decorated the walls in all the Wards.
- Prisoners have the possibility, if they wish and the orderly operation of the Detention Center allows, to use the outdoor exercise area for a longer period of time.
- The Police promoted the recruitment of a psychiatrist, a social worker and a trainer.
- The Police, in consultation with the Mental Health Services, started the preparation of a protocol for the administration of substitute substances at the Mennogeia Center, so that the prisoners are not transferred for this purpose to the Athalassa Hospital.
- Installation of new water coolers.
- Electrical and plumbing problems that existed were repaired.
- Strict remarks were made to the catering company to improve the quality of the food.
- The Police created a QR Code with which prisoners can access their rights and obligations via their mobile phone, in all available languages.



6. Awareness Campaigns

Press Conference presenting the Actions of the National Mechanism for the Prevention of Torture and the National Mechanism for Monitoring Forced Returns, as well as the Detainee's First Contact Guide

On 5 November 2021, the Commissioner held a press conference, during which she presented the actions of the National Mechanism for the Prevention of Torture and the Forced Returns Monitoring Mechanism.



During the press conference, the Commissioner referred to her work and actions as the National Mechanism for the Prevention of Torture, especially in view of the adversities and difficulties that arose in 2020 with the pandemic of the COVID-19 virus, which did not act as a brake on the continuation and, in in some cases, in the intensification of visits to places where people under restriction live or are accommodated.

Indicatively, the Commissioner referred to the visits to the Temporary Reception and Accommodation Center for Immigrants "Pournara" in Kokkinotrimithia, to the visits to the Athalassa Psychiatric Hospital, to the visits to the Paphos and Aradippou Police Detention Centers as well as to the more than ten visits to the Central Prisons.

Furthermore, the amendment of the relevant law regarding the operational framework of the National Prevention Mechanism was highlighted, where in collaboration with the Ministry of Justice, compliance was achieved with the recommendations of the Committee for the Prevention of Torture of the Council of Europe so that the Commissioner can now carry out visits freely, unhindered and sudden and unannounced to any place or places of detention of his own choice without prior intimation to the competent authorities, which in practice had certainly been adopted in many cases.



In relation to her responsibilities as the Forced Returns Monitoring Mechanism, the Commissioner stated that the role of her Office concerns the recording of those taken during the return operation, without intervening in any way except and exceptionally with recommendations when a serious violation of the human rights of returnees is observed. Subsequently and when deemed appropriate, our relevant recommendations are submitted to the competent Authority.

Next, the Commissioner referred to the Guide of Prisoner's First Contact that was prepared in collaboration with the Association for the Protection of the Rights of Prisoners & Released Persons and the Lawyer of the Association presented the content and purpose of the Guide.



Finally, the Commissioner handed over to the Minister of Justice and Public Order Mrs. Stefi Drakou and to Police Officer A' Mr. Andreas Angelidis, her Reports on the National Mechanism for the Prevention

of Torture and the Forced Returns Monitoring Mechanism, as well as the Guide of Prisoner's First Contact.



Human Rights Information Campaign

The Commissioner for Administration and the Protection of Human Rights, in view of the 30th anniversary of the introduction of the institution of the Commissioner for Administration in the Republic of Cyprus, conducted an Awareness Campaign on Human Rights.

The starting point for this particular campaign was December 3, 2021, as the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, a short video/spot regarding the rights of persons with disabilities was seen and published.

The campaign then culminated with the release of a video/spot on December 10, 2021, the date of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948, which has been established as World Human Rights Day.

The video/spot is posted on the website of the Office and on social media ([facebook](#) and [twitter](#)) as well as on the [YouTube](#) account of our Office and was shown free of charge by the television stations, so that the wider public has the opportunity to be informed about their human rights and how these can be protected and promoted through the institution of the Commissioner.

In this particular video/spot, the 30-year course of its institution is shown, through all its responsibilities, reminding of the need to protect and safeguard all human rights under any circumstances, as the institution of control of the observance of legality, but also as the pre-eminent independent body defending the human rights of all persons without exception without any discrimination.

The mentioned video/spot was also separated into individual pieces, based on each of the Commissioner's mandates, including her

mandate as the National Mechanism for the Prevention of Torture, which was also aired free of charge by television stations and posted on the [Office's website](#) and social media (facebook and twitter) as well as on our Office's YouTube account.



7. Guide of Prisoner's First Contact

The [Guide of Prisoner's First Contact](#) has been drawn up on the basis of the provisions of existing legislation and regulations in force as well as the experience gained through contact with people who have remained in custody, either as undertrials or as convicts in Central Prisons and taking into account the information and opinions of the Directorate of Central Prisons which had been requested.

It aims to inform the newly-entered prisoners about their rights, obligations and the rules of staying safely inside the prison. It is written in simple and comprehensible language and is intended to inform new inmates as fully as possible so that they are as prepared and informed as possible regarding the rules and conditions prevailing within the Central Prisons.

Indicatively, with the Guide of Prisoner's First Contact, information is provided to newly arriving prisoners, in as comprehensible and simple a form as possible, regarding, among other things, the Laws and Regulations of Central Prisons, the Classification Committee and the separation of Prisoners into Wards, the prison premises and their daily schedule and living within them, their right to lodge a complaint with the Commissioner, as well as visits by the National Mechanism for the Prevention of Torture, exit permits and visits, disciplinary/criminal offenses within the Prison, the Parole Board, etc..

The Guide of Prisoner's First Contact has already been translated into English and will soon be translated into other languages understood by foreign prisoners of the Central Prisons, such as French, Arabic, Russian, etc. and is already posted on the website of our Office, where anyone interested can refer to download or print it.

