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REPORT ON **THE CONDITIONS IN PENAL AND CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN 2023**

according to subsequent visits to
PI Idrizovo, PI Stip, PI Prilep
and Prison Kumanovo, in the
period May - June 2023

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INTRODUCTION

This report was prepared within the framework of the project "Fight against torture and inhumane treatment", financially supported by the European Union. For the purposes of the project, a Memorandum of Cooperation was concluded between the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights, the Macedonian Young Lawyers Association and the Administration for the Execution of Sanctions.

In the period from May to June 2023, four consecutive visits were carried out in PI Idrizovo, PI Stip, PI Prilep and PI Kumanovo, in accordance with the assessment of the team working on the project. The selection of penitentiary institutions is due to the perceived conditions for the accommodation of convicted persons ascertained during regular visits, but also to the numerous indications and petitions submitted by the convicted persons to the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights.

The findings in this report are based on the data obtained from the visits carried out by the monitoring team, which inspected the premises of the penitentiary institutions, provided free legal assistance, conducted conversations with almost all the directors of the institutions, as well as with the employees from among members of the prison police, social workers, psychologists, lawyers, etc.

It was noted that, despite many commitments by the state, international and domestic organizations to improve conditions in penitentiary institutions, systemic deficiencies still exist. It is obvious that there is a lack of appropriate intersectoral cooperation between the competent institutions, which is key to solving the problems faced by persons deprived of liberty in these institutions. It is precisely because of this that penitentiaries fail in fulfilling their legal obligations to overcome the problems that have been going on for a long time and make it impossible for convicted persons to enjoy their rights and resocialize themselves.

Convicted persons do not have adequate access to health care, nor adequate material living conditions, and resocialization programs, conditions for their implementation and post-penal assistance are still insufficient and inapplicable. At the same time, during this period there was an increase in the dissatisfaction of the members of the prison police, who pointed out that their security was violated and that they were facing a serious problem due to the increasing number of pressures and threats to them personally,

but also their families and loved ones.

Corruption continues to be a serious problem in institutions, which the convicted persons regularly inform us about. But for fear of losing their rights and conveniences, they do not want to formally report these cases. In addition, what was noticed, and what is particularly worrying, is the small number of appeals submitted by convicted persons for the decisions made on the imposition of disciplinary measures. The practice shows cases when the convicted persons did not receive the decisions on imposing a disciplinary measure. For example, if they are in solitary confinement, the solution is attached to the door of the solitary confinement, and convicted persons manage to get in touch with an NGO, lawyer and/or lawyer after they finish serving the disciplinary measure. All institutions do not respect the regular formal procedure for imposing disciplinary measures, so in some cases no decision has even been made to impose a disciplinary measure.

As a positive practice, it can be noted that in some penitentiary institutions, efforts are being made to establish resocialization measures and activities, vocational activities, as well as increased work engagement of convicted persons.

Overcrowding, especially in PI Idrizovo, where the largest number of convicted persons are located, most of whom are a security risk, is an alarming problem for which the state must urgently find a solution. Only by solving this systemic problem can we expect the realization of resocialization as one of the main goals of the prison sentence and the reduction of the crime rate in the country. In recent years, there has been an increase in the number of probation cases and cases for which an alternative sentence has been imposed, which is certainly one of the positive examples of solving the long-term problem of overcrowding in penitentiary institutions and promoting resocialization and reintegration of convicted persons.

For this purpose, civil society organizations will closely monitor the implementation of the National Strategy for the Development of the Penitentiary System in the Republic of North Macedonia 2021-2025, as well as the Strategy for the Development of the Probation Service in the Republic of North Macedonia 2021-2025. With the implementation of these strategies, we expect the correct application of the legal and by-law regulations, improvement of the conditions and the situation in prisons, but also strengthening of the capacity and professionalism of the employed staff, as well as increased supervision over the operation of the penitentiary institutions, and at the same time, the improvement of the probation system.

VISIT SCHEDULE

DATE	PENITENTIARY & CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTION	TEAM
29.06.2023	PI Idrizovo	Tona Kareva Taleska and Ina Djugumanova
30.05.2023	PI Stip	Tona Kareva Taleska and Irena Zdravkova
29.06.2023	PI Prilep	Tona Kareva Taleska and Irena Zdravkova
09.06.2023	Prison Kumanovo	Tona Kareva Taleska and Irena Zdravkova

ABOUT THE PROJECT

The project "Fight against torture and inhumane treatment" is implemented in partnership with the Macedonian Young Lawyers Association, and is financially supported by the European Union. The main goal is the elimination of torture and inhumane treatment in penitentiaries, correctional institutions and psychiatric hospitals in the Republic of North Macedonia, in accordance with international and European standards.

Specific goals are:

1. To encourage convicted persons, persons deprived of liberty and patients in psychiatric institutions to report torture and inhumane treatment suffered and seek compensation for it;
2. To increase the responsibility of internal and external mechanisms for investigating and prosecuting cases of torture and inhumane treatment; and
3. To strengthen the capacities of the institutions for the recognition and prevention of torture and inhumane treatment.
4. Target groups within the project are convicted persons, persons deprived of liberty, children in conflict with the law and patients in psychiatric institutions.

