



**CIVIL SOCIETY COALITION AGAINST TORTURE AND IMPUNITY IN
TAJIKISTAN
(2020 Annual Report)**

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The report is based on information provided by the member organizations of the Civil Society Coalition against Torture and Impunity in Tajikistan. Nigina Bahrieva, Nurmahmad Khalilov, Gulchehra Kholmatova, Parvina Navruzova, Gulchehra Rahmanova, Shoirav Davlatova, Khursheda Rakhimova

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CPC – Criminal Procedure Code

DCA – Drug Control Agency

DMIA – Department of Ministry of Internal Affairs

DRS – Districts of Republic Subordination

EOPRT – Executive Office of the President of the Republic of Tajikistan

EU – European Union

FME – Forensic Medical Examination

GBAO – Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast

HRC – Human Rights Committee

HRO – Human Rights Ombudsman

ICRC – International Committee of Red Cross

INGO - International Non-governmental Organization

IP – Istanbul Protocol

IPHR - International Partnership for Human Rights

LAG – Legal Aid Group

MDICP - Main Department of Implementation of Criminal Punishment

MFA - Ministry of Foreign Affairs

MIA – Ministry of Internal Affairs

MoD – Ministry of Defence

MoJ – Ministry of Justice

NGO – Non-governmental Organization

NPM – National Preventive Mechanism

ODIHR - Organization on Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

OHCHR – Office of High Commissioner on Human Rights

OPCAT – Optional Protocol to Convention against Torture

OSCE – Organization on Security and Cooperation in Europe

OSI – Open Society Institute

PF – Public Fund

PI – Penitentiary Institution

PO – Public Organization

PRI – Penal Reform International

PTDF – Pre-Trial Detention Facility (SIZO)

RG - Rehabilitation group for torture survivors and members of their families

RT – Republic of Tajikistan
SCNS – State Committee on National Security
TDF – Temporary Detention Facility (IVS)
TNU – Tajik National University
UN – United Nations Organizations
UNDP – UN Development Program
UNICEF – UN Children’s Fund
UPR – Universal Periodic Review

Abbreviations in English

USD – US Dollar
DCAF – Center on Democratic Control of Armed Forces
DFID – Department of Foreign International Development
ABA/ROLI – American Bar Association/Rule of Law Initiative
NED – National Endowment for Democracy

INTRODUCTION

The Civil Society Coalition against Torture and Impunity in Tajikistan (Coalition) was established in September 2011 to consolidate civil society efforts to combat torture and impunity in the Republic of Tajikistan. Since its establishment, the Coalition became a well-functioning civil society structure, which has gained recognition at both national and international levels. The Coalition is an important platform and a safe space for all its members, within which they can get support, professional advice, improve their professional skills, unite their efforts and act as a single voice to achieve more effective impact on decision-makers, victims and donors. The principles of transparency of activities and professional ethics are very important to the Coalition.

Members of the Coalition are leading human rights NGOs with many years of experience, which are supported by international organizations. They have the opportunity to dialogue with the authorities of the country, strengthen partnerships with the media, which play a key role in promoting activities to combat torture and impunity. The Coalition facilitated the initiation of public debate on the issue of torture and has a good understanding of the situation on the individual (direct work with victims of torture and their relatives) and political (policy analysis, participation in political lobbying) levels. The Coalition effectively uses regional and international mechanisms to promote its recommendations.

The Coalition has a web page www.notorturej.org, www.notorture.tj as well as has active social media accounts that present a comprehensive awareness-raising tool regarding the information on torture and ill-treatment in Tajikistan and contains articles from mass media, program documents, outcomes of analytical work and research, interviews and other relevant information.

The Coalition has its own pages in the following social networks:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/notorture.tj/>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/NoTortureTj>

Telegram t.me/notorturetj

Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCWfjfabt9tacFgj-rcJZqtw>

Soundcloud: <https://soundcloud.com/notorture-tj>

Instagram: [notorture.tj](https://www.instagram.com/notorture.tj)

The overall activities of the Coalition in 2020 were carried out with the financial resources provided by the European Union, Sigrid Rausing Trust, Open Society Institute (Berlin), Open Society Institute Assistance Foundation – Tajikistan, OSCE Office in Tajikistan, United Nations Voluntary Fund for the Victims of Torture, UNDP, etc.

1. OBJECTIVES AND PRIORITY AREAS OF ACTIVITY

1.1. Coalition has the following objectives:

- Consolidate efforts and requirements in relation to public authorities on the formation of “zero tolerance” policy on torture in Tajikistan;
- Based on the international standards of the right to freedom from torture to focus efforts on the improvement of legislation and law enforcement practice.

1.2. Priorities and key areas of activities of the Coalition for 2016-2020:

- 1) Promote setting up of effective system to investigate complaints related to use of torture and ill-treatment, and ensure independent investigation of torture in Tajikistan;
- 2) Promote standards of the Istanbul Protocol for effective documentation and investigation of allegations of torture within legislation and practice, including setting up of procedures for independent judicial medical examination;
- 3) Promote external oversight of detention facilities;
- 4) Promote development of compensation mechanisms for moral harm inflicted to victims of torture and members of their families, including fair and adequate compensation and access to comprehensive rehabilitation services;

In 2021 the Coalition plans to continue carrying out activities aimed at:

- Further development of the information web page of the Coalition www.notorturetj.org, which is the only source of reliable and comprehensive information targeting the general public and professional groups. It includes information about individual cases, as well as results of monitoring initiatives and reports on the use of torture in Tajikistan. The web page helps raising public awareness about the situation and serves as a platform for information exchange between all key actors at the national and international levels.
- Continued provision of legal aid to victims of torture, strategic litigation in court, documentation of cases of torture. Documenting cases of torture will allow the Coalition to have an in-depth understanding of the underlying causes and tendencies related to use of torture in the country. Strategic litigation aims at creating a sustainable practice of complying with relevant legislation in order to protect victims of torture and provide them and their relatives with adequate and fair compensation in line with the international standards.
- Monitor implementation of the recommendations to the authorities in Tajikistan formulated by the Committee against Torture, Human Rights Committee, and the Special Rapporteur on Torture.
- Prepare analytical documents and alternative reports to UN treaty bodies and institutions, and deliver briefings within the framework of inter-governmental dialogues on human rights.
- Advocacy for development and implementation of national policy on freedom from torture: the establishment of independent monitoring of detention facilities, amendments and changes in the legislation, execution of the Action Plan to Implement the Istanbul Protocol.
- Delivery of training and educational activities on issues of freedom from torture for practicing lawyers and other legal professionals.
- Development and promotion of strategies for protection against torture and ill-treatment in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In 2020, the Coalition initiated discussions to develop a new Strategy for the next five years. Individual meetings were held with representatives of the Coalition's working groups, and an assessment was made of the effectiveness of the Coalition and the process of achieving the objectives of the current Strategy. A workshop was held from 12 to 14 September 2020 to discuss the future strategy. The meeting proposed new challenges and ideas for promoting freedom from torture and ill-treatment, with a particular focus on the Coalition's activities in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. As all of these tasks are relevant to the existing strategy, a two-year extension of the Strategy is under discussion.

2. STRUCTURE OF THE COALITION

The Coalition unites human rights organizations and individual experts in joint effort to combat torture and ill treatment. They carry out Coalition's activities on the basis of agreed **Rules and Principles for participation in the Civil Society Coalition against Torture and Impunity in Tajikistan and Coalition's Strategy**.

As of December 31, 2020, there are 13 public organizations and 9 individual members of the Coalition:

1. Public organization Apeiron
2. Public organization Association of Lawyers of Pamir
3. Association "Public assessors of the Republic of Tajikistan"
4. Public organization "League of women with disabilities "Ishtirok"
5. Public organization "The World of Law"
6. Public Foundation "Najoti kudakon"
7. Public organization Independent Human Rights Center
8. Public Foundation Notabene
9. Public organization Public health and human rights
10. Public organization Office of Civic liberties
11. Public organization "Otifa"
12. Public Foundation Legal initiative
13. Public organization Human Rights Center
14. Abdurahmon Sharipov, lawyer
15. Askar Tursunov, lawyer
16. Ahliddin Salimov, journalist
17. Zoir Razokov, medical expert
18. Nargis Hamrabaeva, journalist
19. Fazliddin Khojaev, journalist
20. Oynihol Bobonazarova, independent expert
21. Umed Niyazov, lawyer
22. Shuhrat Saidov, lawyer

2.1. Working groups and managing bodies:

The Council of the Coalition includes all active members and partners of the Coalition.

Coordinator of the Coalition – Nurmahmad Khalilov, NGO Human Rights Center.

Analytical Center – Nigina Bakhrieva, Public Foundation Notabene

Monitoring Group of Closed Detention Facilities Farhod Boboev NGO “Human Rights Centre”

Legal Aid Group (LAG) – Gulchehra Kholmatova, NGO “The World of Law”

Rehabilitation Group – Gulchehra Rahmanova, NGO Legal initiative (acts on the basis of the Strategy).

Media group - Shoirav Davlatova, NGO Independent Center on Human Rights (acts on the basis of the Strategy).

3. ACTIVITIES OF THE COALITION DURING 2020

The Coalition Legal Aid Group **documented 38 new cases of alleged torture and ill-treatment**, provided more than **204 consultations**, **legal assistance was provided in 20 cases** of torture and ill-treatment and **legal representation was provided in 13 cases**. The “**Independent Centre for Human Rights Protection**” registered **1 new appeal**; provided **85 consultations** and legal assistance in **4 cases** of torture and ill-treatment, as well as provided assistance in drafting **73 legal and procedural documents**. In 2020 the Coalition member-organization “Office of Civil Liberties” provided **417 consultations to conscripts, military personnel and members of their families**, and provided legal support in 10 cases.

Psycho-social assistance (rehabilitation), was provided to 32 persons (22 cases), including 10 men, 16 women, 2 minor boys and 4 minor girls. Of the total number of persons, 19 were directly victims of torture and ill-treatment, 1 girl (12 years) was a victim of sexual violence and 12 were relatives of victims of torture and/or ill-treatment.