GUIDE OF PRISONER'S FIRST CONTACT



Σύνδεσμος Προστασίας
των Δικαιωμάτων
των Φυλακισμένων
& Στήριξης Αποφυλακισθέντων

1. Laws and Regulations of Central Prisons

The fundamental Constitutional Rights and Rights under the European Convention on Human Rights apply to all persons inside and outside the Prison. Consequently, the Articles of Cyprus Constitution and the European Convention on Human Rights remain in force and effect throughout detention within the Central Prisons with the exceptions mentioned in their own text.

In addition to the above, of relevance are the Council of Europe's 2006 "European Prison Rules", Recommendation REC 2006, as amended in 2020, and the United Nations Minimum Basic Rules on the Treatment of Prisoners (Mandela Rules) of 2015.

It is worth noting that the Commissioner for Administration and Protection of Human Rights as the National Torture Prevention Mechanism regularly makes unannounced visits to the Central Prisons during which she inspects the premises, has confidential interviews with prisoners and makes reports and/or interventions with recommendations to the competent authorities.

More specifically, in the Central Prisons are applicable and in force the Prison Law of 1996, 62(I)/1996, and the Prison Regulations CDP 121/97 with amendments made from time to time.

2. Transfer from the Court to the Central Prisons

If a prison sentence is imposed, which will apply immediately, then the person is transferred, accompanied by the Police, from the Courtroom to a holding cell, in the building of the Court, waiting until the vehicle comes to transport him or her to the Central Prisons.

From this point on the person is considered in custody, and most of the times, he or she will be given the right to communicate with his/her own people, family or friends, before he or she is asked to surrender his/her phone and other personal property to the authorities.

In the Court, any personal belongings, of the convicted person, are handed over to the Police, which will take them to the Central Prison, where they will be stored in the warehouse and returned to the convicted person upon his release from prison.

The prisoner, when admitted to the Central Prisons, undergoes an individual search and a search of his property, in a private setting by a person of the same sex.

The prisoner, according to the practice followed in the Central Prisons, is not entitled to have anything in possession except the clothes he or she wears on the day of transfer to the Central Prison. Anything else can be purchased from the prison canteen (for example hygienic items) and clothes can be sent to him/her by one of his friends or relatives. In case there is no one to send clothes to the prisoner, then s/he can carry with him/her and deliver a bag with various clothes that will be given to him/her after his or her transfer to the Central Prisons.

3. Appeal of the Conviction and / or Sentence

It is important for the person to know that he or she has a Constitutional Right to appeal both the Conviction and the Sentence within 10 days of the day the sentence was imposed (decision day). The 10-day deadline is strictly enforced by the courts, meaning if the prisoner does not appeal within the 10-day deadline will lose the right to appeal with some specific exceptions.

The appeal can be filed either by a lawyer or by the person himself or herself even from inside the prison with simple grounds of appeal.

4. Classification Committee

The Classification Committee, under the relevant legislation, consists of the Director of the Central Prisons, the Prison's High-Ranking

Officers, the Teacher in charge of the Prison School Program, the Prison Social Officer, and the Prison Psychologist.

The Classification Committee is responsible for the evaluation of prisoners, their placement in the appropriate living quarters / wings, the assignment of appropriate work to them, the inclusion of prisoners in the Open Prison, the implementation of the house arrest measure, the granting to them of exit / leave permits to visit their family, and in general for assisting the Central Prisons Director in the formulation and implementation of the whole rehabilitation and reintegration of prisoners. The Classification Committee shall be in quorum when at least five of its members are present.

The Classification Committee shall, in accordance with the practice followed, have for each prisoner a card with his number, the sentence imposed and the day of his release.

5. Detainees pending trial

A detainee pending trial is a person who has been sent to the Central Prisons on the order of the Court and has no date of release since he is not yet serving a sentence. The detainee will remain in custody until the next time s/he appears before a court where it will be decided whether to continue his or her detention.

A detainee has the right to meet with his relatives daily for up to 1 hour, in the presence of a member of the Police, and is entitled to have as much communication as necessary with his/her lawyers for the purpose of preparing his/her defence.

The detainees remain in their own separate wing, if the premises or existing facilities permit it, and have their own daily schedule unless they wish to join another wing together with convicts, in which case they will have the appropriate daily schedule. For these changes detainees must make a request to the Director of Central Prisons. It

should be noted that, as a rule, the detainees are not held in the same wings as the convicts.

The detainees have no obligation to work unless they, themselves, request to work.

6. Convicts / Prisoners

A convict is the person convicted by the Court of Justice and serving a predetermined sentence imposed on him / her. Once s/he has served his or her sentence, the prisoner is released and cannot remain in the Central Prisons.

His or her release, upon serving his or her sentence comes no later than noon on the last day of his prison sentence.

A prisoner who has been sentenced to prison for not paying a financial debt, when he or she pays it to the Prison Authorities is released.

7. Aliens / Foreigners

All detainees / convicts, regardless of ethnic origin, enjoy the same protection and should be treated equally before the regulations and laws of the Republic of Cyprus.

The difference for foreigners concerns the procedures that can be applied to continue serving their sentences in their country of origin and to deport them.

It is important to note that orders for the expulsion of prisoners may be subject to judicial review through an Administrative Appeal to the Administrative Court, which should, in any case, be filed within 75 days of the day on which the prisoner became aware of the decision to expel him or her.

✿ *Transfers within the European Union*

The Law (67(I)/2014) and the Framework Decision 2008/909/JHA established a new procedure for transferring and serving the sentence of a European convict in his/her country of origin or in his/her country of permanent residence or in any other country requested, within the European Union. The criterion now is whether serving his sentence in another country will help his social reintegration.

