



## Building Free of Torture & Impunity Societies in Western Balkans

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# RIGHTS OF PERSONS DEPRIVED OF LIBERTY IN SERBIAN PRISON SYSTEM



Building Free of Torture & Impunity  
Societies in Western Balkans  
An EU-funded Project



The Youth Initiative for Human Rights  
in Serbia (YIHRSRB)

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Societies in Western Balkans**  
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Rights of persons deprived of  
liberty in Serbian prison system

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# I SUMMARY

THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK of the system for the execution of criminal sanctions in respect of the adoption of the necessary legislation has in the last three years produced a new structure of the system of alternative sanctions, laid the foundation for a greater and better use of post-penal acceptance, and also set the task of transforming the Commissioner service into a Probation service before the system. The mentioned changes, which were produced by the modified regulations of two laws and strategy, have not fully managed to take root in practice, however the Directorate for execution of criminal sanctions must continue insisting on their implementation.

Inadequate treatment in prison services remains a constant, especially when it comes to healthcare. The cases listed did not get their disciplinary epilogue despite the fact that in several instances the initiative to resolve certain cases came from the security services, the warden or the educators. Although the abuse of prisoners has been marginalized in comparison with the period 3 or 5 years ago, as confirmed by the reports of the Ombudsman office and the CPT, inadequate behaviour on behalf of employees of healthcare services as well as the treatment service in these cases raises concerns. Although the Initiative's team contacted the competent employees working in the services of county jails, the communication of the staff and the lack of humane approach show that, although there is no torture in the 'traditional' sense of the word, in smaller prisons today it is present in the various forms of ill-treatment.

When it comes to the healthcare of prisoners, it is the minimum of functional level, with plenty of room for progress and improvement, primarily because of material, as well as organizational problems. The institutions do not have the physical capacity to meet all the requirements that are placed before them, first and foremost that every institution has got a clinic and a special hospital room. Then,

due to prohibition of employment in the public sector, there is a serious shortage of doctors and nurses, which affects the prisoners greatly since they are denied all-day medical care. In addition, due to the prohibition of employment of security services, for security reasons, convicts cannot be taken to see a specialist when they want to, because there are not enough guards to remain in the facility. Cooperation between the Ministry of health and the Ministry of Justice, as well as the Directorate for execution of criminal sanctions is necessary to overcome some basic problems that arise in the daily functioning of institutions.

Members of the treatment services in most county jails in Serbia point out the need for additional training of treatment officers as one of the biggest problems. There is also a need for an increase in number of officers and the intensification of educational programs for educators in the direction of applying of various skills of primarily collective educational activities. Also, the employees of the treatment service point out the application of instruments for risk assessment as being problematic, especially bearing in mind that it significantly affects the overall score for the persons deprived of liberty in the process of reclassification, what is often something that convicts complain about. There has been progress in some county jails where the educational programs conducted by treatment services are continuous, while in the other institutions there is still no progress regarding this issue.

The situation in the system of execution of criminal sanctions in the Republic of Serbia is generally on a functional level but it is necessary to invest a lot of effort in order to bring it to a satisfactory level when it comes to the prevention of abuse, torture and inhuman conditions and treatment of persons deprived of liberty. The overall material and infrastructural conditions in prisons are poor (some of the prison buildings date from the 19th century), which particularly makes the serving of prison sanctions harder. The compliance of regulations and the coordination of the competent ministries and administrations is at a very poor level and rather than having a systematic solutions which would bring efficiency and certainty, a large num-



ber of problems are resolved ad hoc. There are many omissions in the work of all prison services, which are partly the result of the work in poor conditions (workplace conditions, salaries, employment status, benefits or their absence), partly due to negligence and partly because of the indifference of the public and political stakeholders in general to deal with this area.

## II INTRODUCTION

THE PROJECT CALLED „Building free of torture and impunity societies in the Western Balkans“ was implemented by the leading partner - the Youth Initiative for Human Rights Montenegro ((YIHR-CG) member of the Civic Alliance)) and their partners: the Youth Initiative for Human Rights Serbia (YIHRSR), Center for Rehabilitation from traumatism and torture from Albania (ARCT) and the International Council for the rehabilitation of torture victims from Denmark. The project is financially supported by the European Union. The total duration of the project is 30 months, starting from November 2013.

The aim of the project is to contribute to a society without torture through civil society activities aimed against abuse and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, and all of that with the intention to eliminate (or reduce to a minimum) the torture of persons deprived of liberty in Montenegro, Serbia and Albania. The idea is based on international, especially OPCAT standards, and their promotion and education of appropriate stakeholders of their importance.

Another aim of the project was to improve access to, as well as inform the inmates of their rights to legal protection, and to increase exercising of these rights. Among other things, the activities of investigating and documenting the cases of torture and inhuman tre-

atment or punishment are planned within the project, as well as the provision of free legal aid to prisoners. In addition, it is important to familiarize the employees from all prison services with the rights of persons deprived of liberty in order to improve their relations and daily work.

The Initiative's Monitoring team conducted 19 visits in 14 different prisons during this period of 30 months, and 5 of the prisons were visited twice (Correctional institute Čuprija, County jail Zrenjanin, County jail Kragujevac, County jail Čačak and County jail Pančevo) in order to monitor the implementation of recommendations made during the previous visit as well as to record the changes in the conditions and treatment in the institution in the period between the two visits.

In order to implement the mentioned activities as much as possible, in August 2015 we organized a training on the topic „The role of doctors in the prison system in Serbia“ in cooperation with the Directorate for execution of criminal sanctions and the Office of the Ombudsman. The doctors and medical staff from the majority of detention facilities in Serbia had the opportunity to familiarize themselves with international standards in the field of healthcare in prisons and to discuss the problems and challenges they face in their daily work.

The gathering of medical professionals who work in prisons at this panel proved to be productive, which resulted in the organization of another training with the same participants in 2016. On this occasion, particular emphasis was placed on the mental health of inmates.

In addition to these trainings, in the period from January to June 2016, we organized two training sessions for law students who are interested in the field of protection of rights of persons deprived of liberty, as well as for the work of state institutions and civil society on the promotion of the mentioned areas. Special emphasis is placed on the work of the National Preventive Mechanism in Serbia and the work of NGOs which deal with the monitoring of the prison system. Also, the focus on the presentation of the system of alternative sanctions and their application in practice was part of the training.

Following a similar principle, a training for the students of the Faculty of Special Education and Rehabilitation (FASPER) was organized, with the lectures focused on the work of the treatment services in prisons, their challenges and problems. The speakers were the prison employees, the professors from the FASPER, experts on the subject of post-penal acceptance and the representatives of the National Preventive Mechanism.

At this point, we would like to emphasize the excellent cooperation that we have had with other NGOs which are involved in the monitoring of prisons in Serbia (the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia, YUCOM – Lawyers’ Committee for Human Rights, Belgrade Center for Human Rights, NEOSTART – Center for the prevention of crime and post-penal help), as well as with state institutions – the Serbian National Preventive Mechanism and the Directorate for the execution of criminal sanctions. The focus of our work with other NGOs and state institutions was to strengthen the capacities of stakeholders involved in the process of monitoring the prison system through the exchange of experiences, data and reports, as well as through the joint work towards the improvement of the conditions for the persons deprived of liberty.

The Youth Initiative for Human Rights in Serbia would like to thank everyone who contributed to the preparation of this report, partners, associate, as well as state institutions and prisons who helped us with the monitoring visits that we conducted.

### III METHODOLOGY

THE METHODOLOGY THAT we had deployed during the gathering of information for this report was based primarily on local regulations and laws, as well as on previously developed methodology which was created by the YIHR and its regional partners on the project.

The activities were aimed at investigating and documenting cases of human rights violations through monitoring visits to prisons in Serbia. The expert team of the Youth Initiative for Human Rights consisted of lawyers, political scientists and doctors in charge of monitoring the various aspects of prison operations. In order to obtain as accurate as possible information, a combined questionnaire devised according to CPT and the Office of the Ombudsman standards was used during the monitoring visits.

The interviews were conducted with all the services (healthcare, security, treatment, general/legal affairs) in order to find out as much as possible about the situation and the position of inmates. In addition, both group and individual interviews with inmates were conducted for a better insight into the situation and to detect possible cases of torture or abuse. In all monitoring visits, insight into the general material conditions in which inmates serve their sentences was obtained.

Through content analysis of completed questionnaires and the evaluation of the institutions after the monitoring visits, the Initiative's team succeeded in producing this report with specific recommendations as to how to improve the position of the inmates. Also, for the purposes of this report we used the techniques of field research, press clippings, legal analyses, interviews, help line and the official reports of state institutions and international organizations.

In the course of the project, after finding out about the ill-treatment of inmates, the Initiative's team provided legal aid in several cases, which was followed by requests for adequate treatment sent to

prisons through the Office of the Ombudsman. The mentioned cases are presented in Chapter IV of this report.

## *IV* PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS

### A) LEGAL FRAMEWORK

For the duration of the project (2013-2016), there was a significant change of legislation in the field of execution of criminal sanctions in the context of the accession negotiations for Serbia's membership in the European Union. The fundamental document that Serbia adopted is the Strategy of the development of the system for the executions of criminal sanctions for the period (2013-2020)<sup>1</sup>. The Strategy was prepared by the Directorate for the execution of criminal sanctions with the support of the OSCE mission in Serbia, and the National Judicial Reform Strategy (2013-2020)<sup>2</sup> refers to the above mentioned strategy considering that the reform of the system for the execution of criminal sanctions is an integral part of the reforms of the judicial system. One of the important objectives of the Strategy is, as presented by the Minister of Justice and Public Administration, the expansion of the network of Offices for alternative sanctions, as well as creating conditions for the implementation of post-penal treatment of persons after they served their prison sentence.

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1 "Strategy of the development of system for the execution of criminal sanctions in the Republic of Serbia by 2020" (Official Gazette, no. 114/2013): <http://bit.ly/24UImiU>;

2 "National Judicial Reform Strategy for the period 2013-2018.": <http://bit.ly/22dq8pU>;

In accordance with the section of the Strategy which addresses the main challenges in its implementation, the legal framework for the execution of criminal sanctions largely complies with the European and international standards, however in the meantime there has come to a development of some services and the need for the introduction of the institute for whose implementation it is necessary to have a new legal framework. As planned in the Strategy, the amended Law on execution of criminal sanctions (2014)<sup>3</sup> defines the role, competence, organizational and procedural framework for the conduct of the judge for the execution, as a new institute in the criminal justice system. Also, provisions relating to the Commissioner service and the execution of alternative sanctions were removed from the previous Law on Execution of criminal sanctions because this area was defined by the special Law on execution of non-custodial sanctions and measures<sup>4</sup>. The Law on execution of non-custodial sanctions and measures will for the first time define the normative and organizational framework for the transformation of Commissioner service into the Probation service with all the powers that this service must have, from pre-trial proceedings to the post-penal care of the persons released from prison.

Amendments to the Law on execution of criminal sanctions (ZIKS) and the Law on execution of non-custodial sanctions and measures (ZIVSM) were started to be implemented from September 1st 2014. The organization NEOSTART which deals with the post-penal acceptance has stated several times in their publications that the decisions on post-penal acceptance contained in these regulations stipulate primarily the shared jurisdiction between the treatment service which exists in every correctional institute and the Commissioner service which was established within the Department for treatment

3 "Law on execution of criminal sanctions" (Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia, no. 55/2014): <http://bit.ly/1TRHNgo>;

4 "Law on execution of non-custodial sanctions and measures" (Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia, no. 55/2014): <http://bit.ly/23UEjQb>;

and alternative sanctions in the Directorate for execution of criminal sanctions. What stems from the above provisions and what is important to note is the fact that the support for the correctional and commissioner service can also be provided by the „adequate organizations or associations” both during the preparation for the release from prison and following the completion of the sentence. In other words, the Law on execution of criminal sanctions in a general way provides for the possibility of activity of the NGO sector in post-penal help to former convicts / prisoners who are preparing for release.<sup>5</sup>

## B) GENERAL SITUATION IN PRISONS

The current conditions in prisons are not satisfactory. Most do not meet the basic conditions for serving sentences (old buildings, insufficient capacity of housing, unsanitary conditions).

Although the Council of Europe published on March 8th 2016<sup>6</sup> a CPT report on the situation in Serbian prisons referring to the period of 2014, according to which there were many activities undertaken for the reconstruction and expansion of the prison complex, there is still a lot of room for improvement.