Within the framework of the project, several activities are foreseen, namely: provision of legal assistance, preparation of educational materials for persons placed in psychiatric institutions, organization of information sessions on the rights of convicted persons and persons placed in psychiatric institutions, strategic representation, monitoring of penal-correctional institutions, correctional institutions and psychiatric institutions, monitoring of the work of the public prosecutor's office for the prosecution of crimes committed by the police and members of the prison police, educational sessions for lawyers and social workers in penal institutions, support for adoption of by-laws.

Expected results within the project are:

- 200 convicted persons (10% of the prison population) received legal aid;
- 20 convicted persons filed petitions for torture and inhumane treatment;
- 8 information sessions were held on the rights of convicted persons and persons placed in psychiatric institutions; 6 initiated strategic procedures; 4 prepared and published reports with findings and recommendations from regular and follow-up visits to penitentiary institutions and psychiatric institutions; 50 employees from penitentiary institutions participated in trainings on recognition and prevention of torture and inhumane treatment, of which 20 participated in advanced trainings in this area; and 4 prepared by-laws related to the rights of persons deprived of liberty.

PENITENTIARY INSTITUTION IDRIZOVO

The visit started with a conversation with the director of PI Idrizovo. The facility has the capacity to accommodate 900 convicted persons. At the time of the visit, the PI Idrizovo had a total of 1,149 convicts, 65 of whom were women. The institution is once again facing overcrowding due to the large number of convicted persons.

A total of 274 people are employed in the institution, of which 220 are members of the prison police, and 24 are administrative officers. 28 people are employed in the resocialization sector. The prison police expressed general dissatisfaction due to the lack of new equipment, and the equipment they have is insufficient (uniform, baton, radio links, handcuffs, etc.). In addition, security is a serious problem for them, especially considering the recent events with burning vehicles and escapes. They indicated that they face daily pressures and threats, both personally, but also through their families and loved ones.

During this visit, considering that it is consecutive, we visited the closed ward and the women's ward.

The facilities "Building" and "Ambulance" make up the closed ward of the largest penitentiary institution PI Idrizovo. Again, despite numerous remarks from civil society organizations and the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Other Cruel and Inhumane Treatment (CPT), no positive changes have been observed in these two facilities. Convicted persons continue to serve prison terms in substandard conditions, with a high level of humidity and the presence of bedbugs and other insects, from which the convicted persons have numerous bites. Hygiene in the closed ward is at an unenviable low level. In the "Building" facility, some of the rooms accommodate 10-12 people with beds on 3 or 4 floors (from the third and fourth floors it often happens that convicts fall while sleeping), and the rooms do not meet the standards even in terms of size nor in terms of material conditions, moisture and light. Also, there were some people sleeping on the floor in the rooms themselves, and we found a situation where some condemned people do not have a mattress. For comparison, in some rooms of this facility, other convicted persons are placed in a more favorable position, with the fact that in the same size room, a smaller number of persons serve their sentence, in significantly better conditions. Although, as we were informed, after the change of the director, most of

the almost 30 people who slept on the floor on mattresses are placed in rooms, however, we noticed a few people who did not have a bed and slept on the floor in the corridors. Such a picture confirms that overcrowding is still an unsolved problem in this institution, which has been going on for years. The hygiene in the toilets is at a low level, which is to be expected considering the number of people who use them.

In this part of the institution, numerous remarks were noted not only about the material conditions but also about the food, which the convicts say is given to them once a day. Due to dissatisfaction with its quality, convicted persons who can afford it receive food delivered to them by their relatives. In addition, the convicted persons also complained about the quality of the water, which we independently verified to be murky, so they are forced to provide bottled water themselves. We again ascertained the presence of knives and other cutlery in all rooms, due to the fact that there is no dining room in PI Idrizovo. It continues to be a serious problem, because the closed department houses the convicted persons with the highest security risk in the country, who often use sharp objects in verbal and physical arguments with each other, as well as against members of the prison police during the performance of their duties.

In the closed department in the "Building" there are also the rooms for solitary confinement, which were found in substandard conditions, with high humidity and low hygiene, without the possibility of ventilating the room with fresh air, in which there is not enough natural or artificial light. We are talking to two people at random who were serving the disciplinary measure of solitary confinement, and hence the conclusions about the material conditions of solitary confinement from previous reports have been confirmed. Decisions on imposing a disciplinary measure are not delivered to them and are attached to the door of the premises from the outside, so convicted persons do not have the opportunity to file an objection. In the period from January 1 to June 30, 248 disciplinary procedures were initiated and disciplinary measures were imposed in the largest number of cases for possession or use of a mobile phone, drugs, alcohol or other illegal things, then for running away, physical attack, aggressive behavior, rude behavior, abuse of amenities, causing damage and more.

