To be a human rights defender is not an everyday task requiring braveness, courage, total dedication and devotion to duty. The work of those, who defend human rights is very important for the development of the country and the life of every citizen.

Human rights activities unites civil society actors, state bodies, deputies, representatives of international organisations, thanks to common efforts of which the issue of human rights in the country can be given due regard for the benefit of all citizens of the country.

Under the conditions of wide-ranging malefactions and mass violations happening throughout the world, human rights activities unite people to take more concerted global actions on affirm the timeless principles that we have collectively committed to comply with, namely principle of observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The history of the modern human rights movement goes back to the post-World War Two period. At that time, the four fundamental freedoms, that each person is endowed with from birth, were stated. It is freedom of expression and self-actualisation, freedom of religion, freedom from want and freedom from fear. Eleanor Roosevelt, sided with the human rights defenders from all over the world at the United Nations, in order to secure this liberty in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The unprecedented challenges of modernity can be considered from this perspective and overcome from the perspective of these four freedoms. First of all, it is a freedom of expression and self-actualisation. Secondly, it is a freedom of religion. Thirdly, it is a freedom from want, which still causes a significant part of humanity to suffer and commit certain offenses. Finally, it is a freedom from fear, which is also experienced by people, who are subjected to illegal acts on the part of law enforcement agencies.

Also, a special attention should be paid to the rights and freedoms of women and children, since they belong to vulnerable social categories, which need some protection, especially with deprived backgrounds.

At the same time, particular importance is given to programs on rehabilitation and social resettlement of people, who discharged the term of sentence in prison, since many of them want to be useful to the society and contribute to the development and prosperity of the state. Also it is necessary to provide these persons with incarceration conditions conform to national and international standards and absolute safety, providing them with all rights and freedoms, including freedom from torture and inhuman or degrading treatment.

These directions are interrelated; therefore, in order to achieve a common goal, all rights must be observed and granted. Penal Reform International works in various directions on all fronts of human rights activity.

This PRI Bulletin contains data on actions and events for the first quarter of this year that are related to the activities of our organisation, have social meaning and are aimed at protecting human rights as the basis of our work.

AZAMAT SHAMBILOV
Regional director of Penal Reform International in Central Asia

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«Observance for human rights is a back-stone of the modern secular state. The attitude of the state to the people depends on how human rights are observed; accordingly, the quality and standard of living are formed both in society and in isolation areas, and the external image of the country is formed.»

ZHANNA NAZAROVA
Senior Program Manager for Central Asia countries

«Especially high risk of violation of rights is observed in closed children’s institutions, where the facts of violence against children often remain unidentified. Such cases cause concern and highlight the need to strengthen the work and monitoring of children’s institutions. The state bodies should join with representatives of civil society and non-governmental organisations in this direction, since only by joining forces it is possible to deracinate the violence against children and ensure the observance of children’s rights in the country.»

EKATERINA KAVLIS
Project Coordinator

«Human rights are a unique tool necessary for the activity of the state, in which the main vector is the person and his life. Knowledge of their rights and ability to use them speaks about the level of human education, observance of human rights in the state and creation of conditions for their implementation speaks of the greatness of the state and the excellence of its head.»

AIGUL TABERGENOVA
Project Coordinator
«To know own rights and respect the rights of others is the foundation of humanity, one of the best moral and personal integrity proper to people. As the German prose writer and poet I.R. Becher stated: «A man becomes a man in the company of other people.» The PRI team through the projects aimed at the re-socialisation of imprisoned people seeks to create in the society such conditions, where everyone would deal with others as they would like to be dealt with».

«Each state should not just declare the human rights in laws and regulations, but ensure that everyone knows their rights and could protect them. Not knowing own rights, a person cannot fight for it. Legal ignorance is the cause of frequent violations of human rights».

Adam Mickiewich said «If human rights do not exist in the country, then there is no country after all».

We are fighting not just for the rights of people, we are fighting for the life of the whole country.

AIDANA ASSYKPAYEVA
Project Coordinator

SYRYM YELUBAYEV
Public relations manager

ANEL TLEUKESH
Project manager

ASSEL SAPASHEVA
Project assistant
Today, the PRI team has organised a training in international publications for teachers of the School of Law and Economy at Khalel Dosmukhamedov Atyrau State University. The event was held within the Capstone competitive research project implemented with assistance of the Embassy of the Netherlands in Kazakhstan.