In the past two years, activities to expand capacities have been undertaken, for example the initiative for forming a new County jail in Kragujevac and Pančevo, as well as the Correctional institute in Požarevac where the rooms for the people with disabilities and the elderly were suited in a special way.<sup>7</sup> However, after visiting the county jails around Serbia it can be concluded that the expansion of capacities requires gradual investments in order to improve conditions, or

<sup>5</sup> “Life after prison: The results of research of the needs of convicted persons in the post-penal period”, Center for the prevention of crime and post-penal help- NEOSTART (2014): <http://bit.ly/1Ov5wqE>;

<sup>6</sup> “Prison capacity increased for 2500 vacancies”, B92: <http://bit.ly/1VYhFql>;

<sup>7</sup> “New buildings of prisons and courts”, Legal portal: <http://bit.ly/1Ov6seC>;

a capital investment for the construction of new institutions for the execution of criminal sanctions.

All departments in county jails (treatment, security, healthcare) are understaffed. This primarily refers to the security service, where younger staff is essential for the system of the execution of criminal sanctions and working with inmates to function more efficiently. Also, female employees are needed in order to adequately deal with female inmates. In addition, a treatment separate from other inmates has to be provided for the minors in prisons. It is necessary to arrange as soon as possible a system of regular systematic medical checkups for members of the security service because these have not been performed in certain institutions for more than ten years.

Also, we consider it necessary that the security service employees get early retirement benefits which would facilitate the general functioning of the employment system. In the case of the healthcare service it is necessary to hire nurses and technicians as it has been observed that in many prisons it is the security officers who give out medicines to the inmates, which is not and should not be their job.

Since 2011 until now, 24 offices of the commissioner for alternative sanctions have been established in Serbia, and they mostly employ personnel from the department for the treatment of prisoners, which further complicates and hinders quality performance of their primary duty, which is work with inmates in prisons. As stated in the report by other organizations that perform monitoring of detention facilities, the number of commissioners does not correspond to the scope of work for which they were primarily engaged, and on the basis of the monitoring visits we have established that a much larger number of people is needed to conduct the necessary work.<sup>8</sup> Also, the persons who do the job of a Commissioner for alternative sanctions should have the benefits of early retirement, due to control procedures (house detention, house arrest) and also because of the unregulated status of civil servants which further complicates their work.

<sup>8</sup> "Monitoring of the prison system reforms", Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia (2016);



## VILL TREATMENT/ABUSE

DURING THE VISITS to the county jail in Kragujevac and the penal-correctional institution in Čuprija in December 2015, through individual interviews with the inmates as well as through communication with the security and treatment services, the Initiative's monitoring team obtained information about three cases of ill treatment of persons deprived of liberty. In most cases the requests were related to legal assistance from the Initiative's team because of inadequate medical care, and the case of an inmate from the County jail Kragujevac related to the mistreatment of a prisoner by a cook employed in prison kitchen.

### *Case V.G: Inadequate medical care*

Inmate V. G. in Penal-Correctional Institute Čuprija, who came to serve the sentence from the hospital where he was undergoing chemotherapy since he is diagnosed with cancer, was put in the closed ward of the institution. Then, V.G. was moved to the basement. Due to severe pain he was experiencing, the staff moved him to a dark room which is not even intended for the accommodation of inmates. A few days after the visit of the monitoring team, V.G. contacted by phone the members of the monitoring team with a request for a transfer to the Special prison hospital. Although the members of the monitoring team insisted on transferring the inmate, the treatment service of this institution did not agree to transfer inmate V.G. to a special accommodation where he would receive adequate medical care. A few days later, V.G. contacted the Initiative's team to inform that he was released from the institution in Čuprija and that he is undergoing treatment in a special hospital near Niš.

### *Case D.S: Inadequate medical treatment*

Inmate D. S., serving sentence in the closed ward in Čuprija (room 4 which accommodates 25 persons), got the scabies during his

stay at this institution. Because of this he spent 18 days in solitary confinement. According to staff members, due to inadequate conditions of the hospital room, this was the only possible way of isolation from other inmates in order to prevent the spreading of the disease. D.S. mentioned that he waited 4-5 days for the beginning of the “treatment”. As far as the medical treatment is concerned, the inmate got a skin cream to apply on his skin but received no instructions on using it, which had a negative effect on the treatment (it failed) so the inmate remained in the solitary confinement longer than he should have. Moreover, even though he ran out of cream due to his stocky build he was given the cream every four days, which also significantly impacted his recovery and slowed it down.

Due to inadequate medical treatment in the Penal-Correctional Institute Ćuprija, he spent a certain amount of time in the hospital where a nurse employed there incorrectly registered the days the inmate spent in the hospital so that he would not have preferential treatment. Finally, inmate D.S. complained that the written requests for a medical examination must be sent even in emergencies. He also complained that he did not have a button for emergency calls in the solitary confinement, which he needed since he was undergoing a medical treatment.

#### *Beating of inmates and inadequate medical treatment*

Inmate D.S. was present when another inmate sought medical help (cold medicine) from security officers late at night. However, according to inmate D.S., the supervisor (member of the guard) hit the ill inmate on the nose hard and thus caused the inmate to bleed. Inmate D.S. claims that the case was hushed up and that there were no disciplinary proceedings taken against the security officers.

#### *Threats by the commander*

In the Penal-Correctional institute Ćuprija there is a gym used by both the inmates and security officers (guards). There are very few situations when it happens that both groups are there at the same time,

which according to inmate D.S. represents a potential source of conflict and disagreements. On one occasion, inmate D.S. had a disagreement with the commander of the guard while they were working out in the gym (allegedly due to incorrect positioning of the bench for lifting weights). Since then, the commander of the guard has mistreated the inmate D.S., and often threatened him. There was no disciplinary action taken against the commander of the guard.

#### *Case S.A.*

During the group and individual interviews with the inmates in County jail Kragujevac, we were informed of a problem with one of the employees of the service of general affairs – the cooking instructor I.Ć. Several inmates from the semi-open ward complained about the quality of the meals (they think that the cook “deliberately uses less” meat in meals) which causes a lot of tension and hostility towards the employees in the kitchen (threats and curses could be heard). Considering that 70% of food is produced within the prison economy, the inmates feel that a very small part of the produced food is used in the daily preparing of the meals.

In addition, we learned of a similar problem during individual interviews with the inmate S.A. Inmate S.A. had a verbal confrontation with the cooking instructor I.Ć. several times after alleged provocations (cursing family). According to inmate S.A., three months ago (counting from the day of the visit of the Initiative’s team) he complained to the supervisor and the chief of the security service, who presented the problem at the staff meeting, however no action had been taken and the provocations continued. Normally, inmate S.A. works at the prison snack bar and according to the supervisor and the chief of security service he does his work conscientiously and responsibly, and there were never any problems with his behaviour and discipline. According to the inmate S.A. the whole situation was covered up, and the warden asked for his transfer to another work place, what the supervisor and chief of security did not approve. Also, the inmate S.A. mentioned that I.Ć. is protected by the chief of the service for ge-

neral affairs. As the warden did not react to the submitted complaint, inmate S.A. appealed to the Directorate for execution of criminal sanctions, but has not yet received a response. Since then, he is exposed to additional mobbing both in the kitchen and in his workplace.

## VI HEALTHCARE SERVICES

ALL PRISONS THAT the Initiative's team visited have employed on a contract at least one nurse and one general practitioner. Also, every prison has one examination room where nurses stay. These rooms are equipped with the most basic materials and medical equipment, while for more complicated interventions the inmates must go to the city hospital or health center. All prisons visited by our team have a good cooperation with the local health centre and local hospital where persons deprived of liberty undergo all specialist examinations. A small number of institutions is equipped with a dental chair (e.g. the County jail in Subotica). Inmates generally have access to their medical documentation, although according to the employees they are not particularly interested in it, except in cases where they need to continue treatment after release from prison. In that case they ask for a copy of their medical record.

All drugs are procured through tenders, which according to the staff is a much better option than when the drugs were ordered through the Special prison hospital in Belgrade (drugs are not unnecessarily piled up). Methadone therapy is given under the control of methadone centers in Serbia. A very small number of the visited institutions has a psychiatrist employed.

The process of realizing healthcare in some institutions is more formal: the inmate submits a request or a form to the guards or com-

mander to be taken to a prison infirmary for a checkup; while in other institutions the system is informal: the inmate verbally requests to see a doctor or have a checkup. In the prisons with a formal system, the inmates complained that they wait for a response or a specialist examination for several days or weeks, while in the prisons with an informal system there were not so many complaints.

There may also be complaints related to the unavailability of drugs and often use of alternative medicines or treatment methods. A particular problem is the lack of analgesic drugs on the positive list of drugs.

As for confidentiality between the doctor and the patient that segment is still at a low level. Doctors and nurses stated that the guards are often present during the examination of inmates. That practice is contrary with the CPT recommendations, however this practice is justified by the need for the general safety of medical staff.

Some of the biggest problems are: lack of equipment at the prison infirmary for emergencies or more complex procedures; often the lack of hospital rooms and use of improvised prison cells instead of hospital rooms; lack of analgesic drugs on the positive list of drugs (inmates must bring the drugs from home); uneven system of benefit of early retirement for the nurses employed in prisons; privacy of inmates during medical examination.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- ▶ Establish better communication between the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Justice and the Directorate for execution of criminal sanctions in order to improve the general healthcare for persons deprived of liberty (this particularly relates to the continuation of treatment of persons once they are released from prison);
- ▶ Equip the prison infirmaries with modern and functional medical equipment that is needed to provide adequate medical care to inmates;
- ▶ Increase the capacity of health workers, both doctors and nurses, in order to have better access to healthcare services;

- ▶ It is necessary to hire a full time psychiatrist in the prisons where there are no psychiatrists employed. Recruit professional staff (psychologists, therapists, special education teachers, social workers) who would provide daily psycho-social assistance and support to persons deprived of liberty;
- ▶ Unless the safety of the medical staff is at risk, the security officers, as a rule, should not attend the medical examination of inmates. In the events of endangered safety it is necessary to alert the relevant persons who would authorize the officers to be present at the medical examinations and in these cases report should be made.

## VII OTHER ISSUES

### A) PRISON STAFF: GENERAL INFORMATION

Number of employees in the prison departments (services) which were visited by the Initiative's team is mostly below the number anticipated by the systematization of jobs. The only services that are not understaffed and do not suffer the consequences of the lack of employees are the services for general affairs, while the treatment, security and medical services have serious difficulties in work. It should be taken into account that with the Law on Amendments and Supplements to the Law on Budget system<sup>9</sup> from 2013, the Government of the Republic of Serbia introduced a ban on recruitment in the public sector, which also applies to the correctional institutions.

<sup>9</sup> "Law on Amendments and Supplements to the Law on Budget System" (2013): <http://bit.ly/1Ovtjb8>;

The number of security officers in all of the institutions that the Initiative's team visited is low (below the number anticipated by the systematization of jobs). This problem is solved in practice by overtime or by maximum rationalization of activities which involve prison guards. As the CPT stated in their report for Serbia: *„the successful establishment of adequate relationship between staff and inmates depends largely on an adequate number of staff present at any given moment (...) low coefficient of staff (...) does not help the development of positive relationships and generates unsafe environment“*. In addition to this, the problem arises also because a number of employees will retire, and due to the ban on recruitment new security officers can not be hired, which leads to difficulties in the operation of these services or the prison in general.

Training courses for the employees in the security services are normally organized at the *Center for the training of employees*, but the employees told us that trainings have not been organized for several years, or if the trainings have been organized, they have not been invited. A similar problem exists with the systematic medical checkups of the security officers, which have not been performed in some cases for up to ten years.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- ▶ Map out in which institutions there is the biggest need for the increase of the number of security officers and announce competitions for filling jobs for easier and safer operation of detention facilities;
- ▶ Organize trainings for security officers at least on an annual basis;
- ▶ Organize medical checkups for the security officers.

### B) CONTACT WITH THE OUTSIDE WORLD

According to the *Law on execution of criminal sanctions*, convicts have the right to a visit by a spouse, children, parents, adoptees, adop-

tive parents and other relatives twice a month, and the warden may approve visits of other persons. The visit lasts at least one hour. The time, duration, manner of visit and appearance of the room for visits are arranged by the internal regulations of the institution. In addition, the Law stipulates that the convicted person has the right to spend three hours with a spouse, children or other close person in the special facilities once in two months. The manner of exercising this right, the appearance of the special rooms for visits and determining the circle of close persons are governed by internal regulations of the institution. In the interviews with inmates we received complaints about strict adherence to the rules regarding visits (in several situations women and children were forced to wait for the start of the visiting time outside the prison in bad weather). In addition, in some prisons, the inmates serving sentences in the closed regime of serving sentences are entitled to one visit per month, which was also observed by a delegation of CPT during their visits. CPT has compiled a recommendation stating that *all convicted prisoners, regardless of the manner of serving sentences, should have the right to a visit at least one hour every week. Furthermore, it should be allowed to the inmates whose families live far away from the prison to add up all the unused periods of visits. It is necessary to change the current laws and regulations in this regard.* Some of the visited institutions did not have special rooms for the visits of the spouse (in some institutions they are in plans to be built while in others this kind of facility is not in plans). In addition, due to poor material conditions the rooms for standard visits are multifunctional (room for religious ceremonies, receiving counsel).