✿ *Transfers Outside the European Union*

For this type of transfers, of relevance are the reports found within the Immigration and Migration Law, Chapter 105, but also the general references in the [United Nations Handbook on the International Transfer of Sentenced Persons](#).

8. Medical Check-up / Examination

Immediately, after the admission of a prisoner to the Central Prisons, a competent medical officer will carry out an examination to determine the health status of the prisoner. Also, a team of mental health experts, of the Department of Prisons, will carry out appropriate tests to evaluate the mental health of the prisoner.

Please note that prisoners have the right of access to medical services.

A prisoner may request to be examined by a doctor of his or her own choice. Such an examination must receive the approval of the Director of the Central Prisons and it will be carried out in the presence of the medical officer of the Central Prisons, during the hours of service of the medical officer.

If the prisoner is required to be treated by a private clinic and if the prisoner so wishes, with the permission of the Director of the Central Prisons, the prisoner shall be referred to the private clinic. The costs of the private clinic are borne by the prisoner.

In the event of a serious illness or serious injury of the detainee or his/her transfer and stay, for this reason, in a hospital for treatment, the nearest relative or any other person named by the detainee, is notified immediately.

Mental health issues are also handled within the Central Prison by the in house psychiatrist but if a person needs specific psychiatric treatment, they can be sent to the psychiatric hospital as mentioned in the Psychiatric Care Law [77(I)/1997].

9. Separation / Assignment into Wings

There are different types of wings in the Central Prisons:

- *Wing for Detainees Pending Trial:*

The detainees are, as a rule, kept separate from the rest of the prisoners, but the possibility exists that there will be some contact or communication with the prisoners.

- *Reception Wing for new prisoners:*

The new prisoners, with their admission into the Central Prisons, are held in a separate wing, called, the reception wing of new prisoners, until some necessary procedures are completed. This time gives new prisoners the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the environment and life of the prison.

- *Young Prisoners' Wing – under the age of 21 years.*

- *Mentally Disturbed Prisoners Wing.*

- *Sexual Offenders Wing.*

- *High Security Wing.*

- *Women's Wing*

The numbering of wings here does not reflect the actual numbering of the wings in the Central Prisons.

10. Personal Property / Personal Items

When a prisoner is admitted to the Central Prisons all his/her personal belongings are handed over to a prison officer for safekeeping, such as money, clocks, chains, rings, telephones, etc.

Anything that can be considered an object of value stays out of prison.

At the request of the prisoner, and with the approval of the Director of the Central Prisons, a prisoner may carry with him/her a wristwatch, a neck chain with a cross or other religious symbol and the married prisoners shall be entitled to bring with them their wedding ring.

11. Prison Cells

In all wings there is an installed central heating system / central air conditioning and ventilation system.

The wings have cells. If conditions permit, each prisoner must have his own individual cell. Where this is not possible, they reside in wards with a maximum number of 5 persons, each.

Each cell is equipped with a double bunkbed, up and down, as well as outlets to supply the prisoners with electricity.

Also, in the cells and wards, sunlight is provided, through windows, as well as good ventilation. The size of the cells is such as to give to each prisoner sufficient space for movement.

In the cell there is, usually, a desk and a clothing cabinet with two (2) compartments, one for each prisoner.

Anything else in an electrical appliance, but also items such as pillows, quilts, duvets, etc., can be purchased from the canteen by any prisoner.

12. Hygiene Areas

Each Wing has 24-hour access to hot water, for the personal hygiene of prisoners, to sanitary areas and to drinking water.

13. The Right of Communication outside the Prison

In the Central Prisons there are telephone booths in which prisoners have unlimited access daily from 08:00 a.m. to 20:30 p.m.

For an inmate to use the phone, s/he must first buy a telecard, from the prison canteen. No free phone is provided.

The prisoner may send unlimited number of letters to family members, associates and friends after submitting these letters for inspection to the competent prison officer. The prisoner may, also, receive letters from people he / she associated with, others, without any restriction on the number.

The content of telephone calls or letters is checked if the Director of Central Prisons considers that this is necessary for security reasons or for any other legitimate, reasonable, or lawful reason.

However, letters sent by the prisoner to his/her lawyer, the Attorney General, the Commissioner for Administration and the Protection of Human Rights, the Council of Prisons, the Council of Europe Commission for the Prevention of Torture and Other Forms of Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and the European Court of Human Rights are sent without delay and are not opened.

Communication can also be done additionally by using SKYPE through the internet.

14. Submission of a complaint to the Commissioner for Administration and the Protection of Human Rights

The Commissioner for Administration and the Protection of Human Rights is the eminently independent incumbent who deals over time with the promotion and protection of the rights of prisoners. The Commissioner's firm position is that anyone who is deprived of his personal liberty in any form of detention or imprisonment is entitled to respect for his inherent dignity.

The prisoner may, by letter, at any time of his detention, contact the Commissioner complaining of any violation of his/her rights or any problem s/he faces in prison. A complaint can be made to the Commissioner by him / her, by letter, which s/he can be placed in the special box which is in every wing and is labelled «Commissioner for Administration and the Protection of Human Rights "OMBUDSMAN"».

These letters, which are addressed to the Commissioner and placed within this box, are not subject to the control or inspection of the Director of the Central Prisons. Every week an Officer of the Office of the Commissioner inspects these boxes, in all wings, and collects their contents. At the same time, a complaint may be lodged with the Commissioner by the prisoner's relatives or his lawyer on his behalf.

