

# Press Release

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## Council of Europe anti-torture committee publishes report on Ireland

Strasbourg, 10.10.2007 – The Council of Europe's Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT)<sup>1</sup> has today published a report on its fourth periodic visit to Ireland, which took place in October 2006, together with the response of the Irish Government. Both documents have been made public at the request of the Irish authorities.

In the course of the visit, the CPT reviewed the treatment of people detained by the Irish police, the Garda Síochána. It also examined the treatment of inmates and conditions of detention in a number of prisons, as well as visiting the Central Mental Hospital in Dundrum.

The majority of people met by the CPT made no complaints about the their treatment while in police custody. However, a considerable number of people did allege verbal and/ or physical ill-treatment by Gardai, and in some cases injuries consistent with the allegations were observed. The CPT has welcomed the initiatives undertaken by the Irish government to stamp out ill-treatment by the Garda, such as the establishment of the Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission and the progressive installation of CCTV in police stations. However, as the Irish authorities acknowledge, there is clearly no room for complacency in this area.

As regards prisons, the CPT was concerned by the increasing level of inter-prisoner violence, fuelled by the widespread availability of illicit drugs and the existence of a gang culture. The problem of violence appeared to be particularly rife in three of the prisons visited (Limerick, Mountjoy and St Patrick's Institution) and, **in this context, the management of prisoners placed under protective custody was examined.** The CPT also noted that while some progress had been made in the provision of healthcare, there was still a need to improve access to psychiatric care and reinforce drug treatment programmes. More generally, the CPT observed that several of the prisons visited remained overcrowded with poor living conditions, and that they offered only a limited regime for prisoners.

With respect to the Central Mental Hospital, the CPT noted that there have been positive developments concerning the treatment of patients, staffing levels and, to a certain extent, patients' living conditions.

In their response, the Irish authorities provide information on the steps being taken to address the issues raised by the CPT. In particular, they express their determination to put an end to ill-treatment by Gardai, highlighting a number of specific measures. The authorities acknowledge the emerging problem of violence within the prison system and refer to a wide-range of initiatives being taken to tackle this phenomenon. They also provide detailed information on the planned development of prison facilities in Ireland over the next few years.

The report and response are available in English on the CPT's website: <http://www.cpt.coe.int>

<sup>1</sup> The official name of the committee is the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

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