In addition to these visits, the inmates have the right to receive a visit from a lawyer or trustee who represents them or a person who the inmate invited in order to give them full powers of representation.

Under the Law on execution of criminal sanctions, convicts have the right to a phone conversation at their own expense, in accordance with the regulations governing the internal regulations of the institution. Most of the complaints about the exercise of this right are related to the price of calls (the inmates think that since Orion, the



new provider, took over the implementation of this service the price has increased and the quality remained the same), and the manner of exercising this right. In fact, in some institutions the time to exercise the rights of using a phone coincides with the time for the walk, which reduces the possibility of exercising both rights. In addition, in some institutions, due to the large number of inmates, some of them are not able to exercise either of these rights. The administrations of these institutions justified these situations by stating that it is impossible to harmonize exercising these two rights for different manners (regimes) of serving sentences, as well as by insufficient number of guards in the security service in order to achieve a safe exercise of these rights.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- ▶ Regardless of the regime of serving the sentence, all inmates should have the right to a visit for at least one hour every week;
- ▶ In the institutions where material conditions permit, provide a room for conjugal visits
- ▶ In the institutions where material conditions permit, provide a room for visits separated from the other rooms
- ▶ Allow the inmates to exercise the right to a phone call throughout the day

### c) COMPLAINTS PROCEDURES AND EXTERNAL INSPECTIONS

If an inmate feels that some of his/her rights have been violated during their stay at the correctional institute, they have a right to submit an oral or written complaint to the administration, the execution judge, or the regional or state Office of the Ombudsman. In a few institutions the inmates complained that the prison administration does not respond to their complaints or if the complaints are addressed outside the institution the inmates wonder whether they were sent out at all. The largest number of complaints relates to legal pro-

ceedings before the courts.

Unannounced visits and external inspections of the prison institutions may be conducted by the execution judge or the representatives of the National preventive mechanism from the Office of the Ombudsman of the Republic of Serbia.

According to the Law on execution of criminal sanctions, individual and group visits to the institution are approved by the Chief of the Administration. Representatives of domestic and foreign institutions and associations dealing with the protection of human rights are allowed to visit the institutions. Exceptionally, visits may be denied if it is required for reasons of safety and security in the institution. In order to ensure the transparency of work of the Administration, the representatives of the mass media, experts who study crime as well as students of relevant faculties are allowed to visit the institutions. The Chief of Administration can permit the persons visiting the institution to have a conversation with the inmates, with or without the presence of an employee of the institution. When it comes to the NGO sector, besides the team from the Youth Initiative for Human Rights, monitoring visits are conducted by the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights, the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights YUKOM and the Belgrade Center for Human Rights.

All these organizations provide legal aid for persons deprived of liberty, if there is a need for it.

## VIII MONITORING VISITS

### PENAL-CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTION IN ĆUPRIJA

*Date of the visit: October 10<sup>th</sup> 2014.*

The Penal-Correctional institution in Ćuprija is designed to accommodate 176 persons, but at the time of the visit of the Initiative's team there were about 200 persons – out of which 164 persons are convicts and 6 or 7 are convicted for an offense. The institution is an open ward type, there is also a semi-open ward and there are 42 persons serving sentences in the closed ward. The warden claims that the closed ward presents a problem.

Among the inmates, besides persons of Orthodox confession, there are also persons of Catholic and Muslim confessions. Religious services and lectures are conducted only for inmates of Orthodox confession. The Catholic and Muslim priest (not the priest from the Islamic community in Serbia) are „on standby“. Regarding the ethnic structure of the inmates, besides Bosniaks (Bošnjak) there are also inmates of Roma ethnicity and sometimes inmates of Albanian nationality from Preševo and Bujanovac.

The warden states that there are only one or two employees on the closed ward and that there are no safety conditions for more employees. „Market research“ was taking place at this time for the purposes of a bigger rate of employment on the closed ward – packaging of envelopes, CD casings etc.

People who serve their sentences in semi-open and open wards have access to the economy where they can do farming, poultry raising and keep livestock. There is also a sawmill but it is still not used. Within the department for general affairs there is also a car mechanic workshop which is used mainly by the administration officials, and it

employs inmates. Around 15 people are employed by the third parties – in public utility companies and in private companies (Rubin, Ždrelo...). A project of training for a baker is being conducted and 4 persons are being trained. The warden states that a total of 50-70 people are employed on a daily basis.

According to the systematization of jobs in the security service, 70 positions for security officers are anticipated, and in reality 55 security officers are employed. The warden said that all of the services lack about 30% of the employees. The security service employs one female commander. On the day of the visit among the inmates there was one person with a physical disability (no leg).

On every working day one of the doctors is present, and on weekends, if necessary, the doctors are on call. The institution has an arrangement with the health center regarding dental services for the inmates, and according to the warden there is an idea to open a dentistry at the institution. Specialist and psychiatric medical services are provided in the hospital in Čuprija, and persons who need operative procedures or undergo post-operative treatment are sent to a Special prison hospital in Belgrade. The treatment service employs a psychologist.

To the day of our visit, the judge for execution did not visit this institution.

Drugs are procured from the pharmacy in the health center, on a daily basis, and in the future the plan is to procure them through tenders. Methadone therapy is given out by in-house doctors, and the therapy is controlled by a hospital in Paraćin.

There have been no cases of rebellions and significant violence and self-harm. In an interview with the administration it was stated that among the inmates „there is probably an informal system but it is not organized“ and that informal groups do not last long.

There is no healthcare service – on a permanent contract there is one senior technician and another person, and two persons have temporary contracts. Other services are present.

In the closed ward there are three rooms. The inmates are en-

titled to two hours of walking daily in the „boxes“ that have benches, greenery and a covered section. The wall and ceiling of one box (left box), next to the toilet entrance, are decrepit from moisture. This was one of the complaints the inmates had.

**RECOMMENDATION** Rebuild the ruined portion of the box next to the toilet entrance.

The room 14A („fourteen“) has 14 beds in the bedroom. The door of the bedroom is locked in the period from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. In the living room the inmates have at their disposal a TV room, chess board and a table for table tennis. Smoking is allowed in the bathroom and in the bedroom and living room it is not.

There are radiators and central heating. The inmates have at their disposal storage cabinets and the items that are not stored there are put in boxes. Repairs on the window, according to inmates, were done one day before the visit of Initiative's team.

In the room 14B (OPN) there are 22 beds and it is both a living room and a bedroom. Call button is in the lobby (it activates both visual and audio signal).

Inmates in the closed ward with which the Initiative's team spoke complained of the pedagogue with whom they do not have adequate and sufficiently frequent communication. The pedagogue was not in the office during the visit of our team so it was not possible to ascertain the details regarding these complaints, but regular and adequate communication with the inmates is crucial in their rehabilitation therefore improving this communication is certainly one of the recommendations. The inmates emphasized that no one from the administration comes to see them so there is room for improvement in this aspect as well.

The inmates also complained that they have to wait for a long time for medical services: waiting time for the dentist is 15 days, for a visit to a psychiatric hospital 20 days, etc.

Food is satisfactory.

The inmates said that the duration of the walk is one hour and that a two-hour walk must be approved after filling a request.

The inmates also said the security officers are fair.

The inmates state that they can not get pate in metal packaging which was not an issue in other prisons we visited so it is recommended that this practice is reconsidered.

Department with special supervision (14B) has video surveillance system in the room which is also the bedroom – 11 inmates are accommodated here, and there are 14 bunk beds. Bedding is changed every ten days or more.

In this room there is one person with a disability, and the prison provided him with a prosthetic leg. Still, the inmate complained that he can not independently use the toilet, which is not an unsolvable problem, and with a small investment (for example, it is even not necessary to buy a lavatory because a movable chair can solve this problem as well). The engagement of the prison administration regarding the purchase of the prosthetic leg is praiseworthy, however there is still some room for improvements.

**RECOMMENDATION** In the case of the arrival of persons with physical disabilities in prison, it must be made possible for them to use the toilet independently if they can do that when they are free.

The inmates complain about the open ward, presumably because they see through the bars the persons serving sentences on a lighter regime, while they can walk only within the boxes located in the opposite direction and enclosed by high walls. This may be the reason for a very pronounced dissatisfaction of the persons on the closed ward (dissatisfaction is loudly expressed both in the presence of the guards and when the Initiative's team held interviews without the guards.)

In the solitary confinement there is a bunk bed. The toilet is not separated from the rest of the room. There is a table and a chair. There is no panic button, so the inmate must knock on the door to get the

security officer's attention. There is no window on the door which would facilitate the work of security services. In the second solitary confinement there is no table.

**RECOMMENDATION** Install panic buttons in the solitary confinements.

**RECOMMENDATION** Rearrange the furniture so that it is away from the toilet or separate the toilet from the rest of the room with a screen.

The room where the inmates who work are accommodated is airy, clean and generally in good condition – the inmates have at their disposal a TV, games, chess board, table for table tennis and tables and chairs. Payment for work is delayed for ten months.

There is a great deal of interest for cultural and sports activities. All of the inmates who have extended rights are encouraged to participate in them. Eight inmates from the closed ward participated in the activities. From sports and games available are football and mini-football, chess board and dominoes.

There is also a gym for the employees. Employees do not do their medical checkups in the prison. There is religious service and religious education for Orthodox Christians.

The meals appropriate to the religious and dietary needs of inmates are prepared.

The hospital room in the semi-open ward has 12 beds. On the net for the capturing of flies and insects there were many insects and more attention should be paid to hygiene.

The library has about 2000 books and the most read are rules, regulations and conventions. There is humidity and it is recommended to remediate this problem so that the printed materials would not be damaged.

In the room where persons punished for misdemeanors are accommodated there are 12 beds and only 2 persons.

In the room 14B the inmates complain that they do not receive legal aid and that lawyers and pedagogues do not come to see them. One inmate complained about the late notification of the accident in which the members of his family were injured. The inmates also complain of a lack of physical activity. They complain as well about the lack of work engagement and one inmate claims that he offered to work on plastic doors and windows but his request was denied.

Special conjugal visits are not provided. Visits are carried out in the living room of room „fourteen“.

*Date of the visit: November 30<sup>th</sup> 2015.*

The monitoring team of the Youth Initiative for Human Rights conducted a monitoring visit to the Penal-Correctional institution Čuprija on November 30th 2015. This is the second visit to this institution within this project, conducted with the aim of monitoring the implementation of the recommendations given during the previous visit, as well as recording changes in the conditions and treatment in the institution in the period between the two visits.

Although the Penal-Correctional institution Čuprija was designed as an open and semi-open type, there is also a closed ward in this institution. This causes inadequate conditions as well as unsatisfactory treatment of persons who are accommodated in the closed ward (considering that the conditions and the qualifications of the treatment service are appropriate for work with persons who are serving sentences in open and semi-open wards. Inmates who are placed at the closed ward can see the inmates from the open and semi-open ward using some conveniences (they spend time outdoors, go to work or visit family over the weekend), which causes additional tension in the closed ward.

In the closed ward there are three bedrooms, but the accommodation and hygiene in these bedrooms are not uniform. In one of the bedrooms, the common room is not big enough to be appropriately used by all the persons accommodated in the bedroom.

The institution has a library, studio for painting and a coordinator for sports activities, however all of these special benefits are ava-



ilable only to the inmates in open and semi-open wards. One of the solitary confinements has been converted into a studio for painting which can be used by the inmates from the closed ward, however this studio does not have the same resources as the studio in the open ward.

„The conjugal visits room“ is in the final stages of renovation and will be put into operation (Initiative's monitoring team did not have direct access to this room because the person who holds the key was not present in the institution during our visit). In interviews with inmates, they expressed doubt that it will be possible to use this room in the near future, considering that it has been in final stages for months now.

Inmates from closed ward expressed the greatest deal of dissatisfaction with the work of the pedagogues from the treatment service, as well as with the work of the healthcare service. According to one inmate from the closed ward, when he got ill with scabies he was isolated in the solitary confinement which was treated as a hospital room (the monitoring team observed that a sign „sickroom“ was put on the door of the solitary confinement). The inmate was treated as if he was in solitary confinement even though he was in isolation due to illness. During his time in isolation the inmate was denied visits.

Inmates have expressed dissatisfaction with the fact that they are unable to be admitted to talk to the prison warden and with the fact that the warden does not visit different wards of the institution. The only contact with the administration can be achieved through pedagogues.