The expert David Keane, associate professor of International Law in the field of Human rights from Middlesex University in London, supporting Capstone Project for the second year, was invited for the training. Participants of the event have considered issues on publication of scientific articles in international magazines, the choice of the corresponding direction, the correct structure and technical aspects of the planned work.

A working meeting with advocates of the Kyrgyz Republic has taken place. Advocates of the KR are always distinguished by the high level of professionalism and business approach to any case. Cooperation with them is always fruitful. The results of the previous joint cooperation were summed up during the meeting and a number of actions were planned for the subsequent period.

PRI together with representatives of civil society and state bodies visited a number of institutions in the Pavlodar region. One of the first institutions was the prison for males AP-162/3. In this institution the limit of filling the convicts is 870 places, the actual occupancy is 603 people. Approximately 113 convicts are employed in production facilities on the territory of the prison, 120 convicts have secondary education and 80 have higher education, which they got before prison.

We made a detailed visit to the institution and communicated with the convicts without the administration and the prison staff. Our visit to this institution lasted more than 4-5 hours, we examined the production, visiting rooms, the refectory and all other public facilities, and visited almost all living quarters (detachments), where 35-60 convicts were held. Our dialogue with the convicts was built on trust, most of the convicts spoke very boldly about their problems and raised various issues, starting with the living conditions, torture and ill-treatment at the very beginning of the pre-trial criminal investigation.
A round table on the subject «Places of Temporary and Long Isolation from the Society — Free from Tortures» was held with the participation of central and regional public authorities, non-governmental organisations, the public designed to actualise the issues of respect for the rights of people in places of detention and imprisonment. The event was held in cooperation with the Commissioner for Human Rights in the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Public Council on the Activities of Internal Affairs Bodies of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

In his speech, the Regional Director of PRI Shambilov Azamat noted that 20 years ago activity of Penal Reform International in Kazakhstan was begun with implementation of the first projects and direct actions in Pavlodar, and that the first public monitoring of respect for human rights and the program for improvement of the situation with tuberculosis began here.

This event was initiated for the purpose of mainstreaming the issues of respect for the right to freedom from tortures as absolute right in places of detention and imprisonment.

Participants of the round table discussed the current situation in institutions on respect for the rights to freedom from tortures and health protection, mortality issues.

Within their stay in Pavlodar region, co-organisers of the event visited institutions of the penal correction system and also had separate working meetings. The recommendations developed during the working visit will form the basis of the subsequent measures for prevention of infringement of human rights in closed institutions of Pavlodar region. The dialogue platform collected a large number of offers and recommendations.

A seminar for representatives of judicial authorities, advocates and workers of the civil sector of Pavlodar region took place. Within two days, participants of the seminar studied the national legislation and the international standards in the sphere of availability of justice to vulnerable groups of convicts. They gained theoretical knowledge on the issues of definition and classification of vulnerable groups of convicts and also studied in more detail the features of consideration of criminal cases concerning minors; persons sentenced to lifelong imprisonment and death penalty, other categories of citizens.

During the seminar, trainers Mrs. Kissikova D.G. (an honorably discharged judge in Astana city) and Mrs. Singaliyeva N.K. (retired judge of the Supreme Court) submitted instructions and recommendations on various mechanisms of ensuring access to justice for vulnerable groups and on interaction of judicial authorities with the civil society.

The event was held within the project «Support of judicial reform in Kazakhstan: increase of potential of the civil society organisations for the purpose of improvement of access of vulnerable categories of convicts to justice», financed by the Delegation of European Union to Kazakhstan.

Following the results of work of the seminar, participants together with trainers developed recommendations on improvement of access of vulnerable groups in places of detention and imprisonment to justice and the plan for their implementation. All participants of the seminar were handed certificates on training.
Within the PRI project realised with assistance of the Embassy of Great Britain in Kyrgyzstan, two pilot projects on re-socialisation of convicts and their reintegration into the society are successfully completed in Bishkek and Karakol. The results of work were presented earlier and were further implemented.

So, for example, the project in Bishkek was implemented when former convicts of NGO opened a sewing shop which is developed, carries out orders on tailoring of clothes and bags for conferences. Beneficiaries in Karakol managed to receive the necessary help; cooperation between public authorities and non-governmental organisations was established.