15. Visit of the National Mechanism for the Prevention of Torture

By Law 2(III)/2009, the Commissioner for Administration and the Protection of Human Rights was designated as the National Torture Prevention Mechanism.

Specifically, under the Law, the Commissioner is designated as the National Body of Visits and is authorized to visit detention sites freely and unannounced, at regular intervals, with a view to monitoring

compliance with the provisions of the United Nations Convention against Torture. During his/her visits, the Commissioner shall have free access to all premises and facilities of each place of detention and to have confidential private interviews with any person s/he deems necessary.

The Commissioner could submit recommendations and reports to any Detention Center Authority, and the competent authority must then submit a reply on the measures taken based on the report or recommendations submitted to it.

Furthermore, the Commissioner is authorized to submit suggestions for better regulation and to express opinions in the House of Representatives when considering relevant bills. In addition, the Commissioner presents, to the Attorney General of the Republic and the Independent Police Allegations and Complaints Authority, any allegations of human rights violations by detainees.

The prisoner, during such regular visits, by the Commissioner, may himself freely request to speak with the Officers making the visit to his / her detention wing. All interviews with the Commissioner or his/her designee are confidential.

16. Visits

Each prisoner is allowed to receive up to 10 visits per month, 3 adults per visit, from family members, relatives, and friends. The prisoner may have additional visits from embassies, consulates, high commissions, as well as from religious representatives of his choice.

For any person to be able to visit, the prisoner must enter the person's name on his/her list for visits, which is provided by the prison staff, and send the visitor an invitation. If this procedure is not followed, the prison staff may not allow the visitor to enter the Central Prisons.

Usually, visits by family and friends take place from Monday to Thursday, and Saturday to Sunday, from 8:00 in the morning until 12:00 in the afternoon. Visitors are not allowed to bring anything with them upon entering the Central Prisons, for example food or drinks.

The visitors can bring clothing, for the prisoner, during the visit to the Central Prisons. The clothing must be left with the staff at the front gate / entrance and will be received by the prisoner after 1 day.

To plan a visit, people can call 22406259.

17. Feeding

The meals provided to inmates are prepared in the prison's kitchens. There is a selection of 8 menus, that are determined monthly by a nutritionist of the Ministry of Health in collaboration with the Director of Central Prisons and the Chief Officer of the Kitchens, addressing the issues that each prisoner may face (e.g., medical), his dietary preferences and his religious convictions.

In particular, there is a daily regular menu, as well as special menus for gastric diet, hypolipidemic diet for heart patients and diabetics, vegetarian diet as well as other menus that are determined by a medical officer based on the medical problems that a prisoner may face. There is also a special menu for the needs of Muslim prisoners and for the specific fasts for Christians.

Each menu includes breakfast, lunch, and dinner. In addition to dinner the prisoners are provided with an evening sandwich or other snacks such as cheese pie, olive pie, etc. with juice that the prisoners are allowed to take to their cells after dinner.

18. Canteen

In the Central Prison there is a canteen where a prisoner can procure whatever he wants.

There is a relevant list of the items available in the canteen. In the canteen prisoners can purchase everything from food, sanitary ware, household items, even electrical items, etc.

Payment in the canteen is made through the prisoner's account and the prisoner is informed of the balance of his/her account per his / her request.

Prisoners can be informed of the balance of their account on Wednesdays and Fridays.

19. Money in Central Prison

No prisoner can have any money in his / her possession within the Central Prisons.

His/her money is deposited into a personal account and the prison officer issues a receipt.

Each prisoner has his own account.

20. Requests

When a prisoner wants to ask for anything, he / she asks for it in the form of a request. He / she writes his / her request on the Application Form, provided by the staff, which is examined by the Officer of the Central Prisons of each wing, every day except weekends. In his/her request the prisoner may ask for example to be examined by a doctor, to request the provision of electrical appliances, as well as to request communication with the Director, requesting the change of wing, a roommate or change of roommate.

21. Prison Administration

The general public can communicate with the Director of Central Prisons by calling the phone number 22406141 or 22406142. It is understood, of course, that prisoners can communicate with the Director through written requests that they can submit themselves.

22. Daily Program

The daily schedule and occupations for each prisoner are not the same. There are inmates, for example, who are part of the work program, other inmates who are part of the drug rehabilitation program, yet others are assigned to the Central Prisons Schools.

At 6:00 a.m., the cells are opened, and the prisoners are counted.

Then around 7:30 in the morning the prisoners receive their breakfast.

Immediately, after breakfast, prisoners report to their approved work assignments, go to school, or participate in various educational programs and activities within the prison.

Each prisoner from 7:30 until the locking of the cells has free access to the courtyard of his/her wing and can work out in the yards and gyms that exist within the wings, based on a program and under the guidance of physical education teachers of the CAO.

Further, prisoners have access to a TV with free subscription service from the Department of Prisons, radio, CD player, etc.

At around 12:00 noon lunch is offered, which is prepared by prisoners who work in the prison kitchens. Then, after lunch, the prisoners use their time in activities, in the gym, at work, etc.

At 5:30 p.m., the prisoners return to their wings, where the afternoon count takes place. They enter their cells at 21:00 in the evening on weekdays and at 22:00 in the evening on weekends and public holidays. On New Year's Day, the cells close at 24:00, at midnight.

23. Work Assignments

Under Article 12 of the Prison Law of 1996, a prisoner serving a prison sentence, other than that of a life imprisonment, can obtain a reduction in his / her sentence if he / she demonstrates good conduct and hard work.

All prisoners sentenced to more than one (1) month in prison who wish to receive gratuity allowance must work in a job assigned by the Classification Committee. Prisoners, usually, work five days a week about 5 hours a day.