The inmates in the closed ward have also expressed dissatisfaction with an instrument-questionnaire which is used for risk assessment (on the basis of which the inmates are classified into treatments), because they feel that the decisions on classification are arbitrary and dependent on the perception and mood of the pedagogues. Additionally, after a subsequent assessment on the basis of which it is possible to transfer inmates from the closed ward to a ward with more benefits they do not receive any written decision about

that, instead they are verbally informed by the pedagogues (according to some inmates, it happens that oral information is absent).

In a later interview with the chief of the treatment service, she said that she was not aware of the complaints filed by inmates and that the administration complies with the provisions laid down and that they apply the questionnaire adequately during the classification of inmates.

## COUNTY JAIL IN ZRENJANIN

*Date of the visit: November 17<sup>th</sup> 2014.*

At the time of the visit, there were 170 inmates there, of which 40 are detainees and 17 are punished for misdemeanors. The warden believes there are more returnees than there should be and that the prison population consists of „mostly multiple recidivists“. At the time of the visit there was one woman detained and no minors.

The building of the County jail is also the place for police custody. The procedure is such that the police officer visits the arrested person in a separate room (solitary confinement). The police consider this a resolved situation.

The warden of the prison is aware that it is possible that in the prison, 4 square and 8 cubic meters are not provided for each inmate.

The prison has a small (but recently expanded) yard for walking and according to the warden the inmates often refuse to go out for a walk.

During 2014 the warden received (and mostly refused) 4 or 5 complaints, primarily about the inadequate health service. The County jail does not have its own doctor, and a doctor comes from the health center every day for two hours. The psychiatrist comes once a week, and in cases with methadone treatment he may come urgently, or the inmate is taken to the emergency room to receive the therapy. A nurse distributes the methadone therapy.

The complaints about the treatment relate to the categorization of inmates (for example why is someone in the V category etc.), then

about the weekend leaves, transferring to one section of the prison economy.

The warden complained about the problem of extensive documentation that must be kept („We are swamped with documents“).

The warden states that there are positions for 40 employees within the prison economy, and that due to formal procedures they „barely manage“ to provide jobs for 16 persons.

In the treatment groups there are 30 inmates per one pedagogue, which is a ratio that hardly provides a quality group work. The warden stressed that they strictly adhere to the questionnaires they fill in and that the first questionnaire usually „permanently establishes“ the treatment of the inmate.

Inmates who work are engaged in the prison economy, in the city heating plant (cleaning jobs), market (cleaning jobs), and they also work for the municipality and the Red Cross (for the soup kitchen, they only charge up to the amount of wages in the prison).

The warden believes that the conditional remission has not yet taken root and that in the case when the court denies the plea for parole and the prison supports it, the message sent to other inmates is that they should endure to the end.

Before the visit of the Initiative's team the judge for execution visited the prison once. She held several meetings with the warden and advised her on good practices which should be continued.

The warden stated that there are no problems with the language barrier and that all inmates speak Serbian language. She also stated that among the employees there are minority members, such as Roma, Romanians and Hungarians. There were some irregular migrants among the inmates but not at the time of the visit.

For Good Friday meatless food is served to all inmates. Meatless food is also served for the Catholic holidays. The inmates of Muslim faith receive meals in accordance with religious rules. It is recommended that the inmates are provided with a choice of food which is not meatless during the holidays when the inmates of Orthodox faith are fasting.

In the prison there had been disciplinary procedures, but not at the time of our visit and not because of the treatment of inmates.

Coverage of video surveillance is good, but what is missing are the signs on all the rooms which are covered by video surveillance.

**RECOMMENDATION** Place signs of video monitoring on all rooms which are covered by video surveillance.

The warden feels that there is no need for the improvement of the healthcare. She also said that the competition for general practitioners was opened but no one applied for this position. Sanitary inspection comes once a month and takes swabs from surfaces in the facilities.

The warden claims that she receives everyone who comes to see her.

In the courtyard there are also weights, fountain and a table for tennis table. It is equipped with cameras and infrared barrier. There is no overhang that would protect the inmates from rain or snow.

**RECOMMENDATION** Construct an overhang in the courtyard.

One of the inmates complained of health problems and that he does not know what was the result of his medical examination. It is recommended that the inmates are informed of their own health status after the medical examinations because there is no reason to keep this information from them.

In one of the rooms which the Initiative's team visited during the tour of the prison it was very cold, the inmates were wearing jackets and complained about the low temperature. Since similar rooms in the County jail were warmer, it is recommended to check whether the heating works well during the colder days, and that the cold rooms are additionally heated.

*Date of the visit: December 11<sup>th</sup> 2015*

*\* The visit was organized by the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights whose monitoring team was joined by one member of the monitoring team from the Youth Initiative for Human Rights*

Within this project, the Initiative's team visited the County jail in Zrenjanin for the second time.

On the day of the visit of the monitoring team in the County jail Zrenjanin there were a total of 212 inmates. Of the total number, 110 persons are convicted inmates, 17 persons are punished for misdemeanors and 86 persons are in custody (there was an increase in the number of people held in custody for 100% while the increase of 25% is recorded only in the cases of domestic violence). According to the sequential solution, convicts who are sentenced to one year in prison are placed in the County jail Zrenjanin, however many of them are involved in other proceedings before courts in Serbia.

The capacity of the prison, if fully complied with the standards, is 150 persons. Official and administrative facilities located on one of the floors also accommodate inmates who are serving their sentences on the open regime.

The persons in custody are generally detained on average from 6 to 7 months, especially in cases when it is expected they will be sentenced to 30 or 40 years in prison. A detainee who has been in custody the longest is there since February 2013.

At the time of the visit of the monitoring team, 4 minors (16 years old) were in detention and they were not separated from adults. The minors were separated in two detention rooms.

In some cases minors spent a year in custody in this prison before being sent to juvenile Correction Center in Kruševac.

In the County jail Zrenjanin there are 59 employees, of which 34 persons are employed in the security service. There are no female employees in the security service and the institution is not included in the competition on filling additional positions in the security service.

In the treatment service there are the chief, two pedagogues and one person in charge of sports activities.

A nurse is employed full time in the institution while a doctor comes every day for two hours. The psychiatrist works in hospital in Zrenjanin and comes to the institution as needed.

The security officers have the benefit of early retirement, as well as the warden and two persons from the treatment service (the nurse does not have this benefit).

A priest from the Russian Orthodox church comes to prison, and for the inmates of Catholic faith a Catholic priest comes to serve Mass before the New year's. For inmates of Muslim faith the diet is adapted in accordance with the religious rules, however there are no religious rituals performed. Within the institution there is a room which is the common living room where the priests come to perform religious rituals.

At the time of the visit of the monitoring team there were no foreign nationals, however it happens from time to time that there are foreigners in the County jail Zrenjanin.

At the time of the visit of the monitoring team, in the closed ward there were 61 inmates, in the semi-open ward 40 and in the open ward 10 inmates.

The convicts stay in the admission ward from 10 to 12 days on average, although there are convicts in the admission ward awaiting further classification for two months already.

Therapy for anger management is organized for inmates with problems of drug addiction and alcoholism, while the literacy program is mostly conducted for inmates of Roma ethnicity.

In the County jail Zrenjanin there is no capacity for organizing VET trainings for inmates. There are also no physical capacities to separate the older inmates in private rooms.

Although there are two courtyards in the prison, at the time of the visit of the monitoring team only one yard was in operation due to construction work done in the second yard. In the courtyard there is a small grassy space, as well as a few improvised pieces of gym equipment on which inmates can exercise. In the buildings there is no opportunity for physical exercise. The time for walking is limited to one hour a day.

The inmates from the closed ward are engaged in activities within the prison, such as working as a hygienist or doing jobs in the kitchen.

In the semi-open ward, in the space of about 30 square meters there are 15 inmates convicted for crimes together with one person convicted for misdemeanor. The inmates expressed their complaints regarding the quality of the food which is often same and it comes down to cheese, pate or jam. They compensate for this lack of variety by eating the food from their packages. The inmates also had complaints about the healthcare service. One inmate waited for an ultrasound for 1.5-2 months, which was not followed by any kind of medical treatment even though his health problems continued.

In the section of the prison where misdemeanor convicts are accommodated the rooms are not locked, however considering that on the same floor there are also detainees it is not possible for them to leave their rooms for this reason.

Inmates in the closed ward complained about the lack of water on the third floor where the rooms of the closed ward are located, as well as about the poor conditions of toilets in rooms (common showers are in the basement). The inmates are aware that parole and extending benefits for them is only a theoretical possibility and it does not happen in reality, which is why they hope that during the process of EU integration Serbia will have to amend its legislation and automate the process of conditional release after 3/4 of served prison sentence. Inmates in the closed ward do not have any information whether anyone from that ward had ever been engaged in performing a job in the prison. Spouse-family visit is realized by adding an additional hour to the regular visits (where in reality the family visit is joined with the regular visit although it is supposed to be an added convenience). Health service is unsatisfactory considering that there are long waits for examinations and many drugs are on the negative list and inmates must pay for them themselves. According to the inmates the judge for the execution of criminal sanctions does not visit them.

It was noted that the forms which the convicts can use in order to address the various institutions in relation to their requests and



protection of rights are not publicly visible anywhere nor made accessible to inmates. As explained by the employees of the treatment service these forms are accessible to inmates who get them from the treatment service at their request..

In the prison, 80% of employees are hired on the basis of temporary contracts. In the treatment service there are two pedagogues from the institution and two visiting pedagogues hired due to increased workload. One pedagogue has got a group of 40 to 50 convicts. The chief of the treatment service performs the admission of the inmates and also has her group of inmates that she works with.

Regarding the alternative sanctions, although there is Zrenjanin-based office for alternative sanctions, to the day of the visit of the monitoring team a commissioner for alternative sanctions had not been elected, which creates a further burden on the treatment service whose several members also engage in the implementation of alternative sanctions.

25 inmates are entitled to special rights that are realized out of prison.

At the time of the visit of the monitoring team, 6 inmates were in isolation.

## COUNTY JAIL IN KRAGUJEVAC

*Date of the visit: November 17<sup>th</sup> 2014.*

Material conditions in the prison in Kragujevac are not at a satisfactory level and the prison administration is aware of this fact. The construction of a new prison that would solve the problem of prison overcrowding is in plans for the future, so it is unlikely that the conditions in the present prison will drastically improve, unless there is a drastic fall in the number of inmates.

On the day of the visit, there were 39 detainees (including two women) and 70 convicts and persons punished for misdemeanors, thus making the capacities of the prison almost fully booked. Howe-



ver, it should be pointed out that some rooms with full occupancy do not meet the standards of 4 square and 8 cubic meters per inmate.

Among the inmates there were persons of Roma and Bosniak ethnicities, and among detainees there were Albanian nationals.

The inmates can work in the prison economy, snack bar, workshops, garage and boiler room, and working is possible for the inmates serving sentences in the closed ward. However, in the conversations with the inmates from the closed ward we received complaints about the lack of work engagement.

Cooperation with the judge for the execution of criminal sanctions is good, according to the warden of the prison. The warden says that they are in daily contact, and the judge visits the prison once a month (his visit was arranged on the day after the visit of the Initiative's team).

A doctor and two nurses take care of the inmates' health. Specialist health services are provided in the Clinical center in the city and the warden pointed out the good cooperation with this institution. At the time of the visit, among the inmates there was a person sentenced to 6 months in prison who regularly went to the hospital for dialysis treatment at the prison's cost. The therapy is given out by the nurses, in accordance with the standards.

The menu is adapted to the religious needs, and there is adequate food for one diabetic inmate.

Orthodox priest comes to the prison as needed, and a Muslim cleric comes at the time of Eid al-Adha holiday. Icons are made in the workshop.

There is a vacancy for a psychologist, as well as for 7 guards.

The inmates are generally not allowed to spend time outdoors two hours every day and the warden states that it is difficult to harmonize the time for going outdoors for different prison rooms and different categories of inmates. This could possibly be achieved by partitioning the courtyard, but most probably it will be done as part of the systemic solution with the construction of the new prison. Inmates can engage in sports activities three times a week. There is a table

for table tennis and the semi-open ward has got the court for minifootball. The prison administration is aware that there is not much other content besides the mentioned activities.

Visits are conducted on weekends. There is no room for conjugal visits and a pedagogue said that a portion of the inmates use special benefits so they do not even need this room. However, this does not include the inmates from the closed ward and that should be borne in mind, so it is recommended to provide one room for conjugal visits.

**RECOMMENDATION** Provide a room for conjugal visits/family or children visits.

On the day of the visit, the closed ward was nearly full. The Initiative's team was not allowed to do a group interview with the inmates on this ward without the presence of a guard, because of, as the team was told, security risk. There was a certain amount of wonder about our proposal (this was the only situation during the visits where we were not able to do a group interview without the presence of the guard). We had a group interview with the presence of the guard, and we were allowed to conduct individual interviews without the presence of the guards with individuals who expressed a desire to talk, for what we provided another room.