Over 454 analytical materials were published by the Coalition’s Media Group, including 230 in Russian (press releases - 12, analytics - 12, multimedia/video/audio materials - 19, informational materials - 87, media materials from other sources – 12, awareness campaigns - 88) , in Tajik - 129 materials - 129 (press releases - 5, analytics - 8, multimedia/video/audio materials - 13, informational materials - 42, from other sources - 3, materials for campaign and campaign - 76); in English: materials for campaign and campaign - 75.

Preparation of the Coalition's Annual Report for 2019. In January 2020, the Coalition's annual report for 2019 was prepared. The report is published on the Coalition's website in Russian and English languages.

Follow-up report on the implementation by Tajikistan of the recommendations of the Committee against Torture under the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment¹. The Committee against Torture, in its concluding recommendations to the third periodic report of Tajikistan, had identified three main priority recommendations (CAT/C/TJK/CO/3), which the State party should report on within a

¹ https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CAT/Shared%20Documents/TJK/INT_CAT_NGS_TJK_41773_E.pdf

year. A follow-up report was prepared by the Coalition in cooperation with the International Human Rights Partnership (Belgium) and the Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights (Poland).²

National Human Rights Strategy until 2030

In 2020 the work on preparation of the National Strategy on Human Rights until 2030 and development of its Action Plan continued. The activities are carried out by the Department of Human Rights Guarantees of the Executive Office of the President of Tajikistan in cooperation with the Public Foundation Notabene³. The Coalition's members took an active part in the drafting process and provided their recommendations. Adoption of the Strategy is expected in 2021.



Development of an Action Plan for the Strategy for the Reform of the Penal Execution System of Tajikistan for the period until 2030. On 30 July 2020, representatives of the Coalition attended a meeting organized by the Ministry of Justice to discuss the Strategy. At the meeting it was decided to develop an Action Plan for the Strategy. The meeting was attended by representatives of various ministries and agencies, in particular, the Main Directorate of Justice, General Prosecutor's Office, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Health, representatives of civil society.

On August 10-16, 2020, a working meeting was held in the sanatorium "Sarob" to develop the final version of the draft Action Plan. The meeting was organized by the Central Penal Correction Department of the Ministry of Justice in partnership with "Human Rights Centre"⁴, with the participation of representatives of the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Labor and Employment, the Ministry of Public Health and the Ministry of Education, The Prosecutor General's Office, the Ministry of Finance, the National Legislation Center under the President of Tajikistan, the Commissioner for Human Rights, and Public Foundation "Tashabbusi hukuki". In October 2020, the Minister of Justice approved a preliminary version of the Action Plan, which was translated from Tajik into Russian. The draft Action Plan is currently under consideration by the Government.

Working group meeting to develop a new draft of the Criminal Code of Tajikistan, Guliston, July 13-25, 2020. Representatives of the Coalition participated in the working meeting organized with the support of UNDP in Tajikistan. The working group is composed of representatives of the Executive Office of the President, the General Prosecutor's Office, the Supreme Court, the National Legislation Centre under the President of Tajikistan and academia.

² Document prepared with the financial assistance of the Delegation of the European Union to Tajikistan

³ The activities are implemented in the framework of the project "Promoting cooperation between the state and civil society institutions in the field of human rights", funded by the European Union.

⁴ With the support of the OSCE Program Office in Dushanbe, Penal Reform International and the Public Foundation "Tashabbusi hukuki" within the project "Promoting a Human Rights Approach in Reforming the Penitentiary System in Tajikistan" funded by the EU Delegation in Tajikistan.

At the meeting, the draft Criminal Code and proposals from civil society institutions were discussed.

In 2020, the PF "Notabene" initiated the process of **drafting the Law "On Public Councils"**⁵, in cooperation with the Ministry of Justice of Tajikistan. A Working Group was established and held a number of meetings both online and offline during 2020. The working group prepared an analysis of national legislation on the regulation of public councils in the country, as well as the experience of other countries in this field, which formed the basis of the initial draft law. In July 2020, the draft law was submitted to the relevant ministries and agencies of the country. On the basis of the recommendations received, the draft law was finalized and submitted to the Office of the President for comments. National consultations in the regions, with the participation of representatives of civil society, are planned following the receipt of comments.

Practical Handbook for Judges on Compensation for Victims of Torture "No Justice Without Compensation: Fair Trial Solutions - A Path to a World free from Torture" was developed by international expert Elena Volochay, which includes the country's international legal obligations and national legislation on compensation for harm, psychological aspects of the consequences of torture for victims, as well as a review of the practice of international human rights bodies⁶.

Information brochure entitled "Rights of persons in social institutions (orphanages, boarding schools and Residential homes for the elderly)" have been developed by the Bureau for Human Rights and the Rule of Law in cooperation with the Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights and include practical recommendations on human rights issues in social institutions. Document translated into Tajik and available on the Coalition's website⁷.

Information brochure on "Rights of persons in psychiatric institutions and institutions for drug addicts. The rights and obligations of the personnel of these institutions" have been developed by the Bureau for Human Rights and the Rule of Law in cooperation with the Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights and include practical recommendations on human rights issues in psychiatric institutions. Document translated into Tajik and available on the Coalition's website.⁸

Videoconference "EU-Central Asia on the consequences of the Covid 19 pandemic in Central Asia". On 14 May 2020 representatives of PF Notabene took part in the videoconference "EU-Central Asia on the consequences of the Covid 19 pandemic in Central Asia". During the conference, civil society representatives from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan discussed the new challenges they face in relation to the Covid 19 pandemic, including access to information, freedom of expression, access to healthcare, the situation in prisons, and access to education in a pandemic environment.

⁵ The activity is carried out in the framework of the project "Promotion of cooperation between the state and civil society institutions in the field of human rights" with the financial support of the European Union

⁶ http://notabene.tj/Doc/Taj/Compensation%20manual_2020.pdf

⁷ <https://notorturetj.org/library/prava-lic-nahodyashchihsya-v-socialnyh-uchrezhdeniyah-detskih-domah-shkolah-internatah-domah>

⁸ <https://notorturetj.org/library/prava-lic-nahodyashchihsya-v-psihiatricheskih-uchrezhdeniyah-uchrezhdeniyah-dlya>

European Union-Central Asia Forum

On 8 September 2020, representative of the Public Foundation Notabene participated in the development of the agenda of the European Union-Central Asia Forum. Given the ongoing crisis related to the Covid-19 pandemic, it was agreed to focus on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on various aspects of social and economic development, resilience and prosperity of societies and regional cooperation, including by sharing positive examples of civil society contributions to mitigate the crisis. During the discussions it was agreed to pay particular attention to the most vulnerable groups in society, including women and children, youth, PWDs; climate change mitigation/adaptation through sustainable development, including effective management of natural resources; job creation, education, digitalization and security issues related to challenges such as radicalization, violent extremism and terrorism.

On 27 October 2020, ahead of the 16th EU-Central Asia Ministerial Meeting, the second EU-Central Asia Forum was held online due to the epidemiological situation in the world. The event brought together about a hundred civil society representatives from the EU and Central Asia. During the meeting, the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic crisis on different areas of civil society were discussed, with a special focus on the transition to digital technology, access to healthcare and education, as well as the role and contribution of civil society in counteracting and mitigating the negative effects of the pandemic. The recommendations were presented to the Central Asian Ministers of Foreign Affairs and the EU High Representative to the Vice-President during the 16th ministerial meeting.

European Union - Tajikistan Human Rights Dialogue. Annually on eve of the official European Union-Tajikistan Human Rights Dialogue, the European Union delegation conducts a meeting with civil society representatives. The meetings allow the civil society representatives to discuss the current situation with human rights in the country. However, due to the epidemiological situation in the country the briefing with NGOs was canceled.

The 12th round of the EU-Tajikistan Human Rights Dialogue was held on 11 November 2020 via video conference. During the Dialogue the sides discussed the latest developments in a broad range of human-rights related issues, such as political participation, freedom of association, freedom of expression and freedom of religion or belief, as well as the prevention and eradication of torture and ill-treatment, and women's rights, as well the impact of the pandemic Covid 19 on the implementation of the citizen's rights. The EU appreciated the strong engagement of civil society in Tajikistan in addressing the coronavirus pandemic, and called on the Tajik authorities to strengthen their engagement with independent civil society actors and human rights defenders.

The Project staff, together with the International Partnership for Human Rights, prepared an analytical paper on the situation with freedom of association, freedom of expression and Mass Media, issues of non-discrimination, prevention of torture in the country, including individual cases and specific recommendations for the government of Tajikistan.

In cooperation with the Main Department of Implementation of Criminal Punishment of the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Tajikistan, **the NGO "Human Rights Center"** launched a

project "Support for the effective management of persons convicted of terrorist crimes and extremist activities", implemented with the financial support of the OSCE Program Office in Dushanbe as part of its "Justice Reform" activities. The project is aimed at developing a methodology and questionnaire for a system of classification and risk assessment among convicts, as well as a draft comprehensive rehabilitation and resocialization program, including an individual plan for the rehabilitation of convicts; Development of cooperation with the Judicial Training Institute of the Ministry of Justice to analyse existing training modules and program for prison officials. The project will be implemented by an expert working group composed of representatives of civil society, national and international experts and officials of relevant State bodies, with the direct involvement of the Main Department of Implementation of Criminal Punishment of the Ministry of Justice.

Membership in the Coalition. During the reporting period, an application was received from Ms. Dilafruz Samadova to join the Coalition against Torture as an individual member and in January 2021 her candidacy was approved.

Activities for the welfare and safety of Coalition members. The Coalition attaches great importance to the well-being and safety of Coalition members. In this regard, it was decided to provide members and partners of the Coalition with the services of a psychologist as part of the Sigrid Rausing Trust funding. During the reporting period, the psychologist continued to provide services to Coalition members.

