RESPONSE OF THE GOVERNMENT OF
THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES¹
TO NOTE CU 2011/26

¹ This document was received in the Arabic language and has been officially translated.
Best practices and national legislation applicable in the United Arab Emirates for implementing the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners

I. Penal and reformatory institutions in the State operate under the provisions of a federal law of its own, derived from criminal laws of the State. All penal and reformatory institutions in the State take charge of applying its provisions as well as the provisions of its implementing regulations under the supervision of the competent central authority in the Ministry of Interior which ensures, through inspection and regular periodic control, that Management in those institutions is committed to the implementation of the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners which are enshrined in the respective laws, regulations and resolutions, including the following rules:

- Treatment of inmates of all categories without discrimination on any grounds.
- Using penal and reformatory institutions that are officially recognized by the State.
- Separation and classification of inmates per category.
- Ensuring the availability of specialized human and technical resources needed for the undertaking of activities, actions and services that are essential for the running of work in all aspects.
- Keeping registers, in paper format and electronically, to document all detention and release actions, as well as registers for various operations as per the specialization of each penal or reformatory institution.
- Guaranteeing the inmate’s right to physical and moral safety by prohibiting torture and ill-treatment and cruel or inhuman or degrading punishment.
- Guaranteeing the inmate’s right, upon detention, to notify his/her family or any interested parties of his/her whereabouts, as well as guaranteeing the right of foreign inmates to contact the embassies of their respective States or whoever looks after their interests.
- Guaranteeing the inmate’s right to enjoy an adequate standard of living in terms of providing him/her with sufficient nutrition to safeguard his/her health and with clothing, bedding, accommodation, potable drinking water, bathing water, laundry service and personal hygiene items. “There is a cafeteria in each institution providing for inmates’ personal requirements at their own expense”.
- Guaranteeing medical care for inmates in terms of conducting preliminary medical examination on detention, providing them with physical and psychological treatment in the institution’s clinic under the supervision of a qualified physician, referring those whose cases
may require specialized care to the State’s hospitals, and providing all medical services and medicaments free of charge, including surgeries and treatment of eye and teeth diseases.

- Providing material and equipment that are essential for public cleanliness in the inmates’ accommodation sections; providing waste disposal equipment; and permitting inmates to exercise sports and expose themselves to sunshine.

- Pursuing sophisticated and modern methods in maintaining security of institutions and guarding inmates; imposing control and order in a way not to degrade the inmate’s dignity or humanity; the use of traditional tools constraining freedom is prohibited except in extraordinary circumstances; each inmate is informed in the language he/she understands of the institution’s order, the regime applicable to his/her category and to his/her duties and of the acts that will lead to him/her being shot if he/she carries out those acts or takes part therein.

- The maximum disciplinary punishment to be inflicted upon the inmate for contravening the order is the solitary imprisonment for a maximum period of seven days or by depriving him/her of certain benefits for a maximum period of one month.

- Attaining maximum benefit from the penal and reformatory institutions through filling inmates’ spare time with productive activities, as well as useful reformatory and rehabilitation programmes, including traditional programmes and programmes to qualify the inmates for the labour market in desirable areas, in a way matching the spirit of contemporary times based on a regime of gradual treatment and individuality of reformatory action.

- Guaranteeing the inmate’s right to communicate with the outside world whether by traditional or modern methods such as direct phone communication; there are phone communication cabins in all penal and reformatory institutions.

- Various regimes are being applied with respect to releasing sentenced prisoners such as temporary conditional release, special release by decree issued by His Royal Highness the Head of the State and the Emirate Governors, and release on medical grounds whether temporary or permanent. Inmates are permitted to go out of the institution to attend social events that concern them or to visit patients who are closely related members in their families.

- The right to make a complaint is guaranteed for every inmate as well as the right to submit requests to the Director of the institution or the Director General of the penal and reformatory institution or to the Judicial Authority or the Ministry of Interior or to any other authority he/she wishes to complaint to. Inmates complaints and requests are handled in accordance with mechanisms guaranteeing that those complaints and wishes will, under all circumstances, be decided upon and that the concerned inmate will be notified of the results thereof.
• Serving as neutral bodies within their respective competencies, the Inspector General of the Ministry of Interior and the Public Prosecution Office take charge of inspecting the penal and reformatory institutions, familiarizing themselves with the condition of inmates and receiving their complaints; they report to the Minister of Interior on the results of their work.

• All inmates enjoy some general penal treatment; special groups of inmates receive special types of treatment that are appropriate to their legal position or on grounds of gender, age, sentence, health/mental condition, or jeopardy to public security.

II. It is noteworthy that the Ministry of Interior is in the process of taking practical and positive steps towards developing existing laws that govern the work of the penal and reformatory institutions so as to match the vision of the State’s leadership and the Ministry’s overall strategic development plan and to meet the requirements for achieving the mission of the penal and reformatory institutions in ensuring “safe and sound detention for the inmates until they have served their sentences in a legal manner, while working in the interim for their recovery and their reintegration in the society” in accordance with modern methods and regimes that match developments of the present technological era and the requirements of human life such as providing high-level modern services whether for inmates, or agents, or the personnel who take care of them and look after their affairs, bearing in mind that the Ministry has already paved the way in this regard by establishing a specialized administration in the organizational structure of the general management of the penal and reformatory institutions, called the Administration of Policies and Standards, in order “to undertake the drawing up the general policy for the penal and reformatory operating regimes and procedures in the State’s institutions in accordance with the relevant national and international standards”.