

Moussa Diomandé Statement 2nd Intersessional meeting of the CCPCJ
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On behalf of the United Nations Department of Peace Operations, I would like to thank UNODC Secretariat for organizing this intersessional meeting, I would also like to thank the Chair and my fellow panelists. It is a pleasure to make a presentation in this panel discussion.

The Security Council has recognized the importance of safe, secure and humane prisons for conflict prevention, the sustainment of peace and the peaceful resolution of conflicts. Indeed, poorly managed prisons can be drivers of conflict, including violent extremism. Efforts to deter spoilers and hold members of armed military groups and state security forces accountable for serious crimes committed against civilians and peacekeepers and for other crimes that fuel conflict, require functioning prison and criminal justice systems. This is critical to peacekeeping and stabilization. A number of peacekeeping operations and special political missions are mandated to support national authorities in their efforts to build the capacity of their prison systems and thereby contribute to sustainable peace and security. Indeed, approximately 300 United Nations corrections staff and government-provided personnel are currently deployed through the Department of Peace Operations to these missions to implement that mandate.

The linkage between overcrowding, overuse of detention, and hardship prison conditions is clear. In many countries affected by conflict, prison facilities are overcrowded, and prison systems are overstretched due to lack of resources, systemic neglect, insufficient and ill-trained staff, poor living conditions, and inadequate sanitation and health services. Such

conditions have serious implications for upholding security and human rights and may lead to security breaches with effects beyond prison walls - such as prison riots, mass escape, and serious human rights violations. Overcrowding weakens efforts to improve detention and prison conditions while the overuse of incarceration undermines efforts to strengthen the rule of law. As such, there is a need to rethink the use of imprisonment to avoid the overreliance on, and inappropriate use of, incarceration.

I would like to take this opportunity to draw the attention of Member States to the United Nations Common Position on Incarceration mentioned by Mr. Philip Meissner from UNODC in his opening remark. This common position, as endorsed by the Secretary General and presented to Member States in 2021, “offers a consistent, holistic and integrated approach to supporting Member States to rethink crime and punishment and adopt evidence- and human rights-based responses. Improving prison conditions, security and preventing recidivism by supporting rehabilitation and preparing prisoners for their social reintegration upon release, are critical to the work of United Nations peace operations.

The Common Position outlines a number of **directions for action** for the United Nations system to step up its joint efforts in support of Member states and constitutes a guide for consistent United Nations advocacy and assistance aimed at supporting reform efforts in Member States relating to incarceration. It is therefore important to call for your engagement and support in its implementation.

The Department of Peace Operations particularly values its cooperation and coordination with other United Nations offices through a ‘one

United Nations Approach'. Several joint initiatives have been implemented through the Global Focal Point arrangements in United Nations mission settings, Regional Offices, Resident Coordinators offices, and UN Country teams based on specific requests from host governments for United Nations support. By promoting the practical application of relevant provisions of the *United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules)* and the *United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders (the Bangkok Rules)*, such initiatives have resulted in the improvement of the security and living conditions in many prisons. For example, infrastructural upgrades, healthcare delivery, food security, separation and classification, capacity-building of staff, action plans for reducing the overpopulation, reviews of legislative frameworks and advocacy efforts to reduce pre-trial detention.

Peace operations successfully assisted national health and prison authorities to prevent the spread of Ebola in prisons. Across all missions, corrections components also supported national authorities to mitigate the impact of COVID-19.

As part of efforts to reduce reoffending through rehabilitation and reintegration of inmates, the Department of Peace Operations has supported the design and establishment of several gender responsive vocational programmes in prisons, including inmates' employment in projects. The Department of Peace Operations has also supported the Secretary General's agenda on the Prevention of Violent Extremism, in partnership with the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism, through the Prosecution, Rehabilitation and Reintegration of offenders

who have been radicalized to violence. Missions have assisted in the development and implementation of classification tools essential for the management of inmates. Moreover, Missions are assisting national authorities in developing national reintegration strategies involving civil society organizations, relevant ministries and other actors. Study tours to expose personnel to contemporary rehabilitation programmes have also been sponsored.

Despite these achievements, challenges such as weak and under resourced prison institutions, the lack of ownership by host countries, lack of political will, malfunctioning of the justice system, overcrowding and overuse of incarceration, non-prioritization of correction work, lack of transparency in prison management remain of great concern.

As best practices, we can mention joint actions with UN Country Teams and other stakeholders to support the national efforts, collaboration with civil society organizations, use of mission good offices, harmonization of the Department of Peace Operation's support programme, the Training of Trainers programme for national prison personnel, resource mobilization and the promotion of the Department of Peace Operations Gender Parity Strategy.

The United Nations' approach to "leaving no one behind" endorsed in November 2016, recognizes prisoners as a particularly vulnerable and marginalized group that is subject to discrimination and exclusion. Sufficiently resourced and well-managed prison services and State policies that advance non-custodial measures are important enablers of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Therefore, we very much hope that support for initiatives aimed at implementing the common position in post-conflict and other fragile settings to help achieve sustainable peace and security, remain high on the United Nations agenda.

Let me finish by thanking our partners within and outside the United Nations family, the Member States who actively support our work and our dedicated staff in the field working under very difficult conditions.

Thank you