The project «Positive changes» implemented in Talas involves both men, and women. Besides receiving legal aid, woman are also employed and work in the sewing shop of the organisation. Also, participants of the project are involved in training in profile professions at the courses provided by the Employment Centre.

The need of psychological preparation and rendering psychological assistance is very important and caused by the fact that a person who completed a sentence, getting to other living conditions, meets new difficulties to which overcoming he/she is not ready. Psychological preparation and consultation are necessary for adaptation of the personality to new living conditions in freedom.

Psychological assistance in formation of a positive attitude towards the people around, work, general education and vocational training was rendered to participants of the project; classes in psychological resistance to stress, skills of interpersonal communication were given; group and individual practical psychotherapy.

At the same time, work was carried out on the following:
- stimulation of re-socialisation of people who completed their sentence for their full development;
- training of the personality for life in freedom;
- forecasting of their adaptation;
- differentiation and individualisation;
- activation and reliance on merits of the personality. This principle indicates the importance of the positive in a person.

Employees carried out works on recovery of documents of 5 beneficiaries, and also their minor children, as the lack of documents of mothers interferes with documenting of their children. Besides, work on registration of children’s allowances and allowances for needy families is currently in progress.

In total, the lawyer of the project gave 95 legal consultations in various branches of the law, including concerning recovery of documents and the right to appeal against passed judiciary acts.
An educational trip to Georgia (Tbilisi) took place from January 28 to February 2 within a joint project of the Penal Reform International (PRI) in Central Asia and the UNICEF in Kazakhstan on improvement of the justice system for minors.

The purpose of the educational trip consisted in acquaintance with positive experience of Georgia in the work with children who are in a difficult life situation and in conflict with the law; application of alternative forms of punishment; visit to correctional facilities for minor children and other child care facilities.

Within the trip, there was a meeting with representatives of the Ministry of the penal system and a visit to a prison for minors took place (Institutions for rehabilitation of minors N 11, subordinated to the Ministry of the penal system). Also, a women’s penal prison and children’s home were visited (division for accommodation of condemned mothers with children).

Besides, there was a meeting with representatives of the National Agency on Probation. Participants of the meeting discussed such issues as juvenile divergence, probation, programs rehabilitation, preparation of the pre-judicial report on cases of minors, assessment of individual risks and requirements. Heads of the Department of Rehabilitation Programs and the Agency of Probation of Georgia participated in the meeting.

Also, there was a meeting with representatives of the Centre for Crime Prevention aimed at discussion of programs of support of convicts after release and services in rehabilitation, programs of mediation and divergence, in which the head of the Georgian Centre for Crime Prevention took part.

Besides, representatives of Penal Reform International in Central Asia, the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and also public authorities of Kazakhstan met representatives of the Ministry of Justice, the judicial system, the Prosecutor’s Office, the Ministry of Healthcare, Labor and Social Safety, Agencies on Social Services of Georgia for studying of alternative forms used during the work with children who are in a difficult life situation.
These days, there was a number of important events, including a press conference devoted to the beginning of implementation of the joint three-year project of PRI and the European Union «Support of Efforts of the State and the Civil Society in Combating Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment and Punishment in Kyrgyzstan» financed by the European Union in Kyrgyzstan, aimed at strengthening of efforts of the state and the civil society organisations in issues of prevention of tortures. The project is implemented jointly with the Akyikatchy (Ombudsman) of the Kyrgyz Republic, the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic and the Supreme Court of the Kyrgyz Republic.

On February 9, within the beginning of implementation of this project, Memorandums of cooperation with Akyikatchy (Ombudsman) of the Kyrgyz Republic, the National Centre for Prevention of Tortures, advocates of the Kyrgyz Republic and the civil society organisations – «Bir Duyno — Kyrgyzstan Human Rights Movement» OS, «Kylym shamy» OS and «League of Defenders of the Rights of Children» OF were officially signed. By signing these Memorandums, the parties confirmed their intentions to unite their efforts, experience in creation of joint plans of implementation of the directions of the project.

Kyrgyzstan is a participating country having international obligations on eradication of tortures in closed institutions. In 2018, the country will present the third Periodic Report to the UN Committee Against Torture.