In response to the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic and in order to ensure the safety of its members, the Coalition purchased and presented personal protective equipment (medical masks, antiseptics, gloves) to Coalition member organizations and individual partners from the Sigrid Rausing Trust funding. Financial assistance is also provided to Coalition members and their families for diagnosis and treatment in the event of COVID 19 infection.

Capacity building for Coalition members.⁹ With a view to enhance the Coalition's activities in the Kulyab zone of Khatlon province in documenting torture, as well as to raise public awareness about the Coalition's activities on freedom from torture, it was decided to hold a specialized training for employees of the NGO "Nachoti Kudakon", Coalition's partner in Khatlon province, on freedom from torture, documenting allegations of torture and ill-treatment, and rehabilitation of victims of torture and their families. The training was conducted by specialists of the Coalition's Media and Analytical groups, who also briefed the participants about the activities of their groups.

Commission on the distribution of the Sigrid Rausing Trust funds. In 2020, the project «Support of the Coalition against Torture», financed by the Sigrid Rausing Trust, was handed over to the NGO "Human Rights Centre", which is currently coordinates the Coalition's activities. Under the project, Coalition member organizations are supported through direct funding and mini-grants, which are being considered by a five-member dedicated Commission.

⁹ <https://notorturetj.org/news/rukovoditeli-grupp-koalicii-proveli-seminar-dlya-oo-nachoti-kudakon>

3.1. ACTIVITIES OF THE COALITION AND ITS MEMBER-ORGANIZATIONS FOR THE PREVENTION AND CONTROL OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The Coalition attaches great importance to the safety of its colleagues, including during the COVID-19 pandemic. Following the official announcement of COVID-19 cases, many member organizations of the Coalition shifted to remote work. At the same time, those organizations that work with the public, alleged victims of torture and ill-treatment, continued their work. In the frame of the Zigrid Rauzing Trust project, the Coalition purchased personal protective equipment (medical masks, antiseptics, gloves) and medicines for Coalition organizations and members. Similar assistance was provided within other projects carried by the Coalition's member-organizations.

COVID 19 and human rights

On 24 April 2020 the Civil Society Coalition against Torture and Impunity in Tajikistan sent letters to the General Prosecutor's Office, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Justice, the Main Directorate of the Ministry of Justice, the Supreme Court, the Ministry of Health and Social Protection, the State National Security Committee, the Drug Control Agency, the State Financial Monitoring and Anti-Corruption Agency regarding the respect of human rights during the COVID-19 pandemic, including in relation to persons held in Pre-trial detention, prisons and other penitentiary institutions. In addition, the Coalition also presented the state bodies with the copy of **“COVID-19 and its impact on prison monitoring and freedom of expression – a compilation of useful resources”**¹⁰, which was developed by the International Partnership for Human Rights in cooperation with the Public Foundation Notabene and NGO Khoma.¹¹ The Compilation provides overview of human rights standards and guidelines on measures taken by States to combat the spread of COVID-19, focusing on the situation in prisons and other places of detention, as well as on freedom of information and expression.

In addition, the Coalition, together with other civil society organizations, prepared appeals and statements to state authorities.

“Civil society in Tajikistan expressed its readiness to support the Ministry of Health in the fight against COVID-19”¹². Representatives of the Civil Society Coalition against Torture and Impunity in Tajikistan and the Network of Women with Disabilities in Tajikistan expressed their willingness to cooperate with the Ministry of Health and Social Protection of Tajikistan to prevent the spread of the coronavirus.

¹⁰ Document was developed with the financial support of the EU

¹¹ <https://www.iphronline.org/covid-19-and-its-impact-on-prison-monitoring-and-freedom-of-expression-a-compilation-of-useful-resources.html>

¹² <https://notorturetj.org/news/grazhdanskoe-obshchestvo-tadzhikistana-predlagaet-minzdravvu-sotrudnichestvo-v-borbe-s-covid-19>

Coalition Against Torture calls for respect for prisoners' rights amid restrictions in the fight against COVID-19.¹³ The Civil Society Coalition Against Torture and Impunity in Tajikistan calls for respect for prisoners' rights amid restrictions imposed by authorities in the fight against the threat of coronavirus.

Ministry of Health responded to the request of the Coalition: the epidemiological situation in the country is relatively calm¹⁴. The Ministry of Health and Social Protection of Tajikistan responded to the request of the Civil Society Coalition against Torture and Impunity in Tajikistan, which asked for clarification on the situation with the spread of coronavirus in the country and the measures taken to prevent and prevent the spread of coronavirus infection.

Civil society in Tajikistan called on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to help Tajik migrants who found themselves outside the country during the pandemic¹⁵. Civil society organizations in Tajikistan are concerned about the situation of migrant workers who are citizens of the Republic of Tajikistan who remained outside the country during the COVID-19 pandemic and have addressed a letter to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Tajikistan requesting support for compatriots.

Civil society organizations' appeal to WHO¹⁶. Civil society organizations in Tajikistan appealed to the World Health Organization (WHO) office in Tajikistan in response to the population's concern about the epidemiological situation in the country and request that their recommendations be taken into account.

Coalition member organizations continued its activities during the **COVID-19** pandemic. With the support of international organizations and charitable activities, Coalition member organizations purchased and distributed medical supplies, personal protective equipment and food for law enforcement officials, health facilities and low-income families; information and awareness-raising activities; and continued to provide legal and psychological counselling directly and through the hotline.

Within the framework of supporting initiatives on preventing and combating COVID-19 in GBAO, NGO "**Lawyers Association of Pamir**" with the financial assistance of international organizations¹⁷ provided assistance to the total amount of **78178.41 somoni**. Personal protective equipment (medical masks, protective suits), antiseptics, disinfectants and medicines were purchased and distributed to employees of the GBAO Interior Ministry, medical institutions and the population.

¹³ <https://notorture.tj.org/news/koaliciya-protiv-pytok-prizyvaet-k-soblyudeniyu-prav-zaklyuchennyh-v-usloviyah-ogranicheniy-v>

¹⁴ <https://notorture.tj.org/news/minzdrav-otvetil-na-zapros-koalicii-epidemiologicheskaya-situaciya-v-strane-otnositelno>

¹⁵ <http://ichrptj.org/ru/blog/grazhdanskoe-obshchestvo-tadzhikistana-prizvalo-mid-pomoch-tadzhikskim-migrantam-okazavshimsya>

¹⁶ <https://notorture.tj.org/news/obrashchenie-organizacij-grazhdanskogo-obshchestva-k-voz>

¹⁷ Assistance was provided through the Police-Society Interaction Project, in partnership with Saferworld International in Tajikistan, for 5,128.41 somoni and the International Partnership for Human Rights for 2,650 somoni

The **Association of "People's Assessors of the Republic of Tajikistan"**¹⁸ has opened a "Hotline" at (+992) 98 333,757 to provide legal advice to both patients and health-care workers. The hotline receives up to 20 calls per month from beneficiaries. During the reporting period, the organization held a series of awareness-raising workshops in five cities in Sughd oblast to raise awareness of the legal framework for the protection of rights in the provision of health services; including information on the new COVID19 pandemic, with the participation of 500 people (Isfara on 11 March 2020, Khujand on 13 March 2020, Penjikent on 27 March 2020, Devashtih on 19 January 2021 and Gafurovsk district B. on 22 January 2021). In June 2020, within the framework of the project "Freedom of the Media - Guarantee of Transparency", the organization held a talk show with the participation of active representatives of the media to discuss the role of the media in the development of a democratic society; and its indispensable role in disseminating reliable information during the pandemic, both in Tajikistan and throughout the world. It also highlighted the need for free access by the media to reliable sources of information on the pandemic, as well as the importance of media interaction with State authorities on the issue. The talk show aired on June 22, 2020 (21:30) and June 23, 2020 (12:00) on "Asia" TV station.

At the time of the pandemic, there was also a need to protect the rights and interests not only of citizens but of civil society activists themselves. In November 2020, two member organizations of the Coalition, the Association of "People's Assessors of Tajikistan" and the OTIFA NGO, launched a partnership project entitled "Information and legal support for civil society representatives (NGOs, activists) which is primarily was targeted at improving/maintaining digital security of the CSOs, as well as provided consultations through a Hotline +992 92 9409494

In May-June 2020, the **Office of Civil Liberties** purchased 265 sets of personal protective equipment for public organizations in Khatlon and Sogd oblast, GBAO, PPP and Dushanbe (valve masks, respirators, antiseptics, shields, gloves,). Masks and antiseptics are also distributed to **538 of the country's lawyers** through the chairmen of the territorial bodies of the Bar Association¹⁹. OCL specialists provided **psycho-medical assistance to human rights defenders**, a total of 27 applications were received from private individuals and public organizations.²⁰

Infographics: Infographics on the prevention of COVID-19 were developed and published in three languages (Russian, Uzbek, Tajik) in a quantity of 1000 pieces. The infographics were distributed to the population in the remote regions of the country together with the basic necessities (rice, flour, oil, oil, lentils, pasta, hygienic products, and personal protective equipment) as part of the charitable activities of the OCL to more than 400 families, elderly people's home and persons with disabilities in Degmai, Sughd province.

<https://www.facebook.com/officeofcivil/posts/2536606463258073>

<https://www.facebook.com/officeofcivil/posts/2520314751553911>

<https://www.facebook.com/officeofcivil/posts/2495403480711705>

¹⁸ Activities are carried out within the framework of the Republican partnership project "The Right to Health - an Important Human Value" with the financial support of OSIAF-Tajikistan

¹⁹ The funds were purchased with financial support from the URGENT Fund, the Open Society Institute Assistance Foundation - Tajikistan, and the Open Society Foundations (Eurasia Program).

²⁰ With the financial support from the URGENT Fund and the Open Society Institute Assistance Foundation - Tajikistan.

Letters and appeals: The OCL experts prepared appeals to the President of Tajikistan, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Defence and the Ombudsman. In their appeal, the OCL called on the above-mentioned entities to scrutinize media reports of cases and take preventive measures, also requesting that special attention be paid to the health of soldiers in order to prevent them from contracting the virus, calling for thorough medical examination of conscripts, testing of conscripts, mandatory X-rays and other necessary measures.

