

London, United Kingdom
June 18th. 2023

Reference: Improvement Prison System Mauritius in regard to respect the Human Rights Agreements between the State of Mauritius and various other parties.

Commissioner of Prisons

Mr. Jaganaden Rungadoo,

We are writing on behalf of the foreign prisoners currently detained in the High Security of Melrose in Mauritius. We would like to bring your attention to the poor prison conditions in the prison system that is disrespecting human rights agreements as agreed with several parties and the state of Mauritius.

We are aware that several foreign prisoners have been detained for long periods up to eight years without any case lodged, and as a result, we are asking for immediate intervention by the commissioner of prison. One of the significant issues that have been affecting us is the lack of essential amenities like toilet paper and clean and warm water. These inadequacies have many side effects on prisoners that have far-reaching implications both on their physical, mental and social well-being as well for the environment where they are living in.

Besides, there is no daily program or activity, and the provision of education is almost non-existent. This lack of activities means that prisoners are not engaged in any skill-building activities, which limits their potential to develop new abilities that can assist them upon being reintegrated into society.

We are also distressed by the poor communication policy upheld by the prison system, which has made it difficult for prisoners to maintain strong family ties. This communication breakdown has resulted in prisoners not being able to communicate adequately with their families, and as a result, many prisoners suffer from a lack of emotional support from their loved ones. Beside this, the respect of the fundamental rights of the prisoners is being disregarded as they are not allowed to communicate confidentially with their lawyers without guards listening in, leading to a situation where they are unable to adequately prepare themselves for their upcoming trials.

As we write to you, we would like to reiterate that Mauritius must respect the human rights agreements it has entered into with human rights organizations. We, therefore, ask that the authorities take immediate action to improve the quality of life in prisons and ensure that prisoners are treated with dignity and respect. Given the various reports coming in on the state of Mauritius prisons, we plead that you do your utmost in respecting the human rights agreements that have been established and closed between the state of Mauritius and human rights organizations.

In this matter we would request you to do the following with immediate effects:

- * Approve to use toilet paper in the prisons
- * Supply toilet paper in the prisons
- * Supply of warm water to wash and clean
- * Improve communication standards from 4x10 mts per month to 4x30 mts per month for everybody who is held in custody in long remands.
- * Improve CONFIDENTIAL Communication standards between suspect and their lawyers
- * Allowance of personal education for studie courses

Thank you for your attention to this pressing matter. We look forward to your urgent reply in the above matters.

Sincerely,

Paula Tierney

NGO Foreign Prisoners Network
(On behalf of the foreign prisoners in detention)