During the visit of PRI team to East Kazakhstan region within the joint project of the Penal Reform International [PRI] in Central Asia and the United Nations Children’s Fund [UNICEF] in Kazakhstan on improvement of the system of justice concerning minors, Anton Van Kalmtut, an expert of the Penal Reform International in the field of probation and application of alternative measures not connected with imprisonment, held training discussions with police officers, officers of the probation service in Ust-Kamenogorsk and Zyryanovsk; he visited the rooms intended for work with children in offices of the police and the probation service, and also gave recommendations on improvement of work of officers of the probation service.

An expert meeting on the issues of pre-judicial probation concerning minors took place in the Committee on Legislation and Judicial and Legal Reform of Mazhilis of the Parliament of the Republic of Kazakhstan with the participation of the expert of the Penal Reform International [PRI] Anton Can Kalmtut, a member of the Supreme executive council of PRI, the expert famous in the world community, in the field of probation and rendering legal aid to persons released from places of detention, who advises the Council of Europe, the Netherlands Helsinki Committee, the European Union and holds the position of professor of criminal and migration law in Tilburg University in the Netherlands.
Representatives of the interested public authorities participated in the meeting which took place within monitoring of execution of recommendations of the Government Hour of Mazhilis of the Parliament dated September 25, 2017. Definition of the condition of introduction of pre-judicial probation concerning the minors and further steps on its development, taking into account the international experience, became the purpose of the expert meeting. Opinions of representatives of authorised public authorities, international organisations and expert community were expressed in this regard.

There was a training on interaction with judicial and other public authorities in the justice system for representatives of the civil society organisations.

The event was held within the PRI project «Support of the reform of the justice system in Kazakhstan: increase of the potential of the civil society organisations for the purpose of improvement of access of vulnerable categories of convicts to justice», the financed by the Delegation of European Union in Kazakhstan.

The training was held as a logical continuation of the events and actions of the project held in various parts of Kazakhstan: Astana, Pavlodar, Aktobe, North Kazakhstan, South Kazakhstan, Mangystau, East Kazakhstan regions.

The project gives expert support to NGO and public authorities. One of important expert documents is the Guide to interaction for employees of the penal system and NGO on work with vulnerable groups of prisoners.

Non-governmental organisations from different regions of Kazakhstan exchanged their experience of interaction with public authorities, gained new knowledge and practices on creation of a constructive dialogue with public authorities on providing access to justice.

The National meeting devoted keeping of women with children in the closed institutions of Kazakhstan was held within implementation of the project of the Penal Reform International (PRI) in Central Asia «Support of the judicial reform in Kazakhstan: increase of potential of the civil society organisations for the purpose of improvement of access of vulnerable categories of convicts to justice», financed by the Delegation of European Union in Kazakhstan.

International standards in the sphere of human rights protection and issues of access to justice for vulnerable groups, including protection of the rights and interests of women and children in places of detention and imprisonment, were discussed at the event. Getting to the sphere of justice, women, especially pregnant women or women with juvenile children, need special measures for protection of their rights according to national and international standards. Development of specific recommendations on improvement of prison conditions for women with children was the purpose of the event.
A training was held for participants of the pilot group within the pilot project «Positive Changes» realised with assistance of the Embassy of Great Britain in Kyrgyzstan. The group was created together with «Union Unification» OS and SSEP CI of Talas region from among the persons released from places of detention and living in rural areas, who lost their jobs during the sentence and experience difficulties with employment. The training was devoted to business planning from the point of view of its efficiency. Participants of the training gained primary knowledge and understanding of approaches.

THE ACQUIRED SKILLS CAN BE USED BY CONVICTS TO DEVELOP EMPLOYMENT IN THE PRISON AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF THEIR OWN BUSINESS AFTER THE RELEASE FROM PRISON.

In the framework of the project of the British Embassy in Kyrgyzstan and the GSIN KR in conjunction with the Penal Reform International (PRI) in Central Asia, courses are being implemented in the closed institution of the SSEP KR No. 10 in order to promote the development of sewing skills. The acquired skills can be used by convicts to develop employment in the prison and the development of their own business after the release from prison.