A webinar for lawyers and activists about the Covid-19 pandemic and human rights was held on May 28, 2020 with the participation of more than 40 participants.

<https://www.facebook.com/officeofcivil/photos/a.1839768972941829/2524749524443767/?type=3&theater>

On July 27, 2020, "Human Rights During a Pandemic" training was held for 21 doctors at the military hospital of the Border Guard Troops of the SCNS.

Medical specialists of PF «Public Health and Human Rights» from the first days of the official announcement of COVID-19 in Tajikistan have joined online consulting groups on the prevention, treatment and referral of patients with COVID 19 symptoms. Between April to December, the organization's psychologist provided free online counselling to beneficiaries in a complex pandemic situation. Between May and October 2020, employees of the organization purchased food and personal protective equipment (masks, gloves, antiseptics and vitamins) worth 27,000 somoni, which were provided to beneficiaries in difficult economic circumstances.

From the first days of the official announcement of the COVID 19 pandemic in Tajikistan, the staff member of the NGO "Najoti kudakon" joined the Mobile Group (MG) to conduct awareness-raising campaigns in the remote mountain areas of Khatlon region (Hamadoni, Farkhor, Shamsiddin Shokhin, Muminabad, and Vose). These activities were carried out within the program «From home to home». During the campaign the activists distributed 1,600 copies of informative booklets and provided legal and psychological consultations with women whose children and husbands are in migration in the Russian Federation. Between May and July 2020²¹, the organization's staff purchased food supplies for a total of 7,000 somoni and distributed it among 75 low-income families. In cooperation with NGO "Nazari Digar", and "Office of Civil Liberties", the organization provided food supplies, antiviral medicines, and personal protective equipment²² to 19 families with children with Down syndrome in 16 jamoats of the region. At the moment, there is a 24-hour hotline that provides legal, psychological and medical advice to the public. An analysis of the organization's activities demonstrated that violence in families and public places significantly increased during the pandemic. With the support of the International Partnership for Human Rights, the organization continues to provide assistance to women victims of violence in the Safe House office. Staff members were provided with personal protective equipment and were ready to receive citizens.

Coalition member NGO "**Independent Center for Human Rights Protection**" is the coordinator of the Central Asian Network on the Right to Adequate Housing. As part of the network's

²¹ With the support of the TFEO Foundation

²² With the support of the TFEO Foundation

activities, a review **report** entitled "**COVID-19 and the Right to Housing**" on measures taken by governments and non-governmental organizations in these countries on the right to adequate housing, the right to housing and related areas to address the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic was prepared. This report was submitted to the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Right to Adequate Housing, Balakrishnan Rajagopal.²³

Publications prepared:

- Central Asian Network on the Right to Adequate Housing calls for the right to adequate housing in Central Asian countries during the Coovid-2019 pandemic.²⁴
- Leilani Farha: Evictions are not only inconsistent with the “stay home”²⁵ policy. “In the face of this pandemic, being evicted from your home is a potential death sentence. The right to adequate housing is not subject to derogation in times of emergency” - she says in her video message.

Representatives of the organization distributed free of charge more than 100 medical masks and protective equipment to prevent the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) and leaflets on the right to adequate housing in the **cities of Khatlon oblast**²⁶. In addition, the organization’s lawyers provided legal advice on housing issues. Similar events were held in **Sughd oblast**²⁷ in Khujand (19-20 October 2020) and Buston (23-24 October 2020), and in **Dushanbe**²⁸ (28 October and 4 November 2020).

The Public Foundation "**Tashabbusi hukuki**" has provided assistance to children serving sentences in the Juvenile Correctional Institution J/C 3/12 of the Central Penal Correction Department of the Ministry of Justice and its staff, as well as to torture survivors, and their families. With the financial support of JSC "Humo", the organization purchased hygienic products (soap, shampoo, toothpaste and brush) and protective equipment (masks, antiseptics, thermometers, medicines and vitamins) and handed over children serving sentences and the staff of the institution. The organization also provided protective equipment (masks, antiseptics, medicines and vitamins) to victims of torture and/or their families. A total of 14 boxes of a dry soup mixes were distributed among the survivors of torture and/or members of their families and children serving sentences in the Juvenile colony (each box contained 8 packs of soup set). This assistance was provided by the Public Organization "Avesto" within the framework of USAID "Feed the future" initiative in Tajikistan.

The NGO "**Human Rights Centre**" in the framework of the project "Support for migrant workers and their families during the COVID-19 pandemic", financed by the Open Society Institute - Assistance Foundation in Tajikistan, in 2020 provided food and household products for 150 families of Khatlon region, for 150 families of Sughd region and 300 families of RRS and Rasht valley.

²³ <http://ichrptj.org/ru/blog/centralnaya-aziya-covid-19-i-pravo-na-zhilishche>

²⁴ <http://ichrptj.org/ru/blog/set-ca-po-pravu-na-dostatochnoe-zhilishche-prizyvaet-k-soblyudeniyu-prava-na-dostatochnoe>

²⁵ <http://ichrptj.org/ru/blog/leilani-farha-vyselenie-ne-sootvetstvuet-rekomendacii-ostavaytes-doma>

²⁶ <http://ichrptj.org/ru/blog/edvokasi-akciya-v-gorodah-hatlona-zhilishchnoe-pravo-i-covid-19>

²⁷ <http://ichrptj.org/ru/blog/v-sogde-proshla-edvokasi-akciya-zhilishchnoe-pravo-i-covid-19>

²⁸ <http://ichrptj.org/ru/blog/v-stolice-proshla-edvokasi-akciya-zhilishchnoe-pravo-i-covid-19>

Thus, with the support of partner organizations in these regions, lists of **600** families with a total of more than **2,800** people were prepared. Some of the families lost their breadwinners in labor migration during the COVID-19 virus pandemic, or they were forced to return home due to lack of jobs and job closures. In addition, it is worth noting that almost out of 10 selected families there are 6-7 children with disabilities. These families received food kits including wheat flour, vegetable oil, pulses, rice, sugar and salt. The kits were supplemented with household and antiseptic products such as laundry soap, antiseptics, reusable and disposable masks.

3.2 INTRODUCTION OF THE SYSTEM FOR REHABILITATION OF VICTIMS OF TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT

The aim of Coalition's Rehabilitation Group for the Victims of Torture and Members of their Families (RG) provides holistic assistance services to victims of torture and to their relatives and restore their independence and ability to carry on with their physical, psychological, social and professional activities, and fully participate in all aspects of social life.

During the first quarter of Group activities in 2020, a number of changes were made in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Owing to overcrowding in clinics, the provision of non-emergency medical care was postponed until a later period, when the situation would improve and the spread of the virus would be reduced. It has also been decided to suspend the provision of in-person psychological assistance as well as on-site counselling in the regions. The Group continued to hold consultations by telephone. At the same time, the Group has intensified its activities related to provision of social assistance to the survivors of torture and their relatives. Beginning on 15 June, the Group began its activities as scheduled and resumed its work with all health facilities.

At the end of 2020, the recommendations of the United Nations Committee against Torture and the Special Rapporteur on torture and ill-treatment, Juan Mendez, on his visit to Tajikistan were used for establishing an effective system for the rehabilitation of victims of torture and ill-treatment:

- Review mechanisms and programs that provide rehabilitation services to victims of torture, including the relevant infrastructure of the Ministry of Health, as well as funding for private medical, legal and other institutions; Including those managed by non-governmental organizations providing medical, psychological and social rehabilitation services;
- Include in the national legislation explicit provisions on the right of victims of torture to redress, including fair and adequate compensation and rehabilitation, for damages suffered as a result of torture.
- Mechanisms and programs should be put in place to provide all victims with rehabilitation, including appropriate infrastructure within the Ministry of Health, and to finance private medical, legal and other institutions, including those run by non-governmental organizations, that provide medical, psychological, and social rehabilitation services.

In 2020, the activities of the Rehabilitation Unit to assist victims of torture and/or their families focused on the provision of services, capacity-building and the development of practical materials for professionals working in this field. In cooperation with public authorities, a number of activities are planned for 2020, including financial support for rehabilitation programs and the mobilization of alternative sources of funding; Consider public funding as a reserve for rehabilitation programs for victims of torture and ill-treatment and consider including victims of violence (torture, domestic violence, violence against women, military) and consideration of the inclusion of victims of violence (torture, domestic violence, violence against women, military personnel) in vulnerable groups in order to guarantee medical expertise and the inclusion in rehabilitation programs of free medical care, Integration into society, etc. into vulnerable groups in order to guarantee medical expertise and inclusion in rehabilitation programs, free medical care, integration into society, etc. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the activities and resources of the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare were diverted to the fight against the pandemic, so the RG was unable to implement the planned activities.

The RG operates in close cooperation with the Coalition's Legal Assistance Group. Once the allegation of torture and/or ill-treatment is received and documented by the LAG, with the consent of the alleged torture victim and/or their family members, they are referred to the RG for rehabilitation services.

Rehabilitation of victims of torture and members of their families

In total, in 2019 the Coalition provided rehabilitation services to 32 persons on 22 registered cases, which include 10 men, 16 women, 2 underaged boys and 4 underaged girls. Of the total number of victims, 19 were directly victims of torture and ill-treatment, the remaining 12 were relatives of victims of torture and/or ill-treatment, and one girl (12 years old) was a victim of sexual violence.

Physical torture was applied to 17 out of 19 victims who were directly tortured: beatings, electric shocks through fingernails and groin area, beatings in the head, stomach and face, dousing with water, pulling hair. Two victims were subjected to psychological pressure from law enforcement officers, including insults and foul language.

Thirty of the 32 people received medical and psychological assistance, and one person refused rehabilitation. A minor girl, a victim of sexual violence, was referred to the NGO “Korvoni Umed”.

All applicants were provided with rehabilitation assistance in the form of social, medical and psychological help and support:

- Outpatient treatment - 24 persons;
- Inpatient treatment – 6 persons;
- Medical examination - 30
- Physical therapy and massage – 4
- Medications - 30
- sanatorium/spa resort treatment – 5 persons.