Substandard conditions in terms of humidity and material conditions are also observed in the reception department in this institution, where convicted persons are kept longer than necessary due to overcrowding, but

also due to the long process of expert assessment by the competent team in the institution.

In the facility called "Ambulance" and in the facility "Building" moisture is present in all rooms, hygiene and smell are at the lowest level, therefore their complete reconstruction is needed, or their closure and construction of a new facility in order to ensure adequate conditions.

During the visit, the team again pointed out the need to move a certain number of convicted persons from the penitentiary to one of the psychiatric institutions, in order to receive appropriate health care due to their health condition.

In addition to the standard employment of convicts in janitorship, hygiene, laundry, kitchen, etc., convicts in the largest penitentiary institution in the country do not have any conditions and programs for professional training and quality spending of free time.

Taking into account the category of persons serving a sentence in a closed ward, the state should make special efforts to develop a good internal atmosphere. It is in the interest not only of the humane treatment of convicted persons in the ward, but also of maintaining efficient control, safety and security of the staff.

Women's department

In this part of the facility, the situation has not changed since the last report. Certain parts have been renovated and reconstructed with a new floor and new PVC windows, doors and solar panels, thus improving the material conditions for the convicts. But the moisture in the premises, which is visible and widespread, continues to be a problem.

The phone booth in the women's ward is functional. The prisons, apart from the open space in which there is a bench with chairs, do not have additional conditions available for leisure, sports and vocational activities. They also have tablets available for communication with families, but are not used often. In the women's department, there is not even a suitable room in which female convicts can have contact with their children, a room that should offer a relaxing and recreational atmosphere.

Female convicts complained about the inappropriate distribution of convicts in the closed versus semi-open and open ward, which is why there

is impatience and dissatisfaction in the institution. More precisely, some convicts who should be placed in the closed ward are placed in the semi-open one, and vice versa.

The problem of not having regular gynecological examinations and services continues to represent a serious violation of their basic rights, for which the Ministry of Health is responsible.

Also, during the visit, we ascertained the segregation of Roma convicts, in that all Roma women were placed in one room in the closed department, in which the worst conditions were ascertained, and only in that room was there no television.

Health protection

Health care in the facility is provided by 1 doctor and 2 nurses, who visit the facility only for a few hours during the day, which is not enough for a facility with over 1,000 convicts.

It is necessary to provide buprenorphine and methadone therapy to all who need it, in order to continue the treatment of convicted persons without interruption for any reason, including the untimely implementation of the tender procedure by the Ministry of Health. In this way, the "black market", violence, stress and other psychological and somatic consequences will be prevented.

The facility informed us that they are facing large debts related to health care, resulting from invoices from the medical facilities in which the convicted persons are conducted, and again, due to difficult opportunities to organize the executions, they do not receive adequate health care.

Furthermore, diabetics are not provided with strips to measure their blood sugar levels and their lives are at risk, as they determine the amount of insulin they need at their own discretion.

The Ministry of Health should provide adequate health care for convicted persons. Taking into account the financial implications arising from referrals to health facilities and invoices for health care services for convicted persons for penal institutions, the state should find an alternative way to provide adequate health care, which will be provided in the facility, or will be contracted public-private partnerships for providing health care.

Legal aid

During the visit to PI Idrizovo, we spoke with 17 convicted persons. The most common grounds for which convicted persons in this institution requested legal advice are related to health care, material conditions, seeing children and an extramarital partner, food and water quality, the right to parole, transfer to another penitentiary institution and realization of the right of visitation. Some of the convicted persons complained that they were victims of corruption and that in the institution everything can be bought with money: bed, mattress, telephone, hot water, medical therapy, transfer to another institution, use of facilities, etc. A large number of convicted persons complained that, due to the lack of sufficient medical staff, they could not get their turn to be examined.

Recommendations

- To take measures to eliminate overcrowding in the institution by the Sanctions Enforcement Administration, by taking appropriate measures and activities and by implementing the second phase for construction and reconstruction;
- The institution to improve conditions in solitary confinement;
- To increase the number of employees in the prison police and in the resocialization sector;
- The Administration for the Execution of Sanctions to provide new appropriate equipment for the prison police;
- To improve the conditions in the facilities "Building" and "Ambulance", which are extremely inhumane and degrading for the convicted persons, through their complete reconstruction or by closing them and building a new facility;
- The Ministry of Justice, the Administration for the Execution of Sanctions and PI Idrizovo to take measures for the permanent removal of knives and other sharp objects from the premises of convicted persons;
- The Ministry of Justice, the Administration for the Execution of Sanctions and the PI Idrizovo to provide conditions for free, sports,

educational and vocational activities for all convicted persons, for the purpose of quality spending of free time;

