

The Prisoners and Detainees Rights Commission on an unannounced visit to the Dry Dock Detention Centre

The Prisoners and Detainees Rights Commission (PDRC) held a press conference on Tuesday, 26th August 2014 to announce the release of its first inspection report. The Commission's first inspection was an unannounced inspection to the Dry Dock Detention Centre (DDDC). The inspection was conducted over a four day period from 21-24 April 2014 with all of the PDRC's commissioners participating in the inspection.

The Commission inspected all buildings in the facility including wings, cells and conducted unmonitored interviews and had free interactions with the detainees in order to gather firsthand information on any issues, concerns or difficulties encountering them at DDDC. It used the Bahrain Ombudsman's Standards for Visiting Prisons and Places of Detention as a basis for the inspection.

The Commissioners, in their inspections, relied on:

- A. Evidence Gathering:** where evidence is derived from the DDDC staff, through access to documents and records in all sections, and from a review of the administrative system in DDDC.
- B. Interviewing Detainees:** provided information on detainees' names, nationalities and age, bearing in mind that detainees are not classified according nature of their charges.
- C. Observation:** was carried out through the observing the conditions of the facility to assess suitability and that it is well equipped to ensure its compliance with international standards.

All PDRC members attended overseas training and observed actual inspections. The assistance of experts from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons for England and Wales (HMIP) and others in the field of prison inspections was sought to obtain experience and knowledge on the best practices of inspection procedures and to develop the necessary frameworks and guidelines to promote the rights of prisoners and detainees in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

During the press conference, the Chairman of the PDRC, Mr. Nawaf Al Moawda, said that the establishment of the Commission is very significant in the field of human rights in the Kingdom of Bahrain. PDRC was entrusted with the inspection of prisons, detention, juvenile centers and other places where it is possible to detain individuals such as hospitals and psychiatric facilities. The establishing decree enables the PDRC to inspect the detainees' conditions and the treatment they receive to ensure they are not subjected to torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment.

He also added that Commission's Decree is in accordance with the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, ratified by the Kingdom of Bahrain in 1998. The decree has also taken into account the principles of the Optional Protocol of the Convention. It also complements the recommendations of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry (BICI).

The Chairman also highlighted some of the main statistics regarding the detention centre's main findings, and the Commission's recommendations. The report found that the DDDC held 991 detainees, with 108 of them being persons aged between 15-18. 765 were Bahraini, while 226 were foreign nationals. It is worth mentioning that the DDDC's capacity is 1020 detainees. Additionally, the PDRC listed 21 recommendations in their report as a result of findings of the inspections. The recommendations are as follows:

Special Humane Treatment and Conditions Recommendations:

- Urgent action is required to ensure the cleanliness of the wings and periodic overall maintenance.
- The number of administrative staff with expertise in dealing with detainees should be increased. Special measures for detainees aged between 15 and 18 is a necessity for visits, communication, activities and motivating them to complete their studies.
- Training for DDDC staff on dealing with elderly detainees and those with special needs, foreign nationals or those aged between 15 and 18 should be in place. Staff should also be trained in managing and assessing risks.
- A suitable waiting area for visitors should be provided.
- Measures should be taken to ensure detainees can contact their families upon arrival to DDDC.
- Procedures to ensure detainees can inform their lawyers and families when they are transferred should be established. Risks should be assessed during transfer.
- Waiting areas should be provided for detainees at courts.
- Urgent action should be taken to install surveillance cameras to cover all the facilities of DDDC.
- Written procedures and measures for the delivery and exchange of personal necessities of detainees should be put in place.
- Educational, cultural plans and programs for all detainees should be developed. Detainees should be also motivated and encouraged to participate in such programs.
- Well trained and qualified staff to oversee the learning and skill acquisition programs should be provided with the provision of suitable places.
- Procedures for the legal use of force in DDDC should be established with the provision of proper training for the staff.
- A library should be provided as well as proper procedures to guarantee the delivery of reading materials.

Specific Recommendation for Rights and Safeguards:

- Publications covering the rights and duties of DDDC in several languages and in Braille (for the blind) should be given to detainees upon arrival.
- Written procedures for complaints and grievances and for the protection of complainants in order to ensure privacy and follow-up should be available.

Special Healthcare Recommendations:

- Increase the number of medical professionals, provide a dental clinic and a trained mental health team.
- Establish programs for health promotion and awareness among the detainees and the DDDC staff.
- Take the necessary measures to raise the level of awareness among staff and detainees on ways to deal with patients and explain the concept of medical isolation.
- Increase the number of administrative staff at the health center, provide an infection control team and activate the administrative supervision over the clinic and its staff.
- Develop measures to ensure the provision of translation services for detainees during their visit to the health center.
- Develop a mechanism to guarantee the provision of special diets for detained patients.

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