Psychological assistance was provided to 20 torture survivors and/or their families:

1. Initial assessment - 20;
2. Opinion on psychological condition - 20;
3. Sessions with a psychologist - 20;
4. Preparation of psychological reports before and after rehabilitation - 20;
5. Re-rehabilitation - 0;
6. Providing counselling for lawyers on psychological assessment of moral harm - 2;

At the time of the report preparation, 10 persons had been psychologically rehabilitated. 20 persons had received a psychological report.

Social assistance is provided to 31 survivors of torture and/or their family members, which includes:

1. Initial assessment and determination of needs - 31 (in the end one person refused);
2. Social support for victims and/or their family members - 30;
3. Assistance to the victim in social security issues (employment, Education, pension, benefits etc.) - 3;
4. Drawing up an individual plan of work with a victim of torture and their family members and coordinating with other professionals - 30;
5. Convening a consultation and taking minutes for each case - 31 (one person later refused services).

Repeated rehabilitation

In 2020, repeated medical care was provided to 12 individuals: Five men, six women, and one minor girl. All twelve persons were examined and diagnosed and received outpatient treatment. The assistance was provided on the basis of a consilium decision and a doctor's recommendation.

Guidelines for the Psychological Rehabilitation of Survivors of Torture and/or their Families

The Guide is developed for the psychologists who work with the survivors of torture and/or their family members. The guide is available in two languages, Tajik and Russian, is distributed to professionals and is published on the Coalition's website. The guide includes a scheme of assistance, as well as methodologies to be used by psychologists during the initial assessment and in the process of providing psychological support. Like the Social Work Manual, this Manual includes case management (intake forms, initial assessment, interim and final assessment, etc.). Based on the developed manual, 23 psychologists were trained, 8 of whom are psychologists in the penitentiary system.

The manual includes a scheme for the provision of care, as well as methodologies to be used by psychologists during the initial assessment and in the provision of psychological assistance. Like the Social Work Manual, this Manual includes the Case Management Manual (registration forms, primary assessment, interim and final assessment, etc.). On the basis of the guidelines

developed, 23 psychologists were trained, 8 of whom are psychologists of the penitentiary system.

Development of a Guide to the Social Rehabilitation of Survivors of Torture and/or their Families and Training of Social Workers in Case Management Skills

The Guide includes step-by-step actions on providing social assistance and support to survivors of torture and/or their family members, including methods of case management from the moment of arrival of the victim to his/her full rehabilitation. The document was prepared in two languages, Tajik and Russian, distributed to social work professionals and the electronic version is available on the Coalition's website.²⁹ In order to test the developed Social workers from Dushanbe, RRP, Khatlon and Sogd oblasts, together with the representatives of penitentiary institutions of the Ministry of Justice were trained on the topic "Case management - a technology for the integrated social rehabilitation of torture victims and/or their family members" to test the newly developed Manual and to discuss a new form for the registration of individual cases. During the training, participants were trained in individual social support for victims of torture and their families, as well as in the management of personal files.³⁰

Meeting of the General Assembly of the International Rehabilitation Network for Torture Victims (IRCT).

On 6, 7 and 9 October 2020, the annual online meeting of the IRCT General Assembly, of which the Public Foundation "Tashabbusi Hukuki" is a member, was held. The meeting discussed the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on the rehabilitation process and lessons learned, as well as the development of a Global Standards on Rehabilitation of Torture Victims in a pandemic. At the end of the meeting, resolution was adopted <https://notorturetj.org/en/library/resolution-adopted-6th-general-assembly-international-rehabilitation-council-torture-victims>

3.3. LEGAL AID

The activities of Coalition's Legal Aid Group (LAG) aim at promoting the establishment of an effective response system to allegations of torture and ill-treatment, including an independent mechanism for the investigating torture, and adequate provision of legal aid to victims of torture and their relatives.

The main tasks of the LAG are:

- To establish the scope of torture and ill-treatment;
- To document torture and ill-treatment, provide legal assistance to victims of torture and their relatives, conduct strategic litigation;
- To develop rules and procedures for cooperating with lawyers to provide legal assistance to victims of torture and their relatives;
- To coordinate the activities of Coalition members on legal assistance to victims of torture;
- To promote effective mechanisms for responding and investigating torture by state bodies.

²⁹ <https://notorturetj.org/library/psihosocialnaya-reabilitaciya-lic-perezhivshih-pytki-rukovodstvo-dlya-sotrudnikov>

³⁰ <https://notorturetj.org/library/rukovodstvo-po-okazaniyu-kompleksnoy-socialnoy-reabilitacii-licam-perezhivshim-pytki-i>

The Secretariat of LAG consists of one coordinator, three experts on documenting torture in Dushanbe, RRS, Sughd province, for and Khatlon province (covering cases from GBAO) and one Expert on medical documentation of torture in accordance with the Istanbul Protocol (IP) standards.

In 2020, the LAG continued its activities aimed at:

- Provision of legal assistance to victims of torture, strategic litigation, documentation of cases of torture. Documenting cases of torture will enable the Coalition to obtain first-hand information on the situation of torture in the country, and pursuing strategic litigation will enable it to establish sustainable practices in the application of the law on the protection of victims of torture, as well as the practice of compensating victims of torture and their relatives in accordance with international standards;
- preparing submissions for analytical papers and alternative reports to UN bodies, as well as for intergovernmental dialogues on human rights.

3.3.1. Documenting cases of torture and ill treatment

In 2020, the Legal Aid Group continued to document the cases of alleged torture and ill-treatment, provided consultations and legal assistance, and monitored trials. In cooperation with the Analytical Group contributed to the preparation of analytical materials for the international human rights bodies. Worked with the Media Group on the development of information and education materials and reports on individual cases, legislation and practice of torture and ill-treatment.

In April 2020, LAG employees were forced to switch to remote work in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Group continued to consult victims and their representatives by telephone and, in extreme cases, citizens were received in the office in compliance with the necessary security measures. Subsequently, the Group staff developed a duty schedule of citizens' reception. Between April and December 2020, there was a significant decrease in the number of applications from citizens. Although no compulsory isolation had been declared, citizens nevertheless observed all necessary precautions, including avoiding visits to public places.

Law enforcement and judicial authorities have not officially announced changes in their work regime due to the pandemic, but there have been some restrictions related to citizens' appeals. In Tajikistan, the concept of e-governance is poorly implemented; the websites of state and local governments are partially inactive or have only an informational function, so there is virtually no access to electronic services in the country. In addition, the Internet, known for its high cost and low speed, is not conducive to the provision of public services to citizens. Moreover, the Internet, known for its high cost and low speed, does not facilitate the delivery of public services to citizens. In the context of the pandemic, serious violations of the right of citizens to appeal were committed by the courts, procurators' offices and internal affairs bodies, which severely restricted the physical reception of citizens and the registration of complaints, petitions and applications. Reports of crime were not recorded, procedural documents were not issued or were issued with great delays, and lawyers' access to their clients was severely restricted, even with

the written permission of an investigator or a judge. Owing to the epidemiological situation, the consideration of civil cases by the courts has been postponed indefinitely, except in the case of criminal cases in which the accused were placed under preventive detention, which has had a significant impact on the time frame for the processing of compensation claims in the courts.

In 2020, the Legal Aid Unit achieved the following results:

- Documentation specialists have provided legal advice on complaints of torture and ill-treatment in cases where lawyers are not needed. As a result, the specialists have secured administrative and disciplinary sanctions for the perpetrators. In one case in which an inmate complained of inadequate conditions causing blindness, the specialist was able to get him transferred to a penal colony-settlement regime.
- The Group sought the return of the criminal case for further investigation. The Supreme Court, for the first time, referred the criminal case back for further investigation, demanding an investigation into the guilt of the head of the Police Department, who was responsible for the actions of his subordinates. The Supreme Court also drew attention to the negative practice of administrative arrest, which preceded the institution of criminal proceedings and encouraged the use of torture, and demanded that measures be taken against the judge of the Court of Tursunzade and the district police officer, who wrote the fictitious report.
- The practice of filing a complaint with the courts for compensation for moral injury to victims of torture continues. An action was filed in the case of Khodjanarov K. in favor of his wife and minor children, in which two departments, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the State National Security Committee, were named as defendants.

In the course of its activities, the LAG encountered some problems. Legal protection was mainly carried out by documentation specialists and new lawyers, who had not previously participated in training on the standards of the Istanbul Protocol and had no experience in drafting applications for the appointment of expert examinations to assess physical and psychological trauma. It is therefore difficult for lawyers to draft procedural documents in terms of a detailed description of methods of torture, bodily and psychological injuries received, the general state of health after the torture, raising questions to forensic experts and a psychologist.

There are serious problems in responding to lawyers' petitions for a comprehensive expertise on the part of investigative bodies and courts. Investigators and judges do not make decisions on the petitions, thus violating the procedural terms of their consideration, provided for in the CPC of the Republic of Tajikistan. It should be noted that there are problems in assessing the psychological consequences of torture, lawyers are not always ready to file motions for the appointment of an expert examination to evaluate the psychological state of the victim of torture and ill-treatment. In judicial practice, very few such motions are filed.

During the COVID-19 pandemic lawyers were denied access to their defendants. The Main Penal Correction Department of the Ministry of Justice refused lawyers' written request for access to their defendants, justifying it by the epidemiological situation in the country.

In a case of torture, where four high-ranking officials were sentenced, the court refused to pay compensation for moral damages to the torture victim. The Court ruled that the State, through the competent body (the Ministry of Internal Affairs), was not responsible for the actions of State officials who violated the human right to protection against torture in the exercise of State authority. This case is a serious violation of international standards on freedom from torture. Lawyers will appeal the court's decision.

In addition, during the reporting period, the LAG specialists encountered such problems as the refusal of victims of torture and their relatives to further appeal against unlawful actions of law enforcement officers. The refusals are primarily caused by fear of further criminal prosecution, threats from law enforcement agencies, mistrust in the justice system. As a result of such refusal, the work done by the specialist cannot be completed, which may negatively affect the effectiveness of indicators in the activities of the LAG as a whole.