- PI Idrizovo not to segregate Roma convicts in the closed ward at the women's ward;
- The Ministry of Health should take measures for adequate access to health care for convicted persons, namely:
 - Provision of medicines and a sufficient number of health workers to improve the availability and accessibility of medicines, doctor, psychiatrist, gynecological and dental services;
 - Timely provision of appropriate health therapy for convicted persons and escort to medical facilities;
 - Provision of tapes for measuring blood sugar levels of convicts suffering from diabetes;
 - Providing therapy for all persons for whom there is an indication for treatment with buprenorphine or methadone, without payment from their own funds but from the addiction program of the Ministry of Health;
 - Updating of all changes in the medical documentation of convicted persons, to correspond to the current situation;
 - Regular monitoring (screening for substance use) and assessment of the condition of persons involved in an opioid treatment program by health professionals is required, not only when starting therapy but regularly and occasionally, and especially when making a decision to reduce or to increase the therapy;
 - Psychoeducation is needed for people with addiction in prison;
 - Psychosocial help and support is needed for convicted persons;
 - Education about addiction diseases, treatment and its benefits is needed for uniformed persons and other prison staff.

State of crisis

On 06.06.2023, the Government adopted a decision which established "the existence of a crisis situation in part of the territory of the Republic of North Macedonia, namely in the area of the Municipality of Gazi Baba, where the Penitentiary Institution 'Idrizovo' exercises its competence, in order to

prevent of security threats and strengthening the security of the institution". The bodies of the state administration are required to take measures and activities in accordance with the crisis management regulations, and the main crisis management staff at the CMC, to monitor the situation, coordinate the activities and regularly inform the Government. The state of crisis lasted for 30 days, after which, after a break of 2 days, a state of crisis was declared again on 07.07.2023.

With the declaration of a state of crisis, members of the Ministry of Interior and the Army began to secure the prison due to a lack of guards. One of the main problems facing "Idrizovo" is the lack of sufficient staff in the prison. The number of employees in the prison police is insufficient to meet daily needs and activities. The government has given consent for the employment of 100 new members of the prison police, but the consent of the Ministry of Finance has not yet been received. During the duration of the crisis, an advertisement was published for the employment of new persons - members of the prison police, and after the completion of the procedure, 70 persons will be employed. It was announced by the Administration for the Execution of Sanctions that 30 more jobs will be provided with the rebalancing of the budget. Additionally, during the crisis, 40 million euros were provided for the reconstruction and construction of a new building. However, it should not be forgotten that, while the construction of a new building continues, the convicts will be housed in inhumane and substandard conditions. On 27.07.2023, within the 124th session, the Assembly unanimously with 62 votes "for" adopted the decision to approve the extension of the deadline for the existence of a state of crisis in part of the territory of the Republic of North Macedonia, for the purpose of preventing security threats and strengthening of the security of PI Idrizovo.

The state must ensure that in its actions during a crisis situation, international standards will be respected and that this will not be to the detriment of the convicted persons who are serving a prison sentence in PI Idrizovo. It is particularly important that the state of crisis is not prolonged indefinitely, especially because it is a question of structural deficiencies in penitentiary institutions that have existed for a long time, so the solution is not to declare a state of crisis, but to solve systemic problems.

PENITENTIARY INSTITUTION STIP

The visit to the prison began with a conversation with the director of the institution. PI Stip has 148 places for accommodation of convicted persons according to the standards of CPT, and according to the institution, the capacity is for 210 convicted persons. The current numerical situation is 219 convicted persons. In the period May - June, about 30 convicted persons were moved to other institutions, in order to unload the institution. There are 69 convicts in the closed ward, 7 convicts in the reception ward, 124 in the semi-open ward, and 19 convicts are on the run. The institution is once again facing overcrowding due to the large number of convicted persons and the small facilities that the prison has in accordance with the standards of the CPT.

Regarding the number of employees in the institution, 106 people are employed in PI Stip, of which 13 are administrative officers, 93 prison police officers in the prison police department and 6 people in the resocialization department.

One of the main problems facing the prison is precisely the small number of employees in key positions for the resocialization of convicted persons. Specifically, in the resocialization sector, the number of educators has been reduced to two, who work with all convicted persons. New employment was announced, i.e. consents were obtained for the employment of 8 people in administrative positions, of which 4 people for resocialization and 1 person in the prison police. The prison police has no new equipment (uniform, baton, radio links, handcuffs, etc.) since 2017, and the one it has is insufficient and incomplete.

The improved space that was ascertained in the previous report from a regular visit has been preserved, maintained in good condition and all the purchased appliances are functional.

New tiles were installed in certain parts of the prison, and during the visit some of the rooms in the semi-open and open ward were renovated by the convicts. They also participated in the construction of an open amphitheater and a garden in the courtyard of the institution, which still lacks chairs for the amphitheater. The institution has signed a memorandum of cooperation with the House of Culture Stip, so the amphitheater is expected to contribute space for a cultural and entertainment program.