Recommendation: Consider the possibility of group interviews without the presence of the guards on the closed ward during the visits of NGOs. This does not necessarily pose a security risk, and it may increase the trust between the inmates and the prison administration, to be more precise security service.

One of the complaints of the inmates on the closed ward is low level of engagement / employment.

Besides the closed ward, the biggest problem is overcrowding in rooms and very little space per inmate. The Initiative's team toured the rooms of about 16 square meters where 7 out of 8 beds, or even all 8 of them, were occupied. In some rooms there are triple bunk beds. Although the third level of the bed was not occupied during the time

of the visit of the Initiative's team in any of the rooms that the team visited (except for storage), the security service informed us that the third level is used in exceptional circumstances (this explanation was specifically related to the room for the accommodation of the persons punished for misdemeanors). The walls and ceilings in some rooms were damp.

**RECOMMENDATION** The third level of the bunk bed should not be used, in accordance with earlier recommendations of the NPM.

**RECOMMENDATION** Take care of the damp walls and ceilings and paint the rooms where necessary.

The bathroom is in good condition and at the time of the visit we could see that it was renovated (new tiles were installed). Although there is a schedule for the use of showers, in practice the inmates can use the shower without strict adherence to the schedule. Warm water is always available.

The courtyard is spacious, there is greenery and benches, but the inmates complain that there is not much to do and there is no exercise equipment. Although the administration is not obliged to provide equipment for recreation, the inmates complained about this even before we asked the question so purchasing of some exercise equipment which would satisfy the needs of the inmates should be considered.

**RECOMMENDATION** Ensure at least some exercise equipment or weights considering that the institution in Kragujevac is the only county jail visited by the Initiative's team which did not have any of the exercise equipment.

Solitary confinements were empty at the time of the visit, and they meet the standards except for one in which the opposing walls are less than 2 meters apart. Although this room (security service in-

forms us that it is used for custody of detainees) meets the standards according to the square and cubic meters, its elongated shape, actually the walls being so close makes it inadequate and it should not be used.

**RECOMMENDATION** Do not use the room in which the opposing walls are less than two meters apart.

In the interviews, both individual and group, the complaint that there is no exercise equipment could often be heard. Some inmates also complained about the shorter period of time spent outdoors than they are permitted by law. There were also complaints about the unavailability of some drugs, but these were drugs that the prison is not obliged to procure at their own expense, so it is recommended that the communication with the inmates is improved regarding similar complaints and that the positive list of drugs is explained to the inmates.

At the time of the visit, made at the time of the lawyers' protests, several detainees were on a hunger strike (they did not eat the food from the kitchen but they received packets).

*Date of the visit: December 4<sup>th</sup> 2015.*

The Monitoring team of the Youth Initiative for Human Rights conducted a monitoring visit to the County jail in Kragujevac on December 4th 2015. Considering that this was the second visit within this cycle of the monitoring visits, the Initiative's team had a chance to examine the possible changes in the prison and to what extent (if at all) recommendations were implemented.

At the time of the visit, there were 96 inmates in the prison, out of which 50 inmates are convicted.

Of the total number of convicted persons, 13 of them are accommodated in the closed ward. The prison can accommodate 150 persons and the plan is to build a new prison building that would solve the problem of poor physical conditions in the current facility. The

plan for the construction of the new building was mentioned to the monitoring team during the first visit, however a year later there was still no construction work on the new prison building.

The new building is designed to serve as a detention facility of a closed type, which does not clarify in what way the current problems will be solved, considering that at the moment the existing facility mostly accommodates inmates on semi-open and open treatment.

According to the sequential decision, in the County jail Kragujevac there are inmates serving a prison sentence of up to one year from the territory under the jurisdiction of the High court in Kragujevac. In the prison there are usually mostly persons punished for misdemeanors, in 60 to 70% of cases they are recidivists.

As far as diet is concerned, special requirements related to diet during fasting are taken into account, and the institution communicates with the Orthodox and Catholic priest, as well as with the representative of the Islamic community.

In the County jail Kragujevac there were two foreign nationals in custody, one is a citizen of Morocco and the other one is a citizen of the United Kingdom. They were visited by the consular representatives of their countries and the judge for the execution.

The judge for the execution of criminal sanctions visits the prison at least once a month. After examining the documents, the Initiative's team verified that the last two visits of the judge for the execution were carried out on December 1st and before that on October 13th 2015.

Among the inmates there is also an Albanian from Kosovo, and at the time of the visit of the Youth Initiative for Human Rights there were two women in custody as well as a citizen of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The building of the prison is not adapted to the needs of people with disabilities, there are no ramps and no lifts.

The available services in the prison are: security service and the service of general affairs remained engaged as independent executives. In the prison there is a doctor and two nurses who work in the prison infirmary. The nurses give out the therapy during the day to

convicted and detained persons, and during the night this is done by the security officers, which should be avoided.

Drugs are procured through tenders in accordance with the positive list prescribed by the National healthcare service.

Systematization anticipated 68 work places, and only 37 positions are taken. At the competition for additional filling for the position of security officers it is anticipated that Kragujevac gets 10 new commanders. The County jail Kragujevac asked for 15 new security officers, considering that in the last two years 7 persons retired, and in the security service there is one woman (commander). Within the healthcare service there is one employee less – nurse, and in the treatment service there is no psychologist.

Two days before the visit of the monitoring team, the County jail was visited by the judge for the execution as well as by the president of the court. The monitoring team could verify that the visits really occurred by checking the book of visits.

On the economy which is a part of the prison building there are a pigsty and chicken coop. The products which are used in the prison are produced within the prison economy (around 70% of demand is satisfied by internal production).

In the prison there is also a workshop where the janitors work on repairs and the inmates assist them. At the time of the visit of the Initiative's team there were no inmates working in the workshop so this information could not be confirmed by direct inspection.

In the treatment service there are three pedagogues, and two of them also work on the implementation of alternative sanctions..

In the prison there is an open, semi-open and closed ward. In the physical sense, the rooms are the same, and this separation is performed on the basis of special benefits that are available to inmates. The inmates have at their disposal a spacious common room where there are shelves with books which the inmates can use.

All of the inmates' complaints are addressed to the judge for the execution of criminal sanctions. The requests for parole are usually approved. Since the beginning of the year, 41 request for conditional

release was approved. This request is generally approved in 90% of cases of persons who served 3/4 of the sentence.

The inmates from the closed ward are taken outdoors for two hours every day. The inmates complained that the time for the phone calls coincides with the time for walks outdoors and in that way they can not fully exercise one of these rights.

Smoking is allowed in all of the rooms except in the bedrooms.

There is video surveillance in all of the common rooms, besides the rooms where they sleep and bathrooms.

The toilet is shared and it is located outside the bedrooms. There is a schedule of showers, however it is not adhered to strictly, considering there is enough hot water.

In the summer, the bedding is changed every week and in the winter once in two weeks.

An inmate can not be sent to solitary confinement (implementation of isolation measure), without a previous visit by a psychiatrist who was hired on contractual basis. The solitary confinement is located in the section where the custody is and it is under video surveillance. Although, during 2015 a measure of being taken to solitary confinement was expressed, but this measure was not performed on the basis of an assessment by a psychiatrist (the Initiative's team had a chance to examine the documents and confirm this information).

In the County jail Kragujevac there is no traditional admission ward, instead one room is used. On average, persons who are in this admission ward wait around 10 days for further accommodation. Care is taken to ensure that older persons are accommodated in the rooms with moderate convicts.

The last complaint about the work of the institution was filed in March 2015, however it was rejected as unfounded. The number of inmates was reduced for 1/3, but the number of persons who approved transfer is increased.

The Monitoring team conducted group interviews with the inmates from the open and semi-open ward in the common room, as well as with the inmates in the closed ward.



Similar to the previous visit, the monitoring team was not allowed to conduct an interview with the inmates without the presence of the commander, although that was requested. The presence of the commander was justified by the need for ensuring safety for all members of the Initiative's team.

Inmates from the open and semi-open ward complain about the long wait for a conversation with the pedagogues, as well as poor nutrition and poor preparation of food in the kitchen. According to the inmates, two civilians who were hired to work in the kitchen abuse that position, take the quality food for themselves while they leave the poor quality ingredients for the preparation of inmates' meals. Also, one of the kitchen workers came into conflict with one of the inmates (of which the members of the Initiative's team were later informed by the chief of the security service who sides with the inmates). The Initiative's team conducted a separate interview with the inmate who presented the situation he found himself in.

Although there is a courtroom in the County jail, the prosecutor does not come there, but the persons are taken to him at his request (which significantly complicates the work of the security service which has to accommodate a large number of escorts).

## COUNTY JAIL IN ČAČAK

*Date of the visit: December 11<sup>th</sup> 2014.*

At the time of the visit of the Initiative's team, the prison had half of its capacity filled. There were 34 convicts (8 of them on the closed ward), 21 detainees and 12 persons punished for misdemeanors. Among the detainees there were two minors. Among the inmates there were persons of Roma ethnicity and Muslims, who according to the warden, did not ask for religious services. Menus are adapted to religious needs. There is also a room for religious rituals.

There is no healthcare service in the prison. One doctor works under the service contract and there are two nurses, one of whom has



a permanent contract. There is also no service for general affairs.

The inmates work in the kitchen, snack bar, laundry room and on the prison farm.

The courtyard is spacious enough and there is greenery. It is equipped with exercise equipment as well as table for table tennis. There is an overhang missing and the Initiative's team was assured by the warden that a sufficiently large overhang will be installed as soon as possible, so it is recommended that this work is completed so that the courtyard fulfills the necessary conditions.

Several objections that the inmates had referred to the problems that are easily manageable and these problems were communicated to the warden who assured us that they will be solved. The inmates complained that there is less hot water than it was the case before, which the security service explained by the change of the hot water regime in the beginning of the winter season. It is very important to build trust among the inmates so it is recommended that the inmates are informed in writing of any change of the regimes in the County jail, in order to avoid these kinds of situations.

There were no inmates in the solitary confinement at the time of our visit. One of them is unsuitable because of its dimensions and it should not be used. The conditions in the second solitary confinement are satisfactory although the room was very cold at the time of our visit.

The conditions on the prison economy are good, the rooms are clean and well equipped, and the inmates do not have any significant complaints about the treatment they get. Inmates here work with live stock and poultry, and on drainage, as needed. One issue that the inmates did complain about and that the Initiative's team ascertained is a very cold living room. At the time of the visit, the door was closed so it was impossible to know whether this was because the door was previously open or not. Because of that, the administration is advised to check the temperature in the living room on the economy and if the temperature is low, to additionally heat this space.

*Date of the visit: February 5<sup>th</sup> 2016.*

This is the second visit of the Initiative's team to the County jail in Čačak.

At the time of the visit, there are a total of 43 inmates in the prison, 10 of which were persons punished for misdemeanors. The number of recidivists in total for 2014 and 2015 is 180. Inmates serving their sentences in this institution are mostly sentenced to one year in prison or are repeatedly convicted. Regarding the level of education that the inmates have, 14 inmates have not finished primary school and 4 have. The number of inmates who started secondary education is 12, while 18 of them have finished secondary school. One inmate has a college/university degree. There are 5 inmates with disabilities and psychoactive substances addicts. When it comes to addictions, the biggest problem among inmates is alcoholism.

The prison is categorized as a semi-open institution for the serving of sentences from 3 months up to 1 year in prison, then for repeatedly convicted persons and it is a detention facility. At the time of the visit there was an improvised closed ward for the immediate needs of the institution.

The systematization of jobs anticipated 46 employees. Total staff is 40, of which 31 are security officers, one pedagogue, one supervisor, two cooks, one janitor, two warehouse clerks, lawyer and the warden.

The person who works in the treatment service is also a commissioner for alternative sanctions. Like in other county jails in Serbia, in the prison in Čačak the person working as a commissioner for alternative sanctions is a female (special pedagogue/educator by profession). The commissioner for alternative sanctions works in the buildings of the prison, not elsewhere. Although, according to the warden, there was a special office for this purpose (former building of the Army department), this room is unsuitable.

On the other hand, the pedagogue pointed out the good cooperation with the Center for social services, the Directorate for the execution of sanctions and the court institutions in Čačak.

In the previous year there was one registered fight. The inmates had 5 complaints in the same period, and the complaints were related to treatment and healthcare. In the previous year there were 1383 cases of requests and submissions sent to judicial authorities and the warden of County jail Čačak.

The chief of the security service mentioned that the wardens change very often and that it very much influences the overall work of the institution (getting used to the new warden and the system by which he governs the institution requires a period of adjustment for the employees) and that disrupts the continuity of work.

So far, there has not been a competition for filling vacant jobs. Despite the lack of employees there are not many overtime hours recorded.