The categories of the gratuity allowance and the amount of the allowance corresponding to each category are determined by decisions of the Council of Ministers. No cash payment may be made to a prisoner who works and resides in the Closed or Open Prison except in special cases with the approval of the Director of the Central Prisons.

The gratuity allowance is deposited in a separate individual account of each prisoner, not their personal account.

Prisoners who have been sentenced to one (1) month or less in prison and wish to work in an assignment assigned by the Classification Committee are not entitled to benefits or any salary.

There are various types of work assignments where prisoners can join upon request and approval, such as wing cleaner, barber, carpentry, etc., always depending on the prisoner's specialties and inclinations.

During their work assignment, prisoners are not entitled to leave their place of work without the prior permission of the competent / supervising officer.

A prisoner who wishes, during his/her free hours, to work in his/her cell or in another approved special place, for the construction of art or handicrafts, may submit a request to the Director of the Central Prisons for approval.

24. Schooling / Learning within Central Prisons

Every prisoner has the right to be trained, educated, and informed by special educational programs, books, newspapers, magazines, seminars, lectures, etc. These programs take place within the Central Prisons.

There are eight schools in the Central Prisons where prisoners can attend.

In addition, prisoners are given the opportunity to attend various vocational training programs in prison laboratories and many activities, such as music, dance, theatre, technology, handicrafts and much more.

There are cases where the right to education is also granted to the detainees depending on which wing, they are in.

This usually happens when a detainee is part of a wing which houses convicts, then he/she can join programs with the convicts.

25. Schooling / Learning outside the Central Prisons

There is also the possibility of a prisoner, at his/her request, to receive an educational permit / leave. Educational leave is the license granted to attend non-prison courses.

Educational permits are granted to prisoners who:

- ✿ When they were admitted to Central Prisons, they were students in a recognized school or university,
- ✿ Their prison sentence does not exceed three years.
- ✿ During their detention they demonstrated consistency in their behaviour and hard work,
- ✿ The remainder of their sentence does not exceed one year.

If one or more of the above conditions are not met, but the prisoner during his/her detention has demonstrated good conduct, behaviour and hard work and is interested in attending courses for his/her subsequent professional rehabilitation, the following conditions must be met:

- ✿ He / she must be under 35 years of age,
- ✿ The educational leave to relate to vocational training in a profession for which during his / her detention,
- ✿ He / she showed particular interest by attending special training courses and,
- ✿ To possess the necessary qualifications to be admitted to a recognized vocational school.

Interested prisoners should prepare their application and, together with the Director's recommendation, be sent to the Minister for approval.

26. Detoxification Programs and Therapeutic Interventions

In the Central Prisons an open drug rehabilitation program is provided on a voluntary basis.

Specifically, there are and operate experiential workshops and programs for special groups of prisoners, including drug users, such as the DANAI Detoxification Program and the LEMVOS Substitution Program.

There are also opportunities for detainees to join detoxification programs outside of prisons with therapeutic communities, such as the therapeutic community of Agia Skepi, RETO.

The participation of prisoners is not compulsory, but is considered in their further course, by the Classification Committee, with regard to the inclusion of a prisoner in the Open Prison and in the Center for Extra-Institutional Employment and Rehabilitation.

27. Center for Guidance and Extra-Institutional Employment

Prisoners selected by the Committee, for the Guidance of Extra-Institutional Employment and Rehabilitation of Prisoners, from the Open Prison may be included in the Center.

The period of inclusion of prisoners into the Center may not exceed 12 months or be less than one month. Prisoners who join the Center, work on the free market in a job which is approved by the Committee, their conditions of employment are the same as other workers in the free world.

To get to their place of work these prisoners can use a public, a private or a prison vehicle.

It is understood that the prisoners are not allowed, during their work, to visit other places, they cannot leave their place of work and go someplace without the approval of the Director of Central Prisons, do not receive visits from relatives or friends at their place of work, they are punctual in their departure and return times. In case of any illness,

during their working hours, they, immediately, must notify the Director.

Inmates who reside at the Center and wish to receive food from the prison must submit a written request to the Director. If the request is approved, they pay a daily cost for the food they will receive.

In all other cases, the inmates procure their food from anywhere outside the prison.

Prisoners working outside the Central Prisons surrender their wages immediately after being paid, by their employer. Their wages are entered in a special register and deposited into the prisoner's personal account, after deduction of an amount for any financial, family, or personal obligations.

In case of non-compliance with the Regulations or if the prisoner commits a disciplinary or other offence or shows bad behaviour he/she is immediately transferred to the Closed Prison until his misconduct is examined.

If his/her sentence is longer than that of the reprimand, the Director may order his/her detention in the Closed Prison.

28. Leave / Exit Permits

A prisoner who has served a third of his/her sentence and during his/her detention has shown hard work and good conduct can apply to the Director of Central Prisons to obtain a permit to leave the prison. These applications shall be examined and decided by the Classification Committee.

The unaccompanied exit permit shall be granted if the following conditions are met:

- ✿ The prisoner has actually served a third of his sentence,

- ✿ During his / her detention s/he demonstrated hard work, stability in his / her behaviour and credibility,
- ✿ No disciplinary proceedings are pending against him / her,
- ✿ He / she has not been punished for disciplinary misconduct in the last 3 months prior to the decision to grant him / her an exit permit,
- ✿ It has not been established that he / she has tendencies to escape or commit another new crime,
- ✿ There is no question of his own safety during his / her leave.

The duration of the exit permit, for inmates in the Closed Prison, shall not exceed 24 hours and for the prisoners in the Open Prison shall not exceed 120 hours.