The closed ward is located in a separate building and is completely separated from the rest of the space. People have a special place to walk. There are three living rooms on each floor, and a maximum of 4 people can be accommodated in a room. Disinfection and disinfection are carried out regularly in all wings, but certain convicts complained about the appearance of bedbugs. It was pointed out to us that it is regularly sprayed against insects, but proper maintenance of hygiene is also required by the convicted persons themselves, who, when moving from one institution to another, also transfer the bedbugs.

During the visit, the institution was unloaded – in one room, depending on its size and possibilities, up to 5 convicts can be accommodated. All rooms in the semi-open department have uniform tables and chairs set by the institution, with newly installed PVC windows. New chests of drawers and LED lamps have been installed in all rooms. The doors have been changed and part of the premises have been whitewashed, and some were whitewashed during the visit, by the convicts themselves. Also, some of the toilets were renovated during the visit in this part of the facility.

Due to overcrowding and lack of space in PI Stip, it happens that convicts who have no disciplinary offenses are placed in solitary confinement, who are assigned to other wings and at certain times they are allowed access to the wing assigned to them. Some of the people voluntarily ask to be placed in this section. Although the institution believes that this practice is good and in the interest of convicted persons, especially when it is at their request, we believe that accommodation in these premises is humiliating and inhumane. Those rooms do not provide any privacy even for using toilets, nor do they meet the minimum standards for room size, lighting and ventilation, and convicts do not have free access to the wings assigned to them.

A positive change is that a large number of convicted persons are engaged in work and the results of this are visible, especially in the prison yard, where, except for the amphitheater, work is being done in all fields. More than 60-70 convicted persons are employed. As a positive practice, the agricultural and animal husbandry activities fostered by the institution should be highlighted. Convicted persons are engaged in the preparation of bread and food, and good hygiene is maintained in the canteen and in the kitchen. Convicted persons did not complain about the food, which is changed according to their wishes and needs.

The library has a large selection of books and is used by convicts.

Regarding the part of education, we were informed that convicted persons with incomplete primary education have the opportunity to complete it, and of course to receive various certificates. A total of 45 convicted persons have completed primary education, and over 180 convicted persons have obtained various certificates for occupations.

In a conversation with the director, we were informed that the corruption in this institution is not so great and that it has been reduced to a minimum, and all members of the prison police and staff who will be caught in corrupt actions are severely punished.

We were also informed by the institution that there is a telephone for the convicts to communicate with the outside world and 2 tablets, which we found through talking to the convicts that they are still not used enough.

In the period from 01.01. until 30.06.2023 67 disciplinary proceedings were initiated against convicted persons. Disciplinary procedures usually refer to the possession and use of a mobile phone, physical assault, running away, refusal of an order, abuse of a given facility. The most common disciplinary measure is solitary confinement, but according to the director, the majority do not withstand the disciplinary punishments as a whole. 7 appeals have been submitted to the Sanctions Enforcement Administration regarding the imposed disciplinary measures. Regarding the use of means of coercion, appropriate records are kept by the institution and the employees.

Convicted persons turn to the director with a variety of problems and complaints, and they often confuse rights and conveniences. Also, he receives for conversation all convicted persons, in accordance with his time and obligations.

Health protection

Health care in PI Stip is provided by one doctor and one dentist, and the employment of another general practitioner has been announced. Hygiene and order in the ambulance are maintained at an appropriate level.

We were informed that convicted drug addicts are treated accordingly.

Legal aid

During the visit we talk to 10 convicted persons chosen at random. A convicted person complained of inadequate treatment with insults and shouting by a member of the prison police.

Recommendations

- To take measures to eliminate overcrowding in the institution by the Administration for the Execution of Sanctions;
- The institution should not accommodate convicted persons in solitary confinement due to the size and conditions of the premises;
- The Administration for the Execution of Sanctions to provide adequate and new equipment for the prison police;
- To increase the number of employed members of the prison police and persons in the resocialization sector;
- The Ministry of Health and the Institution should take measures for adequate access to health care for convicted persons, namely:
 - timely provision of appropriate health therapy for convicted persons and escort to medical facilities;
 - Provision of therapy for all persons for whom there is an indication for treatment with buprenorphine or methadone, without payment from their own funds but from the addiction program of the Ministry of Health;
 - Updating of all changes in the medical documentation of convicted persons, to correspond to the current situation;
 - Regular monitoring (screening for substance use) and assessment of the condition of persons involved in an opioid treatment program by health professionals is required, not only when starting therapy but regularly and occasionally, and especially when making a decision to reduce or to increase the therapy;
 - Psychoeducation is needed for people with addiction in prison;
 - Psycho-social help and support is needed for convicted persons;
 - Education about addiction diseases, treatment and its benefits is needed for uniformed persons and other prison staff.

PENITENTIARY INSTITUTION PRILEP

The visit to the prison began with a conversation with the director of the PI Prilep. The capacity of the facility is for 108 people. The number of convicted persons at the time of the visit was 132. The institution is once again facing overcrowding due to the large number of convicted persons, and the capacities of the prison are small in accordance with the standards of the CPT.