Also there are courses of art that contribute to the establishment of a psychological climate among convicts. PRI together with the SSSP KR participates in the organisation of art courses in the prison, regularly discusses with the master and the convicts themselves how the pictures can receive public attention, as well as the development of such courses in other closed institutions.
A press conference aimed at announcement of the start of creation of the Network of the civil society organisations was held.

Participants of the project «Support of Efforts of the State and the Civil Society in Combating Tortures and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment in Kyrgyzstan» implemented with assistance of the European Union, among which there are widely known NGO («Bir Duyno — Kyrgyzstan Human Rights Movement» OS, «Kylym shamy» OS, «League of Defenders of the Rights of the Child» OSI), advocates, the National Centre for Prevention of Tortures and the Ombudsman Institution, reported about readiness for creation of the country Network of NGOs, human rights activists, national experts so that to involve a large number of participants in all areas of the republic in implementation of legislative changes.

As it was reported earlier, the project started at the beginning of the current year and has several directions for interaction with a number of public authorities regarding rendering expert support, increase of potential and strengthening of dialogue of the state and the society in combating tortures. Creation of a network for interaction with the government is one of the important directions of the project.

A training for employees of the Call centre of the Anti-Corruption Service was held. The event was organised within implementation of the Memorandum of Cooperation of PRI and the Agency of the RK for Public Service and Anti-Corruption and the project «Development of accountability of central and regional authorities and good governance in the law enforcement system to combat corruption in Kazakhstan» implemented with assistance of the Embassy of Great Britain in Kazakhstan.

International experts participated in the event which lasted two days: Zoe Perrot (Senior manager in development of the hot line of the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children of Great Britain) and Anthony Amaechi (international expert of PRI in the issues of anti-corruption in the penal correction system).

Employees of the Call centre and representatives of the Anti-Corruption Service shared experience and enriched their knowledge with experience of other countries. The training format for the Call-centre of the Anti-Corruption Service was expanded due to involvement of all regions of Kazakhstan in the training in the video conferencing mode.

Since recent time, the Agency of the RK for Public Service and Anti-Corruption announced expansion of opportunities for citizens of Kazakhstan. Now communication with citizens will maintained not only by the Call-centre located in the central office, but also in each region. It means that addresses will be considered quickly, directly in each region.
Along with this Agency, the map of designations was developed. Introduction of a similar know-how shows openness of this authority and its availability. Also, thanks to modern technologies, employees of each region have an opportunity to take part in the discussion and to get expert advice.

13-15 MARCH
Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan

A training in increase of potential of staff of the Emergency Service «111» — the round-the-clock telephone hotline for children of the Children’s Rights Ombudsman of the Republic of Kazakhstan was held. International experts from Great Britain Zoya Perrot and Anthony Amaechi took part in the training. The experience of Great Britain in work with children in a difficult life situation and also the principles of work of the telephone hotline and the hot line for children and the international standards in this field were interesting for the staff of the «111» service because of their innovative approaches.

The information and propaganda campaign #KnowYourRights was begun within the project «Support of Efforts of the State and the Civil Society in Combating Tortures and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment in Kyrgyzstan» financed by the European Union. Opening of the campaign was marked by a march and a youth flashmob. This action was followed by distribution of leaflets containing information on the fundamental human rights described by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The campaign was conducted in partnership with «Bir Duyno — Kyrgyzstan Human Rights Movement» OS, «Kylym shamy» OS, «League of Defenders of the Rights of the Child» OS, advocates, the National Centre for Prevention of Tortures and the Ombudsman Institution.

The purpose of the #KnowYourRights campaign was increase in awareness of citizens about their rights. The citizens who do not know about their basic rights are vulnerable and can become victims of tortures. It is necessary to increase legal knowledge of the general population. This campaign will take place not only in Bishkek, but also in other regions of Kyrgyzstan, with attraction local media and radio broadcasting.

The campaign provides distribution of information on human rights in public transport: about 40 trolleybuses, 50 buses, 200 route minibuses are involved. Thanks to this, over 20,000 people were informed.

Volunteers distributed information materials near the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Education and Science, the Supreme Court, the Prosecutor General’s Office, the Ombudsman Institution, NCPP and the Ministry of Social Development.