Prisoners in the Closed Prison, to be able to obtain a 2nd leave of exit without an escort must have a period of at least 3 months from the 1st leave of absence and for prisoners in the Open Prison at least a period of at least 2 months.

The total leave of exit may not exceed 72 hours for prisoners in the Closed Prison and 360 hours for prisoners of the Open Prison within the year.

Exit permits are issued (a) accompanied, (b) unaccompanied and (c) for educational purposes.

Convicts serving a life sentence can apply for a license to leave prison after serving at least ten years in prison.

29. Open Prison

In accordance with Regulation No. 127, prisoners may join the Open Prison, after there is a decision from the Classification Committee that there exists no safety or discipline issue.

In the Open Prison are transferred prisoners who have been sentenced to:

- ✿ a prison sentence of less than six months,
- ✿ for debts, regardless of the size of their sentence,
- ✿ a prison sentence of more than 6 months and less than 24 months and have served 3/12 of their sentence with good conduct and exceptional behaviour,
- ✿ a prison sentence of more than 24 months and less than 5 years and have served 4/12 of their sentence with good conduct and have demonstrated exceptional behaviour in the last year in prison,
- ✿ a prison sentence of more than 5 years and less than 12 years, they have served at least 5/12 of the sentence and in the last 2 years have shown exceptional behaviour in prison,
- ✿ a prison sentence of more than 12 years and served 6/12 of the sentence with exceptional conduct in the last 3 years.

Inmates who have previously been prosecuted disciplinary or criminally and found guilty of the offence of escaping or attempting to escape cannot be placed in the Open Prison.

An inmate who during his stay in the Open Prison exhibits bad behaviour or commits disciplinary misconduct or an offence is immediately transferred to the Closed Prison until his/her misconduct is examined. If he/she is found guilty of disciplinary misconduct and is given a sentence greater than the reprimand, the Director may order his/her stay in the Closed Prison for a certain period or for the remainder of his sentence depending on the seriousness of the misconduct.

The real difference between the Open Prison with the Closed Prison is that the inmates are fewer in number, in the Open Prison, all the prisoners have their own room, receive more leave time per year, and basically have the freedom when they can get in and out of their room.

30. Disciplinary Misconduct within the Prison

The prisoner who has been subject to disciplinary proceedings has the right to be aware of the offence for which s/he is accused, has the right to be heard and to defend him/herself. Also, s/he has the right to contact his/her lawyer and have, in private, meetings with him/her. Furthermore, he / she reserves the right to a telephone or private meetings with his family every 10 days.

The Director could, when imposing any disciplinary penalty, suspend its application if, at his/her estimation, the prisoner is expected to demonstrate good conduct.

31. Criminal Offences within the Prison

A prisoner who commits an offence, which is considered a criminal offence, is prosecuted.

In such a case, disciplinary proceedings may not be brought against him/her for the same reasons as the criminal proceedings, until the criminal proceeding it has come to a definitive end.

In addition, to his/her rights as a prisoner, in this case, his/her rights as a suspect are not suspended, but rather are in full force in relation to the offence in question for which he / she is considered a suspect.

32. Reduction of the Sentence for good behaviour/conduct and hard work

When a prisoner demonstrates good conduct and hard work, following a decision of the Director of Central Prisons, he/she may receive a reduction in his/her sentence, except where his/her sentence is that of life imprisonment.

33. Presidential Pardons / Favours

Based on Article 53, paragraph (4) of the Constitution of the Republic of Cyprus, the President has the power, with the consent of the Attorney General and the Assistant Attorney General, to reduce, suspend or convert any sentence imposed by the Court.

Presidential favours are granted each year at various intervals to several prisoners.

Usually, Presidential Pardon is given every Christmas, New Year's Day, Independence Day, and August 15th. In such cases, save any exceptions, the Presidential Pardon applies to all prisoners who have 3 months or less left in their sentence. These prisoners are automatically released and thus, served 3 months less, at the most, on their sentence.

When a new President is elected or the sitting President is re-elected it is customary, in accordance with current practices, for the president to reduce the sentence of prisoners, with some exceptions.

34. Parole Board

The Parole Board consists of five (5) members of which one (1) member is a former judge with experience in criminal law, one (1) member is a lawyer, and the remaining three (3) members hold qualifications such as Forensic Psychiatry, Forensic Psychology, Psychiatry, Psychology, Criminology, Sociology, and the Social Officer's specialty. One of them is appointed to the post of President and another member as Vice-President of the Parole Board.

A prisoner, who has a sentence of two (2) years or more, who has served half of his/her prison sentence, counting the actual days in prison and days he or she earned for good behaviour and work, or who has been sentenced to life imprisonment and has served at least twelve years of the sentence shall be entitled to submit directly to the Parole Board a written request for his/her conditional release on leave,

to continue serving the remainder of his/her sentence outside the Central Prisons.

The prisoner's written request may be submitted to the Parole Board up to six (6) months before the completion of half of his/her prison sentence.

As soon as the Parole Board receives the written request of a prisoner for release on leave, it shall inform him/her in writing of receipt of the request.

Contact details with the Parole Board – 22406295.

35. House arrest and electronic bracelet monitoring

Under Article 21B of the Prison Law, the Classification Committee may allow a convict to serve part of his/her sentence under house arrest if:

- ✿ He / she was sentenced to more than twelve (12) months and less than five (5) years and has served at least half of his/her sentence,
- ✿ He / she was sentenced to less than 12 months in prison and has served at least a third of his/her sentence,
- ✿ He / she is in the Open Prison and has joined a drug rehabilitation program,
- ✿ He / she is in the Open Prison and has been granted unaccompanied leave to serve part of the sentence,
- ✿ He / she is in the Open Prison and is 70 years of age or older unless s/he has been convicted of certain offences that do not allow it.