A total of 66 people are employed in the institution, of which 51 are prison police, and 7 in administration. According to the data we received from the institution, 8 people are employed in the resocialization sector, but at the time of the visit we were informed that 2 people are currently employed in the resocialization sector, which is an insufficient number to fulfill all work tasks.

Prilep Prison has a reception department, an open department, a semi-open department, a closed department and a department for housing high-risk convicts.

Persons undergoing closed treatment B3 and those in the reception department are sometimes, due to lack of sufficient space, placed in a common room, which can have a detrimental effect on newly admitted convicted persons and on their further resocialization.

In the closed department of the institution there are two rooms with 8 and 9 beds each. The size of the rooms, which is not larger than 16 m², is not adequate for the number of convicted persons housed in them. Increased levels of moisture and unpainted walls were also observed in these rooms. The one room in which the persons were previously housed was turned into a study room, due to the high level of humidity. The toilet in this part has a significantly low level of hygiene, with 1 shower and 2 sinks.

The reception department in the institution has two rooms. The hygiene in it was low, and the condemned persons stayed in these spaces for a very long time, some even for several years.

The open and semi-open department in the facility has a total of 15 rooms, which are in relatively good condition, equipped with beds, tables and chairs. Convicts also have a daycare room at their disposal, as well as a fully equipped library with books in several languages. The toilet in this part of

the facility is in significantly better condition than the other toilets, but the hygiene in the corridors is at an unenviable low level.

The institution itself has established the practice of having an isolation area, a ward for high-risk convicts with a capacity for 8 people, which they use for persons with disciplinary procedures and for persons who cause problems and misunderstandings with other convicts. They don't have a rulebook on how long these people will be in these rooms. In front of these rooms there are 4 solitary cells, whose conditions are substandard. During the visit, we spoke with a person who was in solitary confinement for several days, and then was moved to the isolation area. A formal procedure for the disciplinary offense was not carried out and the person did not receive the decision determining solitary confinement. In these rooms, the calling system was not functional and in order for it to work, the convicts connected two wires. From January 1 to June 30, 22 disciplinary procedures were initiated against convicted persons, which mostly relate to the possession and use of a mobile phone, engaging in reselling, physical assault, participation in a fight, abuse of a given facility - escape, and for them most often pronounce solitary confinement or public reprimands. No appeal was filed against any disciplinary measure decision.

It is positive that over 30 convicted persons are employed. At this moment, a project supported by the EU of the Center for Citizen Initiatives is being implemented, through which a locksmith-machine workshop and an IT workshop are being equipped. After equipping the workshops, the process of including the convicted persons will begin, with the aim of their resocialization and reintegration. In addition, it is positive that about 15 people are engaged in the institution's farm, where they are engaged in livestock and agricultural activities. The farm generates an income of over 3,000,000 denars.

Health protection

Health care is provided by two nurses who are in the facility every day, from 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., and on-call if necessary. The nurses, even though they have been working daily in the institution for 4 years, do not have a regulated regular employment relationship. A psychiatrist comes to the facility 2-3 times a month and as needed. Convicted persons use dental services outside the institution. The medical therapy is entirely procured by

the institution from its own funds, however, some drugs are procured by the convicted persons after a previously issued prescription. A large number of convicted persons are forced to procure buprenorphine on their own, due to the fact that the Addiction Center in Bitola does not have enough capacity.

Legal aid

During the visit, we talked to a total of 10 randomly selected convicts, who requested legal advice regarding the right to parole, use of amenities, and access to health care.

Recommendations

- To take measures to eliminate overcrowding in the institution by the institution and the Sanctions Enforcement Administration;
- The Administration for the Execution of Sanctions and PI Prilep to make efforts to improve the conditions in solitary confinement in order to meet the necessary standards;
- PI Prilep to standardize the use of the isolation space that they use in practice;
- To increase the number of employees in the prison police and in the resocialization sector;
- The Administration for the Execution of Sanctions to provide adequate equipment for the prison police;
- PI Prilep should make efforts in the future so that people from the reception department and those who have already received treatment are not accommodated in common rooms and that people in the reception department do not stay in this part for a long period of time;
- The Administration for the Execution of Sanctions and PI Prilep to take measures to improve the conditions in the toilets in the closed and in the reception department;
- PI Prilep not to accommodate more convicted persons in one room than legally allowed and in accordance with the standards;

- PI Prilep to comply with the prescribed procedure for issuing a disciplinary offense and delivering the decision;
- The Ministry of Health should take measures to improve access to health care, namely:
 - Employment of a doctor and two nurses who provide health services;
 - Timely provision of therapy for convicted persons and escort to medical facilities is necessary;
 - It is necessary for all persons for whom there is an indication for treatment with buprenorphine or methadone to receive them without payment from their own funds, but from the addiction program of the Ministry of Health;
 - It is necessary to document all changes in the medical documentation to correspond to the current situation;
 - Regular monitoring (screening for substance use) and assessment of the condition of persons who are included in an opioid treatment program by health professionals is required, not only when starting therapy but regularly and occasionally, especially when making a decision to reduce or to increase the therapy;
 - Psychoeducation is needed for people with addiction in prison;
 - Psycho-social help and support is needed for convicted persons;
 - Education about addiction diseases, treatment and its benefits is needed for uniformed persons and other prison staff.