There are additional trainings for the security service and they are organized mainly in Niš, while the systematic physical examinations for prison staff are rarely carried out (there have not been any for several years).

The magistrate comes regularly every few weeks.

The inmates mostly come from the city of Čačak.

The room for visits is partly converted into a room for Orthodox religious rituals. The priest comes to the prison if the inmates ask for that. In addition, the Church sometimes asks for help with maintenance and cleaning of the church yard in Čačak, and the inmates who are allowed to work, gladly respond. There is no room for conjugal visits nor is it planned to be built. The inmates had no objection to the absence of such a room.

The prison owns 4ha of land used for the keeping of pigs, chickens and for agriculture (they mostly grow cabbage). The gains from the prison economy (cabbage, chicken meat) are sent to prisons in Novi Pazar. On the economy there is a kitchen and laundry. The prison has a cooperation contract with a local motel for washing of bedding and towels. The inmates from the semi-open ward are allowed to work on the economy.

Most complaints addressed to the warden relate to court proceedings which the inmates concluded or were currently going through, and to medical services.

Disciplinary procedures are mainly initiated for abuse of benefits (coming intoxicated, coming back late after the weekend leave, use of a mobile phone).

In the treatment service there is one employee who works as a pedagogue and a commissioner for alternative sanctions.

So far, there have been a few VET trainings for the inmates (vocational training schemes).

Regarding the structure of implementing the system of alternative sanctions, the commissioner exercises control over 5 persons under house arrest, while somewhere between 60 and 70 cases are in the procedure for alternative sanctions.

The County jail in Čačak supported several out of prison activities in which the animators were inmates of the prison. In the interviews with the staff we were informed of the participation in the "Cabbage festival (Kupusijada)" (1st place) a few years ago, and the existence of high-quality painting club in the prison.

There is one nurse permanently employed in the prison, and she works until 4 p.m. every day while at the weekends she is on duty. There is a doctor who works in the prison under a service contract for 9 months (he is also the chief of Health center in Čačak). The doctor is also on duty at the weekends. When this doctor is on vacation there is another doctor from the Health center who covers from him. The nurse does not have the benefit of early retirement and sees that as a problem.

The prison cooperates with the general hospital in Čačak and the Health center (the cooperation is facilitated by the fact that the chief of Health center works in the prison as well).

The inmates have access to their medical records but they rarely seek to see them. Most often they seek access to their medical record when they are about to be released from prison (to be able to continue started therapy).

In 2015 there were 124 escorts to specialist examinations.

Dental examinations are provided in the Health center Čačak.

The medical staff in the prison does not hold stocks of methadone, but the inmates who receive methadone therapy bring it from

home (all of therapies are under the control of the Psychiatric hospital). Regarding the therapy itself, in most cases inmates expressed a desire to reduce the therapy.

Drugs are procured through pharmacies, but not through tenders. The prison purchases painkillers at their own expense. For these reasons the inmates rarely bring drugs from home, because very often there are stocks in the prison infirmary.

In the morning and noon the therapy is given out by the nurse, and in the evening by the guards.

There is no recorded abuse of drugs.

Inmates are rarely injured. If so, they go directly to the emergency room in Čačak.

Statistically, there is a low number of complaints about the healthcare addressed to the warden.

The inmates who use the benefit of going home for the weekend are tested for alcohol and psychoactive substances, before and after each leave.

At the time of the visit of the Initiative's team, two persons were under special supervision of the medical staff because of addiction on psychoactive substances.

## COUNTY JAIL IN PANČEVO

*Date of the visit: March 24<sup>th</sup> 2015.*

The County jail in Pančevo is located at 4 locations. The central part, that is the main prison building, is located in the pedestrian zone in the center of Pančevo. The prison economy is located on the outskirts of the city. There is a department in Vršac and the prison economy in Vršac.

The Initiative's team visited only the central part of the prison. As evidenced by earlier reports, the material conditions in the prison are bad, particularly due to overcrowding. Because of the location of prison in the city center and the fact that the building is under protecti-

on, it is not possible to start serious construction work in order to get the prison conditions in line with modern standards of prevention of abuse.

The construction of a new prison building which will accommodate 500 persons is planned to be built next to the current prison economy in Pančevo. The project is in its final stages, and the beginning of the construction is, according to the warden, planned for September. However, the issue of restitution of the land has not yet been resolved.

According to the warden, and what the Initiative's team established during the visit, the capacity of the prison is filled. There are a total of 220-230 persons in the prison (of which about 50 are detainees). 48 inmates were on the closed ward. At the time of the visit among the inmates there were no women and minors. According to the warden, occasionally there are female inmates and there is a special separate room for them.

There are members of minorities among the inmates, and according to the warden, communication is not a problem because everyone speaks Serbian language, and the chief of security service speaks Albanian so he can communicate with Albanian inmates in their mother tongue. Upon request, the administration allows the inmates to speak with the Orthodox priest, and according to the warden, the members of minorities do not have these requests although they are informed that they can express them.

One doctor and one nurse are employed under a temporary contract, with a verbal consent of the Directorate for the execution of criminal sanctions. There is a good cooperation with the emergency room and the health center where specialist examinations are performed. There is an infirmary in the prison. There are no tests for HIV, however it is necessary to allow testing for HIV and other infectious diseases.

The food is adapted to religious and health needs of the inmates.

The floor where the detainees are accommodated was freshly renovated. The detainees are accommodated in rooms where the dayli-

ght comes only from the windows in the corridors. The ventilation system is located in the hallway and produces a lot of noise in the nearest rooms, so it should be replaced with something less invasive. The very location of the rooms in the hall can hardly be changed and it will probably be solved only by the permanent relocation of the prison.

The rooms are overcrowded. In use are also the triple bunk beds, including the third level of the bed, despite the recommendations of the NPM that such beds are not used. With bearing in mind that the problem of overcrowding in the prison in Pančevo can probably be solved only by the construction of a new prison, we stress that it is necessary to stop using the third level of the triple bunk bed immediately.

**RECOMMENDATION** Eliminate the use of the third bed on the triple bunk beds.

## COUNTY JAIL IN NOVI PAZAR

*Date of the visit: November 27<sup>th</sup> 2015.*

This was the first visit of the monitoring team in this round of visits.

The County jail was designed to accommodate 73 convicts (on the website of the Directorate for execution of criminal sanctions it is stated that the building is designed to accommodate 80 inmates). At the time of the visit there were 58 inmates in prison, of which 22 were detainees. The County jail has got one pavilion intended for the treatment of semi-open type. In the bedrooms there is a maximum of 6 convicts. In this county jail the standard in terms of number of square meters per inmate is filled.

At the time of the visit of the monitoring team there were no women or minors in the prison (according to the administration so far they have not had minors in custody). Regarding the ethnic structure, 99% of inmates are Bosniaks. In the common living room they are



allowed to pray. During the holidays, the common room is used for religious rituals.

Care is also being taken regarding the special (religious) requests.

A nurse on a permanent contract is employed in the prison and the doctor comes a few times in a week. In the event that the doctor finds it necessary such inmates are taken to the health center.

The inmates send complaints, however according to the administration and the pedagogues they have been unfounded so far. The convicts file complaints which relate to work of courts, and one complaint was filed in relation with the disabling of transfer.

In the previous year, one coercive measure was used in one case of the destruction of property and attacks on prison staff. A rubber baton was used in this case.

There is no room for the conjugal visits in the prison.

A total of 36 persons are employed in this prison, which makes for the 53% of occupied jobs anticipated by the systematization. There are 27 employees at the security service. There are 4 female employees at the civil registry office.

In the treatment service there are two pedagogues and one of them is hired for the implementation of alternative sanctions.

As far as surveillance cameras are concerned only the corridors are covered by the cameras. There are no surveillance cameras in the common room. At the entrance to the institution there is a sign that the facility is under video surveillance, however there are no signs in the corridors that the area is under video surveillance.

The location of the County jail presents a problem in terms of security. The County jail is located in the vicinity of city center, surrounded by residential buildings and partly resting on the building of the music school. The football stadium is located near the prison and the detention ward is separated from the street by a single wall. Although there is a need for the relocation of the prison there are no financial conditions to do that.

There are two "boxes" for spending time outdoors, but only one is in use. The space is quite cramped and there is a very small overhang



part. There is no greenery nor green spaces. There is no exercise equipment, but the setting up of another bench for lifting weights is in plans, as well as a table for table tennis.

There are bathrooms within the bedrooms. Each room has a bell for inviting the commanders. Confined space is compensated by the additional benefits which are given to inmates. The inmates spend most of their time in the bedrooms and they are locked during that period of time. There are TVs and cable tv in the bedrooms.

In the treatment service they feel that is sufficiently enough to have two pedagogues. The pedagogues come to see the inmates each day at 8 a.m. In addition, the pedagogues are available for a conversation without previous arrangements.

The prison staff, especially the treatment service, attends the different seminars and educational workshops through a center in Niš. Also, the treatment service organizes these from time to time and also the things related to the prevention of the use of drugs and domestic violence (considering that the inmates are mostly serving time in prison because of similar crimes).

At the time of the visit there were two foreign nationals in custody (one Greek and one Macedonian citizen who are waiting for extradition).

Rule books and other documents on the rights and obligations of inmates can be found in every room. Besides the Serbian version, the rule books are also available in Albanian, Hungarian and English language.

The County jail owns a library also, and they get the books mostly through donators.

As far as alternative sanctions are concerned, at the moment of the visit 50 electronic bracelets for the execution of a house arrest were active under the control of the County jail in Novi Pazar.

## COUNTY JAIL IN KRALJEVO

*Date of the visit: December 2<sup>nd</sup> 2015.*

The prison in Kraljevo was founded in 1968 by the assembly of municipalities Kraljevo, Vrnjačka Banja and Raška, for the area of these municipalities. This facility is located within the building of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MUP) in Kraljevo and it is categorized as a detention facility of semi-open type with one closed ward (V department). The capacity of the County jail in Kraljevo amounts to 100 persons, or 70 convicts and 30 detainees. At the time of the visit of the monitoring team there were 67 inmates in this institution and 27 persons held in custody. In a conversation with the warden, the Initiative's team was informed that this number of inmates is appropriate for the prison's conditions and that because of winter conditions a bigger number of people is expected, the "recidivists" and those punished for misdemeanors. This institution is intended for persons deprived of liberty for up to one year in prison, and generally these are persons convicted for offenses of aggravated theft and drug trafficking.

In the institution there is a security service, healthcare service, service of general affairs and treatment service. The County jail Kraljevo has one doctor and one nurse, and the health service works from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. Also, within the healthcare service, the institution has a service contract with a specialist doctor and psychiatrist who visit the prison twice a week and come as needed.

In the treatment service there is a pedagogue and a professional andragogue who is also the commissioner for alternative sanctions. Individual work is very difficult considering that a large part of the administrative work is done by only one person. Preparation for the release of a person is done in cooperation with the Center for social services and the Red Cross. The pedagogue also mentioned that the only training programs sustainable for the treatment service and for the employees of the Directorate for execution of criminal sanctions in general, are organized by the OSCE mission, while the state authorities

are putting less and less effort into the training of personnel of all profiles that are needed for the sustainable functioning of the prison.

At the time of the visit, 13 persons were under electronic surveillance, 4 persons were not under electronic surveillance and 1 person was under house arrest. Measures of alternative sanctions were pending for 27 persons. The inmates also work out of prison in the public sector companies on the territory of the city of Kraljevo. The inmates working in the public sector are entitled to 20% of the minimum income multiplied by the number of working days. In 2015 there were 14 persons on parole after  $\frac{2}{3}$  of served sentence. Extended rights and benefits were used by the inmates in the following way: free outing in the city (1), reward leave (2), visits to family and relatives on weekends (4), the use of extended rights outside the institution(5).

At the time of the visit of the monitoring team, in the prison there were 3 to 4 security officers/supervisors in the shift. The security service employs two female supervisors. The statistics of incidents for 2015, to what the monitoring team had access, shows that there were 22 isolation measures and 3 cases of use of physical force. The system of video surveillance covers all public areas and corridors. There is one solitary confinement room in the prison. In an interview with the chief of the security service, it was noted that all persons who can not be admitted to Penal-Correctional institution Čuprija are admitted to the County jail Kraljevo, which is totally illogical considering the territorial jurisdiction of this institution and the number of persons deprived of liberty. In addition, in the interview we were informed that the staff employed in this prison, especially in the security service, is the oldest among the prisons in Serbia. Evidence for this claim is the average age of the employees, which is 43 years, and there are 10 employees older than 50. Although this problem was presented to the Directorate for execution of criminal sanctions, in the competition for filling the positions in this service, which was announced on November 24th last year, there were no positions for new supervisors in the County jail Kraljevo, although according to the systematization of jobs there is a need for more than 5 supervisors.