14-15 MARCH
Astana, Kazakhstan

#Children #CallCentre

THE CITIZENS WHO DO NOT KNOW ABOUT THEIR BASIC RIGHTS ARE VULNERABLE AND CAN BECOME VICTIMS OF TORTURES.
A National educational seminar on the issues of access of vulnerable groups to justice and the best international practices for representatives of public and judicial authorities, advocates, undergraduates of the Academy of Justice and non-governmental organisations was held within the project of the Penal Reform International (PRI) in Central Asia «Support of judicial reform in Kazakhstan: increase of potential of the civil society organisations for the purpose of improvement of access of vulnerable categories of convicts to justice», financed by the Delegation of European Union in Kazakhstan.

The National educational seminar was held with participation of Pauline MacCabe, professor of Ulster University in Northern Ireland, international expert of PRI and consultant for human rights and criminal justice, and also national experts Kissikova Daniya Ganiyevna, national expert, judge of the court of Astana city in honorable resignation, with the length of service as a judge of 30 years, the author of the «Guideline for judges on consideration of criminal cases concerning vulnerable categories of persons according to the international standards in the field of human rights protection. Interaction of the civil society organisations and the judicial system», and Utebekova K.B., lawyer of the Almaty Bar Association, specializing in protection of the rights of convicts of vulnerable categories.

Within the project of Penal Reform International in Central Asia «Development of accountability of central and regional authorities and good governance in the law enforcement system to combat corruption in Kazakhstan», implemented with assistance of the Embassy of Great Britain in Kazakhstan, there were Public hearings following the results of the anti-corruption monitoring of the penal correction system of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan held for the first time.

The event was held together with the Agency of the RK for Public Service and Anti-Corruption and the Public Council of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the RK.

Representatives of the central public authorities, advocates community, specialised PMC organisations that took part in anti-corruption monitoring, and also national and international experts participated in the Public hearings.

A training seminar for newly elected participants of the National Preventive Mechanism was held. Such important subjects as international standards and national practice, features of the principle of prevention, the rules of visits, drawing up reports and tracking of the situation, and also the procedure of interaction of participants of groups with public authorities were considered and studied.

The National educational seminar was held with participation of Pauline MacCabe, professor of Ulster University in Northern Ireland, international expert of PRI and consultant for human rights and criminal justice, and also national experts Kissikova Daniya Ganiyevna, national expert, judge of the court of Astana city in honorable resignation, with the length of service as a judge of 30 years, the author of the «Guideline for judges on consideration of criminal cases concerning vulnerable categories of persons according to the international standards in the field of human rights protection. Interaction of the civil society organisations and the judicial system», and Utebekova K.B., lawyer of the Almaty Bar Association, specializing in protection of the rights of convicts of vulnerable categories.
National Consultations «Protection of the rights and legitimate interests of victims of tortures and violence» were held within the project «Support of Efforts of the State and the Civil Society in Combating Tortures and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment in Kyrgyzstan» implemented with assistance of the European Union.

During the event, the issues of respect for the human right to freedom from tortures and the issues of improvement of activity of public authorities, including law-enforcement authorities, strengthening of cooperation and interaction of the state with international and non-governmental organisations as one of the ways of increasing effective minimisation of facts of tortures and violence, and also their subsequent prevention, were raised.

The event was held with participation of deputies Zhogorku Kenesh, the Government Office, the Prosecutor General’s Office, central public authorities, representatives of non-governmental organisations from different regions of Kyrgyzstan. Also, famous international experts were invited to participate in the event: member of the Council for Reforming the Police System of Northern Ireland, professor of Ulster University, International consultant on criminal justice Paulin McCabe, and also David Kater - a consultant on improvement of activity of the police, consultant on organised crime, a High-ranking officer of the Police Service of Scotland Yard (Great Britain).
The II Penitentiary Forum aimed at mainstreaming the issues of modernisation of the penal correction system in the light of the undertaken reforms of Kyrgyzstan took place.

Within the meeting, the parties discussed the beginning of interaction, exchanged opinions on the current situation with respect for human rights and the Rule of law in the republic.

Signing of a Memorandum of Cooperation between the Supreme Court of the Kyrgyz Republic and the Penal Reform International in Central Asia was the reason of the meeting.

Signing of the Memorandum was preceded by negotiations and discussion of plans on implementation of joint directions as a result of which the parties reached agreement on cooperation, rendering expert support and exchange of experience.