PRISON KUMANOVO

The visit to the prison began with a conversation with the commander of Prison Kumanovo. The number of convicted persons at the time of the visit is 156 convicted persons, of which 12 convicted persons are on the run and 32 persons are in custody. The capacity of the facility is for 220 people. There are 28 people in the open department of Kriva Palanka.

Regarding the employees in the prison, it has 75 members of the prison police and 27 people in the administration. 10 people are employed in the resocialization sector.

The institution has an open department in Kriva Palanka, as well as a semi-open, closed, reception and detention department.

An improved level of hygiene can be observed in the rooms and corridors of the penitentiary, which cannot be confirmed for the condition found in some of the convicts' rooms. The other conditions in the rooms have not changed in relation to the state established by the last report. The hygiene and smell in the solitary cells was at a very low level.

The establishment still faces problems with water supply, and during the visit we were informed that they have water if the winery, which is nearby, releases water. There is no water in the convicts' rooms, and there is one tap in each ward. In the toilets, the showers were functional, and for all convicted persons, 4 showers are functional, which is a really small number.

The reception department in the semi-open ward has been converted into a room for religious rites due to the needs of convicted persons.

The promenade for the people is completely without shade and without any props.

The prison police do not have new equipment (uniform, batons, radios, handcuffs, etc.), and what they have is insufficient and incomplete. They have 30 handcuffs and 8 guns. Employees are not currently facing any threats.

Convicted persons turn to the director with a variety of problems and complaints, and they often confuse rights and conveniences. Also, he receives them for conversation according to his time and commitments.

In the institution, the convicted persons who are engaged are engaged in janitorship, i.e. maintenance of hygiene and tidying of the green areas, both within the institution and its surroundings and in other places that have

requested such a service from the prison. Currently, 11 people are employed in external companies and those who are interested in janitorship, i.e. maintenance of hygiene and maintenance of green areas. Some of the convicted persons receive a certain monetary compensation for their work.

Regarding resocialization, we can conclude that the activities that the institution undertakes for resocialization are insignificant and convicted persons do not have any opportunities for activities, which is really inappropriate considering the fact that, according to the information, 10 people are employed in the resocialization sector. Convicted persons do not have any vocational activities.

Disciplinary procedures against convicted persons usually refer to the possession of phones illegally brought into the institution, as well as to narcotics, as well as to disobeying orders, for which solitary confinement is imposed. For the most part, the convicted persons do not serve the disciplinary punishments as a whole. Regarding the use of means of coercion, appropriate records are kept by the institution and the employees.

Health protection

Healthcare in Prison Kumanovo is carried out by the medical technician employed in the institution. A doctor comes to the institution twice a week, and due to the great distance of the institution from the cities of Kumanovo and Sveti Nikole, emergency medical assistance cannot arrive in time to provide health care to the convicted persons.

In the facility, there is no opportunity for the treatment of convicted addicts with appropriate therapy, and only a small part of the opiate-addicted persons in the prison receive appropriate therapy according to evidence-based medicine. These people receiving therapy are people who have been transferred from other facilities. In a conversation with representatives of the institution, we were told that when convicted drug addicts come to the institution, the authorities do not provide adequate therapy. Inadequate treatment results in violence, fights, depression, anxiety, auto-aggression, suicide attempts, aggression and the formation of a black market in evidence-based medicine addiction treatment drugs. Drugs are also present in the prison - marijuana and illegally obtained buprenorphine

lingual tablets, according to the statements of the employees and the convicted persons.