**COMMENT** The way of dealing and communication between the treatment service and security service and the inmates in the prison Kraljevo is very commendable. There is no “military discipline” among the inmates, and the service officers treat the inmates in a very fair and dignified manner.

A priest of the Orthodox church comes regularly, mostly because of communions and confessions of inmates. There is a special room for these occasions. As for the number of national minorities, at the time of the visit there was one inmate of Russian nationality and one inmate of Albanian nationality. The positive-legal regulations are available to the inmates in their mother tongue. The judge for execution comes regularly, three times a month. There are 6 telephone booths in the prison, 4 of which belong to Telekom network and 2 to Orion. The institution has a contract with the city library in Kraljevo, and the inmates can use the books with a membership fee.

Pest and rodent control is carried out three times a month within the prison premises. There is a separate toilet for persons with a disability, as well as separate access to the building. There is no room for conjugal visits, since, according to the warden, there is not enough space because the building was designed for a much smaller number of people when it was built. The prison administration plans to develop an economy and currently, talks are being conducted with the heads of city administration about one plot at the periphery of the town. The whole prison is air-conditioned and hygiene is at a very high level.

## COUNTY JAIL IN KRUŠEVAC

*Date of visit: December 3<sup>rd</sup> 2015.*

At the time of the visit, there were 51 persons in the prison, of which 23 were convicts and 28 detainees. Besides the facility which is located in the center of Kruševac, the County jail also owns an economy which is 7 km away. On the day of the visit, at the prison eco-

nomy there were 10 inmates working.

There are 60 beds in the prison (on the website of the Directorate for execution of criminal sanctions it is stated that the building was designed to accommodate 76 convicts). As far as alternative sanctions are concerned, in the area under the jurisdiction of the County jail Kruševac there are 18 persons under house arrest with electronic surveillance and 10 persons under house arrest without electronic surveillance.

Although this was originally supposed to be a semi-open type of institution, at the time of the visit of the monitoring team there were 5 inmates serving their sentences in the closed ward.

According to the sequential decision, inmates serving sentences of up to 6 months are accommodated in Niš. Evaluation and change of the treatment-benefits category is done every 4 months, and for persons in custody every 15 days.

A priest comes when there is a need for it, and there is no room for conjugal (family) visits on the premises of the prison. Visits are allowed twice a month for a period of one hour for the convicts and three times a month for persons in custody.

At the time of the visit of the monitoring team there was one inmate of Roma ethnicity.

In the County jail Kruševac there are security service and the service of general affairs. The prison does not have the treatment service considering there is only one pedagogue engaged in the treatment affairs. There is a nurse employed in the prison infirmary and a doctor is employed on a service contract. In the case that specialist examinations of inmates are needed, they are taken to the city hospital in Kruševac.

According to the nurse, one of the problems is that many drugs that the inmates require are not found on the positive list, that is the inmates have to pay for them (which often makes the inmates revolted).

There are 52 employees in the prison, although according to the systematization of jobs, 70 positions were anticipated. 39 employees

are engaged in the security service, and 4 of them are females. One of the shift leaders is also a woman. When it comes to the age of the employees in the security service, most of them are between the ages of 41 to 45, and when it comes to the years in service the average is between 17 to 23 years of service.

There are no training programs for the inmates since they stay for a short time in the prison because of the small penalties on which they were convicted. The inmates work in the kitchen, laundry and on the 10ha of cultivated land.

All rooms are air-conditioned and, according to the warden, in the period immediately before the monitoring team's arrival all of the mattresses in the rooms were changed.

There are 16 surveillance cameras in the prison and they cover the premises intended for walking, dining and common (internal) corridors.

The inmates who are accommodated in the closed ward have a right to two-hour walk every day, while the inmates who are staying in the semi-open ward have a right to many more hours.

There are showers in the dormitories together with the shared toilets, and a part has been adapted for the access of persons with special needs.

Sheets are changed every two weeks.

The commission which decides on expanding the rights of convicts consists of a pedagogue, the chief of the security service, a person from the healthcare service and they are the ones who give a recommendation. There is no possibility for the persons placed in the closed ward to obtain expanded rights that are realized outside the prison (but there is a possibility to obtain expanded rights achievable in the prison).

The inmate is informed of the decision on expanded rights immediately after the reaching of the decision, and later is given the written decision.

In the previous period between 20 and 25 inmates worked on the project of afforestation for which they volunteered. The inmates worked for 4 hours a day and were given bigger meals during their engagement.

Persons are held in the admission ward within the limits stipulated by the Law, which is up to 30 days (although many institutions try to speed up the classification process and that people do not spend more than 2 to 3 weeks in the admission ward).

A pedagogue from the County jail in Kruševac attended the training in special physical education as well as the training for the implementation of regulations. Individual interviews are conducted with the inmates when they request it and enroll on the list.

In the prison library there are 300 to 400 books, and cooperation with the city library which provides additional books has been established.

There are two courtyards (for the detainees and convicts) which have some greenery and a bench, toilet and an overhang.

In the prison there is a gym (which is inside the prison) and a table for table tennis.

There are plenty of recidivists in the County jail Kruševac and they are mostly persons with addictions and those punished for violations of traffic safety and disturbance of public peace and order.

There is a canteen in the prison, and also the newspapers which the inmates order one day in advance are bought and delivered to the prison.

## COUNTY JAIL IN BEOGRAD

*Date of the visit: December 8<sup>th</sup> 2015.*

*\* Visit organized by the Helsinki Committee for human rights, whose team was joined by one member of the monitoring team of the Youth Initiative for human rights.*

In 2015, there were 453 convicts in the County jail in Beograd, and 1,742 detainees. On the day of the visit of the monitoring team, there were 665 detainees (which is considerably less than the usual number of over 1600 persons) and 207 convicts.

Of the total number of convicts, on the day of the visit 9 of them were in the admission ward, 52 were in the semi-open ward and 146



convicts were held in the closed ward (two of them were in the Special prison hospital).

It has happened that some individuals stay in custody for 3 to 4 years while waiting for the verdict.

In 2015, 69 disciplinary measures were issued to the convicts and 47 of them were sent to solitary confinement.

In 2015 the convicts sent 39 complaints to the judge for execution and the Ombudsman Office.

According to the sequential decision, persons serving prison sentences of up to one year are accommodated in the County jail in Beograd.

At the time of the visit of the monitoring team there were 3 minors in the prison (in custody). A psychologist and a social worker work with the minors and the treatment service gets involved only in crisis situation.

The judge for execution visits the prison every second Friday in a month. The complaints that the inmates have are usually related to healthcare and poor quality of food.

At the time of the visit of the monitoring team there were 31 female detainees.

The security service employs around 50 women.

Minors are not separated from adults in the detention because in that moment there were only three minors at the institution.

The persons in the admission ward stay there for 10 days on average, after what they are sent to other wards.

There are 254 employees in the security service (of which 9 are hired on other grounds not on a service contract).

At the time when block IV is put into operation, the County jail in Beograd will have the capacity to accommodate 900 persons. The facility in Ustanička (street), which is also a part of the County jail, has the capacity to accommodate 100 persons.

In the last two years the number of convicts has increased due to changes made in terms of spatial solutions, as well as due to too many people who are held in big prisons and then sent to smaller prisons.



Of the total number of inmates there are more of those sent to the County jail in Beograd by court order (70%) than those who are placed there after the decision on the transfer (30%).

In the treatment service there are 2 special pedagogues, 2 social workers, 1 pedagogue and 2 psychologists.

When deciding on extended rights, the inmates are handed the decisions. There is one pedagogue per a group of 45 to 50 inmates from all wards (semi-open, open and closed). In accordance with advice of the professional public, the groups should consist of inmates from the same or similar conditions of life – the same ward.

The benefit of early retirement within the County jail in Beograd is granted to the security service, warden, treatment service and the registry service. It is important to bear in mind that the benefit of early retirement for different services, even within one service, is not uniform across all institutions for execution of criminal sanctions and it varies from institution to institution.

In the detention unit there are around 100 foreign nationals who mostly come from this region and are waiting for the implementation of extradition sometimes up to one year because of the slowness of the court. In the event that foreign citizens do not speak English then the prison invites a court interpreter in order to communicate.

In 2014 there was one case of escape from the Palace of Justice, and it was a person held at the County jail in Beograd. The last case of escape from the facility of the prison was recorded in 2005 when an inmate tried to escape dressed as a woman.

The inmates in the closed ward are entitled to two-hour walks every day, phone calls are allowed four times a week and visits twice a month.

One of the inmates from the closed ward complained that there was no review of the classification after 6 months as is prescribed by the Law. In an interview with the inmates the monitoring team was informed that the judge for execution did not come to the closed ward at all.

According to the security officers, there are no solitary confinements in the County jail, instead there are 10 of, as they call them “the premises for removal”. At the time of the visit of the monitoring team

one person was in the “removal room” for a period of 10 days.

Although the floor with the detainees is heated, in the corridor of the closed ward the radiators were cold. The difference in the quality of rooms in the closed ward is also very noticeable, some of the rooms are painted and clean while in one or two rooms there is a problem with bugs and moisture and it is visible that they have not been painted for a long time.

The warden comes to the closed ward to talk to an inmate upon their request for that. In the corridor there is a box for leaving requests addressed to the Ombudsman, and the rooms are equipped with stoves and fridges.

There is a gym on the first floor, and according to the inmates the biggest problem for them is the fact that even though there is a need for working that is not allowed to them. The inmates also complained that their post is lost and that it does not reach them and they are sure it was sent to them.

A dentist can come to the prison but those services are not free. Also, the inmates who receive methadone treatment complain that their therapy is not regular.

There are 30 inmates who work within the institution of the County jail. In the conversation with the inmates, the biggest complaints they had were often about the disapproval of the conditional release and about the vague and uneven criteria for obtaining the extended benefits such as going out for the weekend.

The inmates built some exercise equipment in the courtyard to create an improvised gym.

There was plenty of responsibility and workload placed on the inmates who work at the prison kitchen even though they were just the help. In addition, it often happens that their working hours were less when recorded.

There are no panic buttons in the rooms and that should be resolved.

The security guards give out medication to the inmates instead of the nurse.

The County jail in Beograd managed to hire a doctor who has a contract for indefinite period.

## PENAL-CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTION PADINSKA SKELA

*Date of the visit: December 9<sup>th</sup> 2015.*

*\* The visit was organized by the Helsinki Committee for human rights whose monitoring team was joined by a member of the monitoring team of the Youth Initiative for human rights.*

The Penal-Correctional institution Padinska skela was formed as the institution of semi-open and open type of prison. Since 2014 the institution has the closed ward which was formed in the facility which belonged to the County jail in Beograd („Central Prison / Centralni zatvor CZ”) and was used as a detention unit.

According to the sequential decision, the inmates serving sentences of up to 3 years in prison can be accommodated in this institution.

In the newly formed closed ward there are inmates who were transferred there (the transfer is mostly performed from the Penal-Correctional institution Zabela) as well as those whose serving of the sentence is coming to an end.

The institution Padinska Skela was designed to accommodate 450 persons.

At the moment of the visit of the monitoring team there were 115 convicts in the closed ward, while in the semi-open and open ward (which are separated one from another) there were 167 convicts.

At the time of the visit there were 14 persons in the institution punished for misdemeanors.

There is no detention unit in Padinska Skela and all of the inmates are serving sentences established by verdicts. In the admission ward the inmates wait for 10 to 15 days to be sent in different wards.

In terms of parole, the statistics in this institution was better than in other institutions, however that percentage was reduced with the formation of the closed ward. Although in theory, the inmates from the closed ward can get a parole, in practice that does not happen.

At the time of the visit of the monitoring team there were no foreign nationals at this institution. Earlier, the foreign citizens remained

there for 10 to 15 days and then they were sent to the immigration detention. Their number has drastically reduced since the government changed its immigrant policy and taken a different stand regarding the immigrants.

In this institution there are inmates of different religions. The room for religious rituals is furnished in accordance with the Orthodox religious standards however it has been known to happen that persons of Muslim religion go to perform a prayer in this room.

Regarding the number of employees in the security service, the number of jobs anticipated by the systematization has not been filled. There are a total of 55 employees of the security service, 2 of which are women.

When the closed ward was formed within this institution, the security service was enforced by employees from other institutions for a period of one year.

Institution Padinska skela has 5 professional services: service for general affairs, registry service, security service and healthcare service for which it can not be said that it fulfills the standards on the basis of which it could be considered as a service.

Within the institution there is an infirmary which was licensed for work by the Ministry of health.

All of the employees in all of the services (except for those who deal with administration) have the benefit of early retirement.

The inmates from this institution were hired to work as help in the hospitals Zvezdara (5 inmates), KBC Bežanija (6 inmates) and 2 inmates worked for private company (one of these inmates was personally requested by the director of the company).