The official meeting of the Chairman of the Supreme Court of the Kyrgyz Republic Aynash Tokbayeva and the Regional Director of the Penal Reform International in Central Asia Azamat Shambilov took place.

The issues of development of penal systems in modern time, the undertaken measures of penal correction system of the Kyrgyz Republic for improvement of the situation with protection of human rights in places of detention and imprisonment, and also measures for decrease of the level of the prison population were raised within the Forum. Special attention was paid to the issue of application of alternative measures of punishment not connected with imprisonment, including for vulnerable categories – minors, women and elderly people.

The forum is an expert platform of the State Service for Execution of Punishment created on a joint initiative last year. The platform of this year raised at the high government level the issues which implementation will allow reducing the number of the prison population, to reduce the level of recurrence of crimes and will allow pursuing the humanisation policy in its entirety.

The event was supported by participation of international experts from Georgia, Great Britain and the Council of Europe.
For today, taking into account the increase in growth of the general population of the country, Kazakhstan still has not reached the stated point. The neighboring Kyrgyzstan, approaching the middle of the table, with its general population of the country of 6.5 million, taking into account 10.5 thousand convicts, takes the 92nd place in the global table sharing positions with New Zealand and the Netherlands. While Kazakhstan is one of the five countries with similar rating, together with Turkmenistan, Chile, Belarus, Tanzania.

The fact that the applicant will continue to remain in this establishment and to be surrounded by those about whose corruption actions he/she reported significantly reduces the potential of identification of penitentiary corruption by means of statements of convicts. Thus, the organizational closedness of penal institutions as a necessary measure for safety of the society creates favorable conditions for “stealthiness” of the prison system.

For a very long time, it was said in the country that there are tortures; we consider that interaction of the state and the civil society is very important. Exactly 10 years Kyrgyzstan started pursuing the policy of zero tolerance to tortures having adopted the UN Convention on Tortures.

I want to note that convicts were wearing very old uniform, it does not comply with the standards which have to be met by the PES Committee. In my turn, assistants of the administration who help them with various events and some convicts beat other convicts for execution of the administration’s order.

It is necessary to introduce in the personnel training system the need to pass special courses and obtain the certificate on psycho-social preparation for work with children, without which no person should get access to children.

Closed nature of the penal system creates ideal conditions for distribution of corruption in it. Convicts have no opportunity to address freely and directly to the anti-corruption service or supervision bodies concerning their forcing to illegal actions - a convict who is serving a sentence in the form of imprisonment and who openly announced about corruption acts of staff of the institution both worsens the situation himself and is exposed to pressure and tortures. As a rule, the situation is aggravated by physical abuse and pressure not only on the part of employees, but also on the part of other prisoners cooperating with the administration of the establishment on various basis.

Serving sentence at the place of residence still remains a topical issue. As the monitoring has shown, for today 70% of convicts in the colony in Pavlodar region are Kazakh citizens from other regions, and only 30% are locals. Therefore, the issue of serving sentence in native regions was raised during the working meetings with the administration. That will significantly lower financial loading and will allow to save means for transportation of convicts and also people will not lose connections with their families and close people.

For today, taking into account the increase in growth of the general population of the country, Kazakhstan still has not reached the stated point. The neighboring Kyrgyzstan, approaching the middle of the table, with its general population of the country of 6.5 million, taking into account 10.5 thousand convicts, takes the 92nd place in the global table sharing positions with New Zealand and the Netherlands. While Kazakhstan is one of the five countries with similar rating, together with Turkmenistan, Chile, Belarus, Tanzania.

The fact that the applicant will continue to remain in this establishment and to be surrounded by those about whose corruption actions he/she reported significantly reduces the potential of identification of penitentiary corruption by means of statements of convicts. Thus, the organizational closedness of penal institutions as a necessary measure for safety of the society creates favorable conditions for “stealthiness” of the prison system.

For a very long time, it was said in the country that there are tortures; we consider that interaction of the state and the civil society is very important. Exactly 10 years Kyrgyzstan started pursuing the policy of zero tolerance to tortures having adopted the UN Convention on Tortures.

I want to note that convicts were wearing very old uniform, it does not comply with the standards which have to be met by the PES Committee. In my turn, assistants of the administration who help them with various events and some convicts beat other convicts for execution of the administration’s order.

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