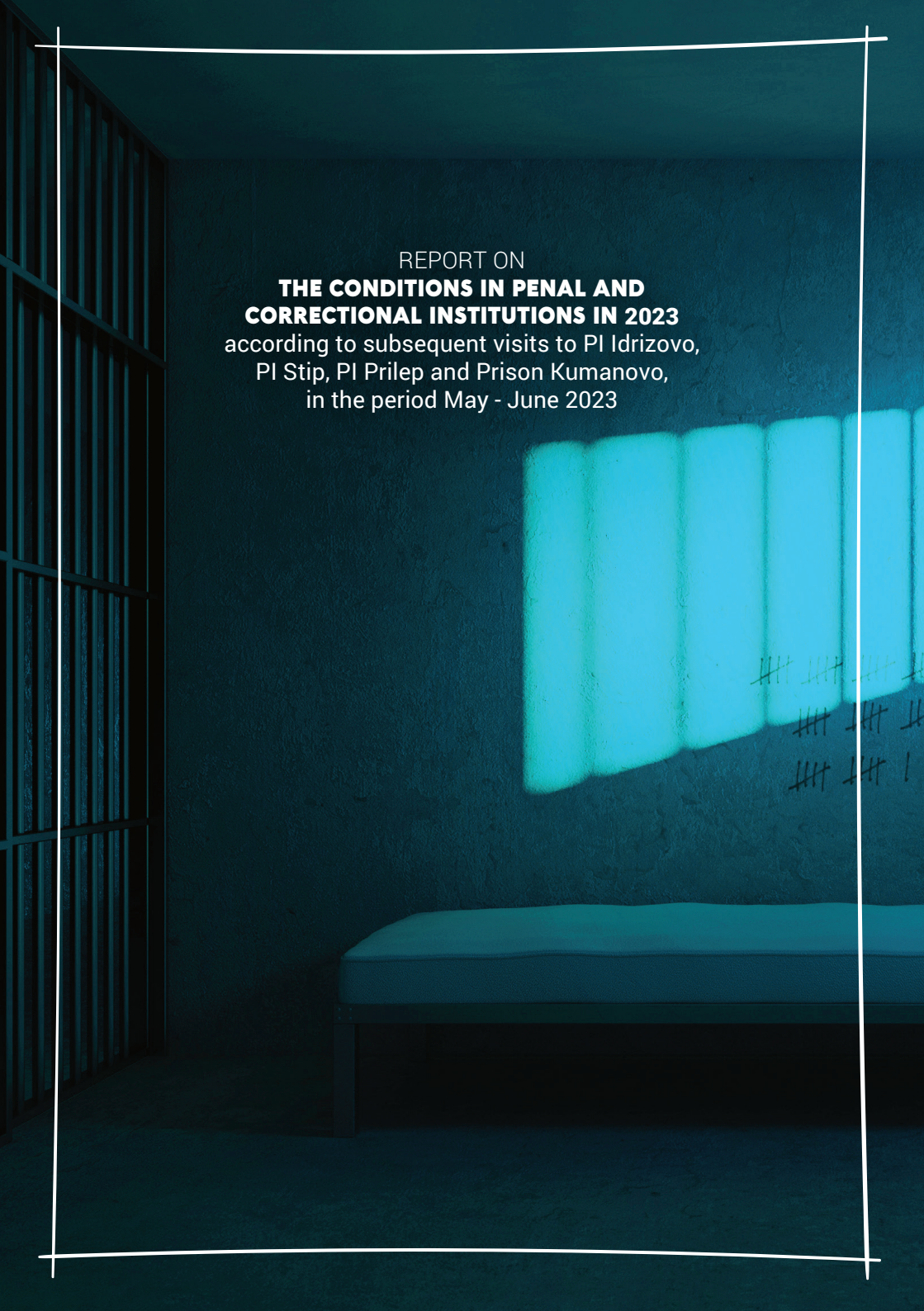
Legal aid

During the visit, we spoke with a total of 10 convicted persons who needed legal advice. The most common problems they face are related to inadequate health care, the enjoyment of amenities, transfer to another penal institution, other criminal proceedings, etc.

Recommendations

- The Ministry of Justice and the Administration for the Execution of Sanctions, jointly with the Prison Kumanovo, to find a solution to the water supply problem;
- The Administration for the Execution of Sanctions should make efforts to refurbish the promenade for convicted persons in the closed department, in order to provide more conditions for quality leisure time;
- The Administration for Execution of Sanctions and Prison Kumanovo to provide conditions for leisure, sports, educational and vocational activities for all convicted persons in order to spend quality free time;
- Prison Kumanovo to take actions to improve hygiene in the institution;
- To increase the number of employed members of the prison police and persons in the resocialization sector;
- The Administration for Execution of Sanctions to provide appropriate and new equipment for members of the prison police;
- PI Kumanovo to deal appropriately with convicted drug addicts in accordance with evidence-based medicine;
- The Ministry of Health should take measures to improve access to health care, namely:
 - Increasing the number of health workers in order to provide adequate health care;
 - Timely provision of therapy for convicted persons and escort to medical facilities is necessary;

- It is necessary for all persons for whom there is an indication for treatment with buprenorphine or methadone to receive it without payment from their own funds, but from the addiction program of the Ministry of Health;
- It is necessary to document all changes in the medical documentation, to correspond with the current situation;
- Regular monitoring (screening for substance use) and assessment of the condition of persons who are included in an opioid treatment program by health professionals is required, not only when starting therapy but regularly and occasionally, especially when making a decision to reduce or to increase the therapy;
- Psychoeducation is needed for people with addiction in prison;
- Psycho-social help and support is needed for convicted persons;
- Education about addiction diseases, treatment and its benefits is needed for uniformed persons and other prison staff.

A photograph of a prison cell. On the left is a metal barred door. In the center is a bed with a white sheet. On the right is a window with white bars, through which some light is visible. The walls are a light, textured color. The entire image is framed by a thin white border.

REPORT ON
**THE CONDITIONS IN PENAL AND
CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN 2023**
according to subsequent visits to PI Idrizovo,
PI Stip, PI Prilep and Prison Kumanovo,
in the period May - June 2023