To ensure that the convict does not abscond, run away, a special electronic device (special bracelet) is applied to one of his/her wrists or angles.

Although it is not specifically provided for in the Law, according to the relevant Law of the Supreme Court, the bracelet can be used for detainees to ensure that they will appear during court hearings.



8. Other Actions

Cooperation with the House of Representatives

Every year the Commissioner is invited to attend meetings of the Parliamentary Commissioners to express her views in relation to legislative provisions or matters relating to her remit.

During the year 2021, the Commissioner and/or Officers of the Office participated in the following meetings of the Parliamentary Committees during the discussion of issues related to the competence of the Commissioner as the National Mechanism for the Prevention of Torture:

Parliamentary Committee on Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Between Men and Women

- On 1 March 2021, the Commissioner for Administration and the Protection of Human Rights and an Officer of the Office participated in a session of the Parliamentary Committee on Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Between Men and Women, during which, the following were discussed:
 - the Prisons (Amendment) (No.2) Law of 2020
 - the Prisons (Amendment) Law of 2021
 - the control procedures for the suitability of the infrastructure and the living conditions of the elderly in roofs and nursing homes, as well as the necessity of introducing the red emergency button for single persons.

Parliamentary Legal Committee

- An officer of the Office participated, on 22/1/2021, 3/2/2021 and 10/2/2021, in the meetings of the Parliamentary Committee on Legal Affairs, regarding "the Establishment of a Criminal Justice System Friendly to Children Who Are in Conflict with the (Prevention, Treatment in the Criminal Justice System and Dealing with Delinquency) Act 2019'.
- An officer of the Office participated, on March 31, in a session of the Parliamentary Legal Committee, regarding the Prisons (Amendment) (No. 2) Law of 2021.
- An officer of the Office participated in the Session of the Parliamentary Committee on Legal Affairs, held on 7/7/2021, on the subject of the Rights of Persons Arrested and Detained (Amendment) (No. 2) Laws of 2016 and 2018.

Contacts with other Bodies

- The Commissioner for Administration and Protection of Human Rights had meetings on February 4 and March 5 and 12, 2021, with the Lawyer of the Association for the Protection of the Rights of Prisoners and Released Persons, Mr. Alexandros Cleridis, to discuss issues concerning persons deprived of their freedom, as well as the right to information of the litigants and convicted persons and the tools for achieving it.
- On July 27, 2021, the Commissioner for Administration and Protection of Human Rights and Office Officials had a meeting with the Lawyer of the Association for the Protection of the Rights of Prisoners and Released Persons, Mr. Alexandros

Cleridis, in the context of which the rights of prisoners and prisoners were discussed.



- On June 29, 2021, a meeting was held at the Mental Health Services to discuss an amendment to the Psychiatric Nursing Law, based on the comments submitted by the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture. In the context of the meeting, in which two Officers of the Commissioner's Office participated, it was discussed, among other things, the need to institutionalize a regular visit by an independent officer who will act as an "advocate" for the patient.



The screenshot shows the International Ombudsman Institute (IOI) website. At the top left is the IOI logo, a stylized blue figure with arms raised. To its right, the text reads "INTERNATIONAL OMBUDSMAN INSTITUTE". Further right are navigation links: "THE IOI", "IOI ACTIVITIES", and "IOI MEMBERS". Below this is a grey banner with a world map and the text "human rights protection". The main content area features a headline: "CYPRUS | Ombudsman publishes Guide of Prisoner's First Contact". Below the headline is the date "11.11.2021". The article text states: "The Commissioner for Administration and the Protection of Human Rights (Ombudsman) published a Guide of Prisoner's First Contact in English and in Greek. This publication was prepared by the Ombudsman in cooperation with lawyers of the Association of the Protection of the Rights of Prisoners & Ex-Prisoners and it takes in consideration the articles of the existing legislation and the rules and regulations in force. It also draws from the real experiences of persons who remained in custody, either as detainees pending trial or convicts in the Central Prisons of the Republic of Cyprus. For the publication of this guide,". To the right of the text is a small image of the guide's cover, titled "GUIDE OF PRISONER'S FIRST CONTACT". The cover features a colorful illustration of hands holding balloons. Below the image is the IOI logo and the text "30th Anniversary" and "Ομιλία στην Επέτειο των 30 Χρονών της ίδρυσης του Οργανισμού".

The Commissioner publishes the Detainee's First Contact Guide

"...The Commissioner for Administration and Protection of Human Rights has published a Prisoners' First Contact Guide in English and Greek. This edition was prepared by the Commissioner in collaboration with lawyers of the Association for the Protection of Rights of Prisoners & Support of Released Persons and takes into account the articles of the current legislation and the applicable rules and regulations...

It also draws on the real-life experiences of people who have remained in custody, either as pre-trial detainees or convicts in the Central Prisons of the Republic of Cyprus. For the publication of the Guide, the Office of

the Commissioner also sought and received the views of the Department of Prisons.

The aim of the Guide is to inform newly admitted prisoners and/or prisoners about the rights, obligations and rules of safe coexistence in prison. The Guide aims to answer, in plain and simple language, some initial simple questions about prisoners' rights...".