130 inmates work on the maintenance of the courtyard as well as on the cleaning of the new criminal correctional institution „Nova skela“ which is located not far from the institution Padinska Skela.

Within the VET programs for the convicts there have been training programs for cultivation of early plants or cultivation of medicinal herbs. Pigs and poultry are kept on the prison economy, which satisfies the needs for food. The extra eggs, meat, cabbage, potatoes

and carrots are sold to third parties for market price, but also taken to other prisons in Beograd and Pančevo.

Only the inmates from the open and semi-open ward can work since the regulations of the institution do not allow the inmates from the closed ward to work.

The most common criminal acts that the inmates have committed (not the recidivists) are mostly: thefts, traffic violations and domestic violence.

There are solitary confinements in this institution and they can be found in the facility where the closed ward is. In the last 6 years the coercive measures were used 7 times, in 2013 the coercive measures were not used once and in 2014 there was one occasion on which coercive measure was applied.

There are 6 persons in the treatment service: 3 pedagogues, a psychologist, a social worker and the chief of the service.

In the courtyard there is an improvised gym and there is also a space for physical exercise inside of the building.

There are 12 persons in the admission ward, and two or three rooms are equipped so that they can be used as hospital rooms.

The convicts wait for further classification in the admission ward for 10 to 14 days.

Regarding the decision on the classification, the inmates receive the decision in the written form and they must sign that they have received it, however they also have the right to decline the post, which sometimes does happen indeed.

The persons punished for misdemeanors are separated from the persons who committed some criminal activity. At the time of the monitoring visit there were 14 persons punished for misdemeanors in the admission ward.

In the interviews with the inmates, the monitoring team was informed that some of them wait for 17 days in the admission ward.

Video surveillance is placed only in the basement, and there are no cameras for video surveillance on the floors. The notification of video surveillance is not visible.

There are 4 or 8 inmates in the rooms, and the bathrooms are in the rooms. The institution is not able to provide TVs, however the inmates are allowed to bring their own.

In the interviews with the inmates we learned that their main complaints are about the decisions on the classification and extended rights (according to one inmate he has not been allowed to go home for the weekend for 8 months now). The inmates who work usually work 6 hours a day, however they stay an hour longer during the loading of groceries for the County jail Beograd.

In the closed ward there are 3 hospital rooms with bathrooms. On the top floor, where the rooms with other convicts are, the bathrooms are shared outside of rooms. All of the common rooms and corridors are under video surveillance but the notification of that is nowhere to be seen.

Phone calls are allowed 4 times a week for 15 minutes, however in the cases of emergencies (calls to the family members or lawyer) these emergency calls are allowed.

Within the closed ward there is a courtyard and equipment for basketball but there is no gym so the inmates improvise and make weights from bottles.

There are no panic buttons in the rooms.

At the time of the visit of the monitoring team there were no inmates in the solitary confinement, and 15 to 20 days ago an inmate was sent to the "isolation room". The isolation rooms are also used in the events of mistreatment when it is necessary to separate the inmates.

The canteen works on Tuesday and Friday but it is not necessary.

In the treatment service there are 3 pedagogues who work with the inmates and in the group there are inmates from different wards, so the pedagogical group and the ward are not related. The allocation of inmates is done on the basis of the characteristics of the pedagogue and inmate. Usually there is one pedagogue per a group of 50 convicts, but that is not necessarily the rule.

The employees of the treatment service are not satisfied with the questionnaire for risk assessment and the classification of inmates

because it is not sensitive to certain categories of persons.

After 1/4 or 1/5 of the served sentence, progress in the treatment is considered and possibly the granting of extended rights. The level of risk which is assessed on the basis of the questionnaire is a limiting factor, although there are subsequent assessments, which practically disables the transferring of an inmate from the closed ward in some other ward.

The greatest progress is achieved by the inmates in the semi-open treatment who following subsequent assessment get transferred into A group (open ward). Novelty are the cases in which an inmate is sent to the open ward in the first classification of inmates.

## COUNTY JAIL IN NOVI SAD

*Date of the visit: December 11<sup>th</sup> 2015*

*\* The visit was organized by the Helsinki committee for human rights whose monitoring team was joined by one member of the monitoring team of the Youth Initiative for human rights.*

The County jail in Novi Sad was designed as an institution of semi-open type, however the prison has also got a closed ward. Due to a lack of physical capacity, it is not possible to have an open ward. At the time of the visit of the monitoring team, there were 457 inmates in the prison although the capacity of the prison is 350 persons. According to the sequential decision, inmates serving a prison sentence of up to one year are accommodated in the County jail in Novi Sad. Although the County jail in Novi Sad is overcrowded, the inmates no longer sleep on the mattresses on the floor (which was observed by the Helsinki committee for human rights in their previous visits) but they all have beds.

In accordance with the recommendation of the Ombudsman, all persons who have had a diagnosis from category F were sent to the Special prison hospital, although they were returned back from the hospital.



In the previous period, bathrooms in the prison were renovated, the courtyard was sorted and the infirmary was capacitated.

At the time of the visit of the monitoring team, there were 145 persons in detention unit, of which 6 were women and 4 minors. Minors were separated in a room away from other adult detainees. In the detention rooms there is a toilet, while the bathrooms are shared. In the rooms there are TVs. The warden has approved the use of services provided by TOTAL TV, however the inmates themselves have to sign the contract with TOTAL TV and settle liabilities that are contractually agreed.

The plan is to introduce a limited access to the Internet and to adapt one room for the persons with a disability. Within the County jail there is currently a temporary ramp for enabling persons with a disability to access the building.

In the County jail Novi Sad there are two walkways and a walkway for detention unit. There are green areas in these walkways. One walkway is intended for persons from the semi-open ward and the other for the persons from the closed ward.

In the prison there are three general practitioner infirmaries. In one of them there is a surgical clinic with a surgical table, UW lamp and the instruments for performing minor surgical interventions. A psychiatrist visits the prison twice a week, while a cardiologist comes once in two weeks. The County jail in Novi Sad is also visited by a surgical and dermatological consultant. The persons working at the infectious department come when there are cases of hepatitis. Methadone treatment is given to the inmates by the medical staff.

Due to the lack of financial resources, the implementation of the idea about forming a therapeutic community and dog asylum was stopped.

The execution judge regularly visits the prison (this judge accompanied the monitoring team during our visit). Detention unit is visited once in three weeks and the persons serving their sentences once in three months.

The security service employs 72 persons although the systematization anticipated 150 jobs. According to the newly announced com-



petition, the security service of the County jail in Novi Sad will hire 40 persons.

Earlier, 8 pedagogues were working in the treatment service, however now the situation is significantly changed because three persons are on maternity leave, one person is suspended and one person was transferred in the institution in Padinska skela.

## COUNTY JAIL IN SUBOTICA

*Date of the visit: January 26<sup>th</sup> 2016.*

The County jail in Subotica was designed as a semi-open type of institution, although the prison also has a closed ward. Since 2014 an open ward of the County jail Subotica has been established on Palić. The prison capacity is 250 persons. At the time of the visit of the monitoring team there were 165 persons in the prison.

According to the sequential decision, the persons serving short prison sentences of up to 3 months are accommodated in the County jail Subotica. Within the County jail Subotica there is also a detention facility.

At the time of the visit, there were no females or minors in the prison (according to the warden, minors are extremely rarely detained in the County jail Subotica).

The prison is physically located in the center of Subotica, however, the warden has not yet expressed any heightened security concerns. Police station is also located within the building of the prison, so that further facilitates the situation. The only problem are the rooms in one part of the building, which were once leased to the radio and television stations and now they are empty and it is not known who will purchase / lease them. The windows of these rooms face the inner courtyard of the prison. According to the warden, so far there has been recorded only one case of escape.

The security service employs 36 persons, although the systematization anticipated 55 employees. Besides the security service, there

is also the treatment and healthcare service. In the healthcare service there is no permanently employed doctor. Although vacancies for doctors had been advertised in previous years, there was no sufficient interest. During the day, the nurse gives out the therapy to the inmates and at night the security guards.

The convicts usually spend up to two weeks at the admission ward before they are classified.

The material conditions in the prison are very bad, especially in the closed ward. The common room where the inmates spend time is not big enough for all the persons who spend their time there, so the room is stuffy (which is further increased because some of the inmates smoke) and with insufficient light.

The complaints of the inmates in their conversations with the monitoring team relate to unsatisfactory food and healthcare. According to the inmates, a very big problem for them is the fact that many drugs are on the negative list (for example analgesics) and they have to pay for these drugs themselves, and at the same time it is not allowed to borrow them from other inmates.

In addition, according to some inmates, they do not have access to their medical records kept in the prison, although the warden explained to the monitoring team that all inmates have got a right to obtain a photocopy / copy of their medical records and that records are kept about this procedure. When checking the statements of an inmate, the members of the monitoring team did not manage to examine the aforementioned records, since they could not be found at the given moment.

The healthcare service employs one nurse who is there every work day until 3 p.m. (has got the benefit of early retirement). Two doctors are hired under the service contract (from two private clinics), one general practitioner and one specialist in emergency medicine. The prison infirmary does not work on weekends but everyone is on call.

Medical room is equipped with a bed for examination and dental chair, which facilitates dental services. The dentist visits every Friday.

Among the inmates there are many psychiatric cases and many persons with heart disease.

In 2015 there were no cases of self-injury. In the same year there were 4 cases of scabies outbreak, which were healed without major consequences. In the second half of 2014 there were 7 cases of scabies. The infected were isolated in a hospital room. The hospital room is right next to the medical room and there are two beds in there.

All inmates have access to their medical records, however, according to medical technicians they are not too interested.

Drugs are procured through tenders instead of through the Special prison hospital (which greatly facilitated the procedure). The court buys drugs for detainees as needed.

Occasionally there is abuse of drugs – exchange for cigarettes and other goods, but there are no major abuses.

In the cases when there are suicidal inmates, they are sent to the Special prison hospital in Beograd or to the hospital in Kamenica.

The nurse cited the lack of analgesics on the positive list as a serious problem, because these drugs are the most needed in daily treatment (patients are given ibuprofen syrup in the absence of drugs).

Methadone treatment is given in cooperation with the methadone center Sombor.

The inmates complained about the lack of analgesics.

## PENAL-CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTE IN SOMBOR

*Date of visit: January 27<sup>th</sup> 2016.*

The administration building and the department for detention in the Penal-Correctional institute in Sombor are open type institutions. In the separate department of the institution, which is of closed type, persons of both sexes from the territory of the District court in Sombor are detained.

According to written documents, prison in Sombor has been there since the end of the 19th century. The detention building, within

which there is now the institution's administration, was built as a county chapel in 1882 and was built in the baroque style with a tower in the central axis.

By the decree of the Government of the Republic of Serbia in 1998 on the establishment of the institution for the execution of institutional sanctions, this institution became the Penal-Correctional institution in Sombor and became one of the five penal-correctional institutions of open type.

The building of the open ward is a facility which is located about 4 km from the city centre, and it has been operational since 1999. The building was made specifically for primary accommodation of inmates and it is designed in accordance with all modern penal criteria.

Within this institution, there is a registered service-production economic unit "Elan" whose main activity is wood processing (production of wooden pallets, joinery and fittings, painting equipment-easels and blind frames). The economic unit "Elan" is also engaged in vegetable and livestock production, food production for the inmates, as well as service activities and craft works in construction.

There were 136 inmates in the County jail in Sombor at the time of the visit. The inmates mostly come from the area under the jurisdiction of the High court in Sombor and the Basic court in Vrbas.

The security service employs 32 guards (30 male and two female), although according to the systematization of jobs, it is anticipated that the security service employs 60 persons. Despite that, the warden emphasized that for now it is not a big problem for the functioning of the institution.

The healthcare service employs two nurses who work in shifts so the medical staff is present in the prison the whole day. Two doctors are employed (a general practitioner and a psychiatrist) on a contract, and they are in the prison two-three times a week, in addition they come as the need arises.

The healthcare service does not work on weekend, but the nurses are on duty.

In 99% of cases the drugs therapies are given out by nurses, in other cases guards do that.

The prison has got a good cooperation with the general hospital in Sombor, where all specialist examinations are performed, if necessary. Hospital room in the prison has 6 beds.

Only one of the nurses has the benefit of early retirement.

Drugs are procured through tenders, which facilitates the procurement and the drugs are not unnecessarily piled up, which was the case when they were ordered through the special prison hospital.

The cases of medicine abuse are very rare and the nurses control very strictly whether the prisoners are taking their medical therapy.

In 2015, there were a dozen cases of patients taken to the special prison hospital in Beograd.

In the case of scabies outbreak, due to lack of adequate isolation rooms, medical staff treats all of the inmates from the room.

Methadone therapy is given in cooperation with the methadone center in Sombor.

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