Documentation of facts of torture and other types of cruel treatment. From January 1 to December 31, 2020, **37** cases of torture and ill-treatment were documented by Legal Aid Group and the Coalition member organizations, of which nine were against women and two against minors. Work continued on 11 cases from previous years.

	Regions				TOTAL
	Dushanbe	DRS	Khatlon /GBO	Sughd	
Total reordered	7 (2)	7 (1)	11 (6)	12 (1)	37
Lawyer provided	2	5	1	5	13
Legal support	3	2	9	6	20
Monitoring the work of lawyers	1			2	3
Rejected legal assistance in the process of providing legal assistance	4	1	5	6	16
At the pending decision stage		1	1		2
Consultations, documents drafted	82 consultation meetings with lawyers were held Provided 204 oral consultations, drafted 193 written documents				

The main human rights violations observed during the detention and investigation: illegal and arbitrary detention; physical violence in the form of beatings, electric shocks; threats of rape of the victim and/or family members; and intimidation in detention.

Torture was used to obtain confessions, punish certain behaviors or as a measure of restraint.

The age groups of victims:

0-18: 2 persons;

19 - 21 - 3 persons;

22-34: 15 persons

35-45: 13 persons

46-60 years: 5 persons

60 and above: 1 person

The Coalition received complaints against the following government departments:

- Ministry of Internal Affairs - 26
- the State Committee for National Security - 2,
- the Main Department for execution of criminal penalties of the Ministry of Justice. - 4,
- Ministry of Defense - 1.
- Committee on Emergency situation – 1
- Public Financial Control and Anti-Corruption Agency - 1
- Domestic Violence - 2

Legal consultations

There are three hotline phones managed by LAG: in Sughd region (987873333), in Khatlon province (987876666), in Dushanbe and DRS (987087676). Telephone lines are also open outside of working hours, including weekends and holidays.

A total of 204 consultations were submitted, 82 meetings were held with lawyers and 20 legal counselling were provided in the General Prosecutor Office, Executive Apparatus of the President, Human Rights Ombudsman and the Ministry of Internal Affairs, including the Internal affairs department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

In addition, consultations cases related to torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment has been separately provided by the LAG member-organizations, as such: **NGO “Independent Centre for Human Rights Protection”** documented 1 case and continued its activities on 3 cases from the previous years; provided 85 consultations, legal support was provided on 4 cases related to torture and ill-treatment and drafted 73 legal and procedural documents.

In 2020, the Expert on the standards of the Istanbul Protocol provided assistance in documenting torture and other ill-treatment in accordance with the standards of the Istanbul Protocol. The expert assistance was provided in the analysis of medical records, preparation of requests for comprehensive medical examinations, development of strategies for the collection of medical evidence during the preliminary investigation phase and after the initiation of criminal proceedings, related to torture and other ill-treatment.

Trial monitoring

In 2020, trial monitoring was conducted in seven cases, and LAG representatives participated in 12 trials as observers.

Main outcomes:

- In almost all cases, the court proceedings started with a considerable delay. In four out of the 10 monitored trials the proceeding started with a delay of up to 30 minutes, and the remaining 6 court hearings started with a significant delay of 1.5-2 hours. The reason for the delay was not given.
- In most cases, court proceedings conducted in the Judges' offices, which are not adapted for such purposes, nor are they capable of accommodating all those who wish to take part in trials. This has a serious impact on the openness and transparency of proceedings.
- A number of the lawyers' requests were put on hold by the judges, in violation of procedural law and international standards. In order to ensure a fair trial, it is important that all motions be accepted and dealt with in a timely manner, as this may affect the course of the trial. For example, in the course of the observation, it was found that applications for the assignment of a forensic medical examination in cases where statements of guilt had been made as a result of torture had been deferred to subsequent court hearings. This practice may have the effect that, with the passage of time, the traces of torture and ill-treatment may disappear and it may become more difficult (or impossible) to prove allegations of torture made during the trial.
- The observers also noted that conditions were not in place at the courthouse: courtrooms were not heated during the winter, participants were forced to sit in their overalls, and during the summer, facilities were not cooled.
- Equality of arms during court hearings: the prosecutor, the registrar and the police used their cell phones in the courtroom, while other participants were searched (bags) and forced to hand over mobile phones at the courthouse entrance.

Legal aid/court representation

The Honorarium Fund for providing legal assistance to alleged victims of torture and/or their relatives is distributed in consultation with the members of the Commission on Allocation of the Honorarium Fund (four persons) and the Coordinator of LAG. In 2020, the Coalition Honorarium Fund received 13 requests for legal assistance on new applications. In addition, the Legal Aid Group is working on six strategic cases, of which four were from previous years.

Working meetings

In 2020 the Coalition's Legal Aid Group conducted working meetings with civil society organizations and lawyers in the regions to introduce them with the Coalition's activities, and enhance cooperation identifying cases of torture and ill-treatment:

- 24 July 2020 in Penjikent, Sughd province³¹

³¹ <https://notorturej.org/legal/gruppa-pravovoy-pomoshchi-koalicii-provela-rabochuyu-vstrechu-s-advokatami-i-obshchestvennyimi>

- 14 October 2020, Khorog GBAO

From 9 to 24 November 2020, the Legal Aid Group conducted workshops on documenting torture and traces of torture in accordance with the standards of the Istanbul Protocol in Khujand, Bokhtar and Dushanbe.³²

In addition, 82 consultative meetings were held with lawyers and civil society representatives around the country:³³

1. Sughd province: Istaravshan, Penjikent, J. Rasulov, Spitamen, Kanibadam, Isfara, Khujand and Asht
2. Khatlon province: - Bokhtar city
3. Regions of republican subordination (RRS) - Rasht, Faizabad, Nurabad
4. Dushanbe

PUBLICATIONS:

1. Practical aspects of the interrogation of minors.³⁴
2. 68-year-old Istat Kurbanova in search of justice.³⁵
3. Ill-treatment and torture of women: what women prefer to keep quiet about.³⁶
4. For the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, 26 June, together with the Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights an infographic was prepared on the case of Umar Babadjanov.
5. The role of private rulings by the courts in preventing torture and ill-treatment (in Tajik language).³⁷
6. Infographic "Moral Harm to Victims of Torture and Ill-treatment: How it is compensated".³⁸
7. The Supreme Court returned the criminal case for further investigation, where two complainants who were victims of torture and ill-treatment were recognized as victims
8. On the entry into force of a court decision where the amount of compensation determined by the court does not correspond to the moral injury suffered
9. "Brief analysis of the legal guarantees on the selection of preventive measures in cases of torture and ill-treatment, based on the applications to the Coalition Legal Aid Unit"³⁹

³²<https://notorturetj.org/news/gpp-provela-dlya-advokatov-sogda-master-klass-po-rassledovaniyu-i-dokumentirovaniyu-faktov>
<https://notorturetj.org/news/gpp-provela-master-klass-po-medicinskomu-dokumentirovaniyu-faktov-pytok-dlya-advokatov-i>
<https://notorturetj.org/news/gpp-provela-master-klass-po-rassledovaniyu-i-dokumentirovaniyu-faktov-pytok-dlya-stolichnyh>

³³<https://notorturetj.org/news/gpp-provela-vstrechu-s-advokatami-i-predstaviteliymi-npo-v-horoge>,

<https://notorturetj.org/news/gpp-provela-vstrechu-s-advokatami-sogda>,

<https://notorturetj.org/news/gpp-provela-dlya-advokatov-sogda-master-klass-po-rassledovaniyu-i-dokumentirovaniyu-faktov>,

[https://notorturetj.org/tj/news/gkkh-baroi-advokatkhoy-sugd-oid-ba-taftishu-khuchchatguzorii-dalelkhoy-shikancha-master-klass](https://notorturetj.org/tj/news/gkkh-baroi-advokatkhoi-sugd-oid-ba-taftishu-khuchchatguzorii-dalelkhoy-shikancha-master-klass),

<https://notorturetj.org/tj/news/vohurikhoy-korii-gkkh-dar-fayzobodu-rasht-va-nurobod-bo-advokatkhovu-khukukshinson>,

<https://notorturetj.org/news/gpp-provela-master-klass-po-medicinskomu-dokumentirovaniyu-faktov-pytok-dlya-advokatov-i>,

<https://notorturetj.org/news/gpp-provela-master-klass-po-rassledovaniyu-i-dokumentirovaniyu-faktov-pytok-dlya-stolichnyh>

³⁴ <http://notorturetj.org/news/prakticheskie-aspekty-provedeniya-doprosa-nesovershennoletnih-pri-rassmotrenii-ugolovnyh-del>

³⁵ <https://notorturetj.org/news/68-letnyaya-istat-kurbanova-v-poiskah-spravedlivosti>

³⁶ <https://notorturetj.org/news/zhestokoe-obrashchenie-i-pytki-v-otnoshenii-zhenshchin-o-chem-zhenshchiny-predpochitayut>

³⁷ <https://notorturetj.org/tj/news/nakshi-tainotkhoy-hususii-sudkho-dar-muboriza-bo-shikancha-va-bechazoi>

³⁸ <https://notorturetj.org/news/infografika-moralnyy-vred-zhertvam-pytok-i-zhestokogo-obrashcheniya-kak-vozmeshchaetsya>

³⁹ <https://notorturetj.org/news/garantii-zashchity-ot-pytok-i-zhestokogo-obrashcheniya-pri-izbranii-mery-presecheniya>

10. Infographic on the topic "Legal basis of the election of the preventive measure in Tajikistan". Available in Russian and Tajik languages.⁴⁰
11. Infographic on "Right to health and freedom from torture in the Temporary Detention facility".⁴¹
12. Article on the case of Kurbonov B. "Torture or death at the hands of a cellmate?".⁴²
13. Infographics: "Guaranteeing the protection of the health of detainees in temporary holding facilities (IVS) and remand centres (SIZO)".⁴³

3.4. INTRODUCTION OF ISTANBUL PRINCIPLES FOR EFFECTIVE MEDICAL EXAMINATION AND DOCUMENTATION OF TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT IN TAJIKISTAN

The activity is coordinated by Parvina Navruzova (Human Rights Centre), an expert on the Istanbul Protocol of the Legal Aid Group.