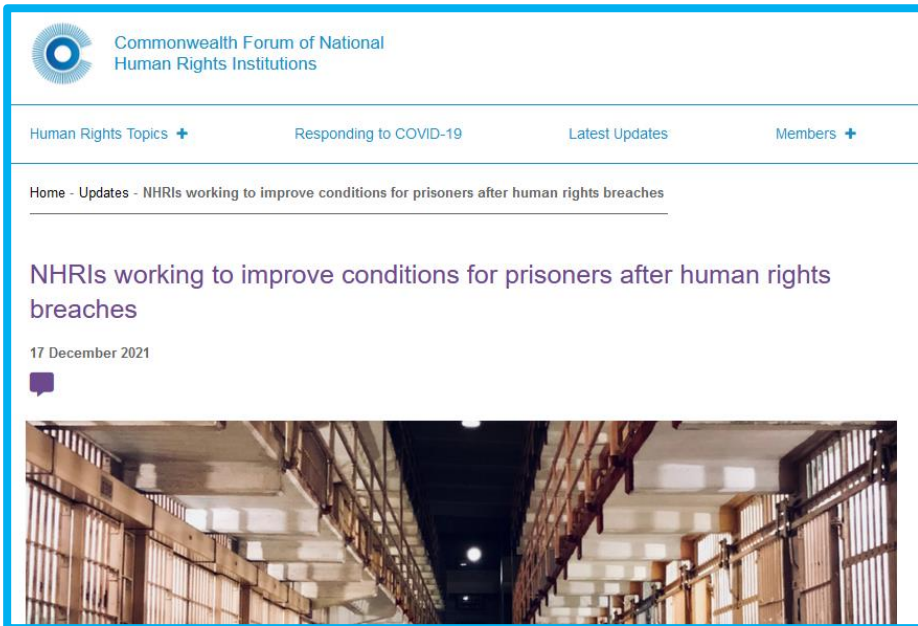
The screenshot shows the website of the Commonwealth Forum of National Human Rights Institutions. The header includes the organization's name and logo. Below the header, there are navigation links: "Human Rights Topics +", "Responding to COVID-19", "Latest Updates", and "Members +". The main content area features a breadcrumb trail: "Home - Updates - NHRIs caution against overpopulation in places of detention". The article title is "NHRIs caution against overpopulation in places of detention" with a date of "01 February 2021". The text of the article states: "National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) from Cyprus, Scotland and Zambia have raised concerns about the COVID-19 risk associated with packed detention centres. As the pandemic continues to make waves across the all aspects of life globally, detained people are acutely at risk of contracting the highly transmissible virus due to cramped living conditions, poor sanitation and in some countries, a growing population in detention. Commonwealth NHRIs have called attention to the potential human rights violation and have called for swift action from governments to lessen the risk to workers and detained people." Below this, there is a section titled "Cyprus" which mentions: "The Office of the Commissioner for Administration and the Protection of Human Rights in Cyprus (Ombudsman) has warned that Pournara reception centre for people seeking asylum is 'bursting at the seams' amid an increasing flow of migrants. In a report issued after a visit to the site in April 2020 (In Greek), the Ombudsman noted that despite some improvement in living conditions, the facility is operating beyond its limits."

[NHRIs warn of overcrowding in detention facilities](#)

"...Cyprus: The Office of the Commissioner for Administration and Protection of Human Rights in Cyprus has warned that the Pournara Reception Center is "bursting" amid an increasing flow of migrants. In a report issued following a site visit in April 2020, the Commissioner noted that despite improving living conditions, the facility is operating beyond its limits.

As of December 2020, there were 968 people living in Pournara, including 103 minors. The facility was originally built to house up to 350 asylum seekers for no more than 72 hours upon their arrival. Some residents are held at the facility for more than four months.

Among her recommendations to the government, the Commissioner called for the immediate release of 200 beneficiaries. He also pointed out that the lack of space means that quarantine procedures are not handled effectively. He recommended the installation of more sanitary facilities...".



The screenshot shows a website header for the Commonwealth Forum of National Human Rights Institutions. Below the header is a navigation bar with links for 'Human Rights Topics +', 'Responding to COVID-19', 'Latest Updates', and 'Members +'. The main content area features a breadcrumb trail: 'Home - Updates - NHRIs working to improve conditions for prisoners after human rights breaches'. The article title is 'NHRIs working to improve conditions for prisoners after human rights breaches', dated '17 December 2021'. Below the text is a photograph of a prison corridor with metal bars on the walls and ceiling.

[NHRIs work to improve conditions for prisoners following human rights violations](#)

"...The Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights Management and Protection has published a simple guide to prisoners' rights. The aim of the guide is to help prisoners understand their legal rights, obligations and how to live safely in the prison environment.

The guide covers a range of topics including:


- *appeals against convictions and sentences*
- *medical examinations and tests*
- *separation and division into wards*
- *how to file a complaint*
- *everyday life...".*


Participation in Events/Seminars/Trainings


- On April 28, 2021, Officers of our Office participated in a webinar on "Annual Lessons Learned Meeting: Use of Force and Means of Restraint".
- An officer of the Office participated on 01 and 25 June 2021 in the online meetings on the subject of the creation of an international training center for the National Mechanisms for the Prevention of Torture (with the support of the Council of Europe), with the aim of training the mechanisms involved, for training and staff expertise for more effective visit/survey methodologies and information/experience sharing.
- An officer of the Office participated on September 20-22, 2021, in an online conference organized by the European NPM Forum and the Department for the Execution of Decisions of the European Court of Human Rights with the following topics:
 - The role of the National Mechanisms for the Prevention of Torture in the effective implementation of the decisions of the European Court of Human Rights and the recommendations of the European Commission for the Prevention of Torture.
 - Tackling police misconduct and ensuring effective investigations.




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