In 2020, activities in this direction were carried out as part of the following projects:

1. "Implementation of the Istanbul Protocol standards in the activities of the Coalition Against Torture and Impunity" was supported by the Eurasian program of the Open Society Foundations and the Sigrid Rausing Trust;
2. "Action for Freedom from Torture" together with the Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights (Warsaw), with the support of the European Union;
3. Awareness-raising campaign "Me and My Rights", timed to the international campaign "16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence" within the global theme of 2020: "Orange the World: Fund, Prevent, Respond, Collect!". The campaign was conducted in cooperation with UN Women in Tajikistan.

Analytical activities

During the period from January to March 2020 the report "On the application of the Protocol of medical examination of detainees in medical institutions of the RT"⁴⁴ and analytical report "On the results of analysis and evaluation of objective state of medical-judicial service of the RT"⁴⁵ were finalized and published on the website of the Coalition Against Torture.

Promoting the creation of the institute of non-state expertise. Program experts analyzed the legislation and regulatory enforcement practices of Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, the Russian Federation and Georgia, as well as national legislation on the establishment and functioning of institutions of non-state and state forensic expertise. Based on the analysis results, an analytical paper was prepared.⁴⁶

⁴⁰ <https://notorture.tj.org/legal/pravovye-osnovy-izbraniya-mery-presecheniya-v-tadzhikistane>

⁴¹ <https://notorture.tj.org/news/infografika-pravo-na-zdorove-i-svobodu-ot-pytok-v-izolyatore-vremennogo-soderzhaniya-ivs>

⁴² <https://notorture.tj.org/news/pytki-ili-smert-ot-ruk-sokamernika>

⁴³ <https://notorture.tj.org/news/infografika-garantiya-ohrany-zdorovya-zaderzhannogo-lica-v-izolyatore-vremennogo-soderzhaniya>

⁴⁴ <http://notorture.tj.org/rehab/otchet-po-monitoringu-primeneniya-protokola-medicinskogo-osvidetelstvovaniya-zaderzhannyh-lic>

⁴⁵ <http://notorture.tj.org/rehab/otchet-po-itogam-analiza-sostoyaniya-sudebno-medicinskoy-ekspertizy-rt>

⁴⁶ <https://hrc.tj/archives/2040>

The analytical document was discussed during the round table on February 21, 2020 with the participation of representatives of the General Prosecutor's Office, the Supreme Court, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Main Penal Correction Department of the Ministry of Justice, the centers of forensic expertise and psychiatry of the Ministry of Health, the Republican Center of forensic expertise of the Ministry of Defense, the Agency for State Financial Control and Combating Corruption, the Drug Control Agency under the President of Tajikistan, members of the Coalition against torture, academics, lawyers, international organizations, and the international organizations. International expert Maryam Jishkariani.⁴⁷

Trainings on the standards of the Istanbul Protocol

From 18 to 20 February 2020, a three-day training course on the standards of the Istanbul Protocol was held for 31 participants, including doctors, psychologists, lawyers, lawyers (partners and members of the Coalition), of whom 15 from Dushanbe, 4 from GBAO, 6 from Khatlon oblast and 6 from Sughd oblast.

Mobile application on medical documentation of cases of violence (victims of torture, domestic violence, people living with HIV; military) according to the standards of the Istanbul Protocol.

The mobile application contains recommendations for victims of violence, lawyers, psychologists and doctors, in particular explaining their rights and guarantees; mechanisms of legal protection; assessment of the physical and psychological consequences of violence; compensation for damages; recommendations on how to conduct medical documentation of victims of violence and contacts of government agencies, law enforcement agencies and non-governmental organizations that are directly involved in the investigation of cases of this category and the provision of legal, medical and psychological assistance.

After testing, the "Me and My Rights" mobile app and Telegram bot were fully launched in September 2020.

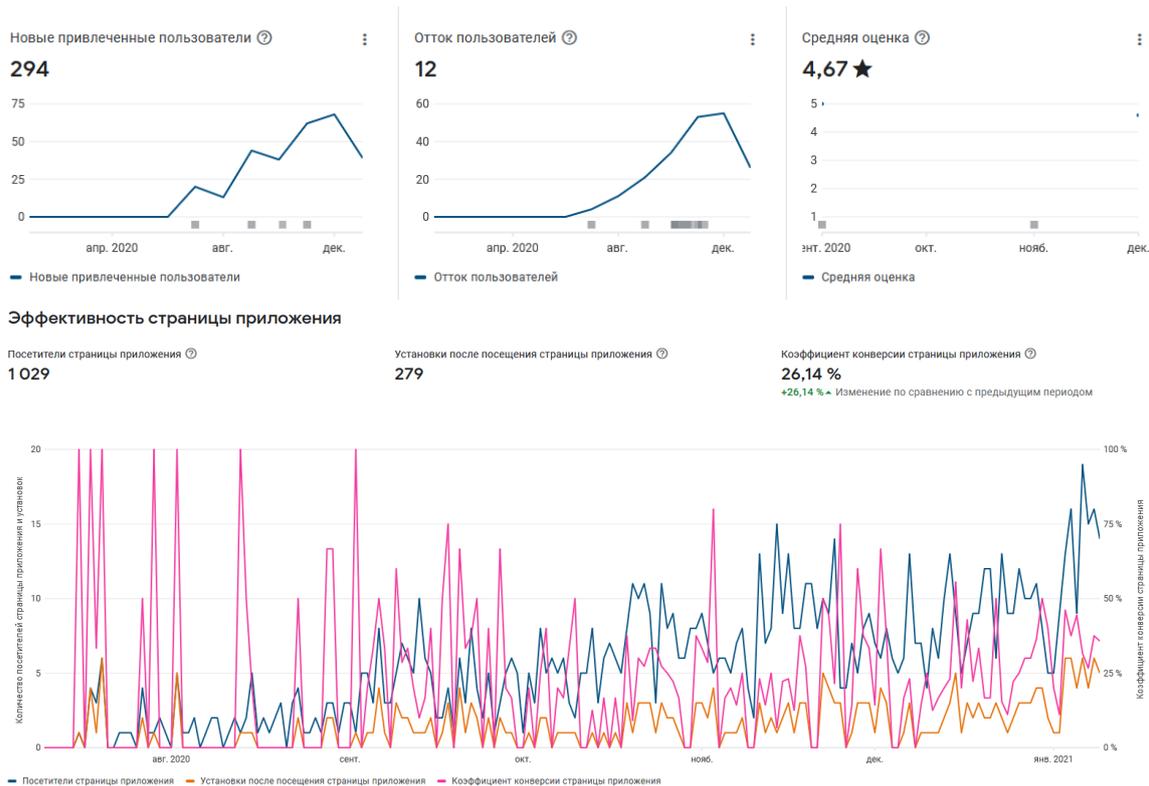
Infographics "**Guaranteeing the health of a detainee in a temporary detention facility (TDF) and pre-trial detention facility (SIZO)**" is developed and widely distributed in Russian and Tajik languages through social networks, the website of the Coalition against Torture and Impunity⁴⁸ and the website of the NGO " Human Rights Center".⁴⁹ Infographics include a QR code on the mobile application and Bot in Telegram "Me and My Rights".

The awareness campaign to inform the public about the mobile app and the Telegram bot reached 52,730 Facebook and Instagram users. The "Me and My Rights" mobile app was downloaded 294 times.

⁴⁷ <https://notorturetj.org/news/kruglyy-stol-posvyashchennyy-prezentacii-analiticheskogo-otcheta-o-sozdanii-i-funkcionirovaniya>

⁴⁸ <https://notorturetj.org/news/infografika-garantiya-ohrany-zdorovya-zaderzhannogo-lica-v-izolyatore-vremennogo-soderzhaniya>

⁴⁹ <https://hrc.tj/materiali/278-garantiya-ohrany-zdorovya-zaderzhannogo-lica-v-izolyatore-vremennogo-soderzhaniya-ivs-i-sledstvennyy-izolyator-sizo.html>



Awareness-raising campaigns “16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence” and “Me and My Rights”

As part of the awareness-raising campaign, the following activities were carried out by the Coalition's member-organization, NGO "Human Rights Centre":

- Two online webinars on redress mechanisms and assessment of injuries from violence⁵⁰, and online webinar and quiz (quizzes) for youth on the theme «Awareness-raising on the problems of violence against women and girls and the characteristics of injury assessment», in which about 71 persons participated.

As part of the information campaign, 100 copies of flyers with infographics and 60 copies of a calendar were published in Tajik and Russian languages. The infographic reflects the history and importance of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women; the responsibility of the state in ensuring the rights and guarantees for women and girls to freedom from violence and impunity; mechanisms to assess the physical and psychological effects of violence, the recovery of compensation for moral damages in accordance with the standards of the Istanbul Protocol.

As part of the campaign "16 days of activism against gender violence" an analytical article was prepared and published on the website of Dialog.tj news agency⁵¹

⁵⁰ Вебинар на тему: Механизмы правовой защиты и оценка телесных и психологических повреждений... - YouTube и Права людей, живущих с ВИЧ - YouTube

⁵¹ <https://www.dialog.tj/news/v-dushanbe-proshla-informatsionnaya-kampaniya-ya-i-moi-prava-v-ramkakh-16-dnej-aktivizma-protiv-gendernogo-nasiliya?fbclid=IwAR0sZ7ZBZAqRs508wkFJQkFwJjULFoTGHMiKW9tQdqE7FOpbI2rK6kqe4Lc>

All informational materials were published in the social networks of the Human Rights Center and on the website of the organization. In addition, infographics and calendars were distributed by the Human Rights Center staff in different cities and districts during various events held by the organization.

Training for psychologists to assess the psychological consequences of violence

On 8-9 December 2020, training was held in Dushanbe for 12 psychologists - partners of the Coalition to assess the psychological consequences of violence and to draw conclusions according to the standards of the Istanbul Protocol. The training was also timed to coincide with the international campaign "16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence" and the information campaign "Me and My Rights".

Prison health reform

On 10-16 August 2020, the NGOs "Human Rights Centre" in cooperation with the Main Penal Correction Department of the Ministry of Justice organized a workshop on the development of the Plan of Action for the Strategy for the Reform of the Penal Correction System of the Republic of Tajikistan for the period up to 2030, which was approved by the Resolution of the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan of June 25, 2020, No385.

The working session was attended by representatives of the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Labour and Employment, the Ministry of Public Health, the Ministry of Education, the the Prosecutor General's Office, the Ministry of Finance, the National Legislation Center under the President of Tajikistan, the Commissioner for Human Rights, civil society institutions.⁵²

During the Working meeting on prison health care, the NGO "Human Rights Center" developed proposals in the section "Provision of medical services", which were included in the Action Plan for the Strategy, including the following:

- Development of a comprehensive program for the rehabilitation of accused persons, defendants and convicted persons (psychological, medical, religious and social);
- Improvement of the institution of disciplinary penalties; elimination of the legal norms on forced feeding and treatment; ICCPR, CAT, Nelson Mandela Rules, etc.
- Development of a mechanism to investigate all deaths in the prison system;
- Consideration of the question of the medical service of the Department of Public Health and the transfer of the Department of Public Health and the Ministry of Public Health;
- Holding educational training and seminars on the organization of medical care, treatment and rehabilitation in accordance with national and international standards.
- Independent monitoring of places of detention by representatives of civil society to assess conditions of detention.

The draft Action Plan is currently under consideration by the Government.

⁵² <http://hrc.tj/materiali/267-rabochee-zasedanie-razrabotka-plana-deystviy-po-realizacii-strategii-rt-po-reforme-penitenciamoy-sistemy.html>

As part of a joint plan of action with the Main Penal Correction Department of the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Tajikistan to implement the National Strategy of the Republic of Tajikistan to Combat Extremism and Terrorism for 2016 - 2020, and the Strategy for the Reform of the Penal Correction System of the Republic of Tajikistan for 2020-2030, the following documents were prepared⁵³:

- Recommendations to the Action Plan to the Draft National Human Rights Strategy until 2030 regarding the implementation of the standards of the Istanbul Protocol in the activities of investigative bodies, as well as in the system of execution of criminal sanctions.
- Concept of rehabilitation program and system of risk assessment and classification of convicted persons. The document contains international standards for the Concept of Holistic Rehabilitation in the Penitentiary System, including interdisciplinary approaches, with cross-cutting issues of prison health, psychosocial rehabilitation, criminology and crime prevention. The document is also based on a review of national legal frameworks and practices. Key principles of holistic rehabilitation have been developed for prison programs and specific recommendations have been added for Tajikistan. From 16 to 20 November 2020, a working group met to discuss the draft Concept of a Comprehensive Program for the Rehabilitation of Convicted Persons. The Working Group met from 16 to 20 November 2020.

3.5. ACTIVITIES OF THE MONITORING GROUP ON DETENTION FACILITIES

The Group was established within the framework of the Coalition's strategic priorities and its **aims** includes the following: a) to promote the ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture (OPCAT) and the establishment of a national preventive mechanism (NPM), and b) to establish an independent public monitoring mechanism for detention facilities.

This Working Group participates in the activities of another initiative – the Working Group on the Promotion of the Ratification of OPCAT, the coordination of the monitoring mechanism under the Human Rights Ombudsman in the Republic of Tajikistan (hereinafter referred to as the Working Group) and coordinates the work of the Monitoring Group to visit detention facilities (hereinafter Monitoring Group).

Since 2016 the Group activities are supported by the European Union, UNDP, OSCE Office in Dushanbe, and Sigrid Rausing Trust.

The activities of the monitoring group are carried out on the basis of the Concept and Action Plan, in the framework of which institutions for monitoring and educational activities in the field of the rights of persons have been identified, Persons deprived of their liberty:

1. Psychiatric institutions
2. Places of pre-trial detention and remand in custody
3. Correctional institutions

⁵³ With the financial support from the OSCE Programme Office in Dushanbe and UNODC

In accordance with the Action Plan, discussions were conducted with the members and coordinators of the Coalition's working groups and other specialists on the composition of the Monitoring group. Currently, the Monitoring group consists of 23 monitoring specialists, 2 representatives of the Ombudsman's office, and experts in various human rights issues, including lawyers, medics, specialists in protecting the rights of children and people with disabilities.

In developing the group's strategy and training materials, the group collaborates with experts from the Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights (Warsaw).

Due to the epidemiological situation with the COVID-19 pandemic, the Group was not able to conduct monitoring visits to the closed institutions. As such, the Group concentrated its activities on the following activities:

- Development of a training program and module for trainers on human rights in the system of psychiatric institutions.
- Developing informational materials for the population and methodological materials for the various target groups identified in the Action Plan.
- Conducting an analysis of the local legislation for compliance with international human rights standards as part of the Action Plan.

During the reporting period, experts from the Coalition and HFHR began analyzing Tajikistan's national legislation for compliance with international standards in the field of mental health. In addition, a training program and module for trainers on human rights in the mental health system is currently being developed.

3.6. ACTIVITIES OF COALITION MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

3.6.1. OFFICE OF CIVIL LIBERTIES

The NGO “Office of Civil Liberties” operates in three areas: protecting the rights and freedoms of pre-conscripts, conscripts, military personnel and members of their families, enhancing the capacity of civil activists and strengthening the human rights community.

In 2020, OCL continued to work on the rehabilitation of victims of torture and ill-treatment in the army and their families with the support of the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture.

The organization closely cooperates with the Ministry of Defense, the Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights in Tajikistan, the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court and its regional subdivisions, the Chief Military Procurator's Office and its regional subdivisions, the Interior Ministry's internal troops, the border troops of the State National Security Committee, military commissariats, the management of military units, doctors of the medical commissions of the conscription commission and the military registration commission.

In 2020, OCL activities were supported by the National Foundation for Democracy (NED), the Geneva Centre for the Control of Armed Forces (DCAF), the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture, the Open Society Institute- Assistance Foundation in Tajikistan and the Eurasian Program of the Open Society Foundation, HIVOS and other donors.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many OCL events in 2020 were held online.

RIGHTS OF PRE-CONSCRIPTS, CONSCRIPTS, SERVICEMEN AND MEMBERS OF THEIR FAMILIES

Analytical activities. OCL lawyers conducted an analysis of the legislation and law enforcement practice of respect for human rights in the gauntlet. *This document is at the stage of editing and will be released soon.*

Legal Assistance. The organization's lawyers provide consultancies on legal, medical and fitness for military service issues in Dushanbe and Khujand. In 2020, 417 persons received consultancies on matters relating to conscription, the right to deferment and release, and appeals against unlawful acts by members of the recruiting commission. Consultations are provided in person, through hotline numbers, as well as during meetings in military units.

There are twenty-four-hour hotline numbers available for the victims of human rights violations in the military service: +992 93 333 18 03; +992 93 333 17 03.

Strategic Cases. Providing legal assistance to victims of torture and ill-treatment in the military is a priority for the OCL. In 2020, the organization's lawyers and involved attorneys worked on 10 cases, in which they participated in the process of verification of complaints, preliminary investigation, represented the interest of the victims in military courts in criminal cases of first instance, as well as in cassation and supervisory instances.

Rehabilitation

Since 2015, the organization has been providing outpatient and inpatient treatment to victims of hazing in the army and their family members. In 2020, the organization provided rehabilitation services for 32 people, including 7 soldiers and 25 members of their families. The beneficiaries underwent medical examination and clinical and laboratory diagnostics. Many soldiers and their families are in constant medical check-ups and support therapy. They also undergo procedures such as physiotherapy, immunomodulating and corrective therapy. Ten people received sanatorium-spa treatment. Four victims underwent psychological rehabilitation courses.

Compendium of laws in the sphere of conscription and military service: is the eighth edition of the organization and is in demand by lawyers, human rights activists, judges, prosecutors, military structures and law enforcement agencies. The compendium was published in Tajik in 100 copies.

The Story of 13 Soldiers, or Lost Dreams. A book that recounts the fates of 13 soldiers who were victims of torture and inhumane treatment and punishment in the army. <https://notorturetj.org/news/istoriya-13-soldat-ili-poteryannye-mechty>⁵⁴

In 2020, **5 radio broadcasts were held in the cities of Dushanbe and Khujand**, during which OLC lawyers answered live questions from listeners regarding the procedure of recruitment, the right to a delay and exemption from conscription, the medical commission, Appeals against decisions of draft commissions, raids and other.

Online conscription school was launched, with 5 videos on conscription and military service and **8 live broadcasts on Facebook and Instagram social networks:**

<https://fb.watch/3rotqrjJkO/>

<https://www.facebook.com/officeofcivil/posts/2484956165089770>

<https://www.facebook.com/officeofcivil/posts/2631346713784047>

<https://fb.watch/3rojPSf9fG/>

<https://fb.watch/3rovW3KuMa/>

<https://fb.watch/3roxOvjRhL/>

<https://fb.watch/3roz6E7U3S/>

<https://fb.watch/3roEHREyGA/>

<https://fb.watch/3roJGrJdhL/>

<https://fb.watch/3rjr4NGlhb/>

EDUCATION AND AWARENESS RAISING

Human Rights Lab (HR Lab) is the most popular and large-scale club among civic activists in Dushanbe and Khujand. In 2018-2019, the club coaches included human rights experts, representatives of human rights organizations and lawyers, and since the beginning of 2020 the club has hosted graduates of human rights education programs of the OLC. The Lab conducted courses, schools, webinars on human rights, including human rights during the pandemic, and provided online legal advice to the public.

The human rights defender course. The course is intended for young people from various professions interested in human rights. In 2020, 60 young people, students, CBOs, journalists, legal interns, doctors and teachers completed the course. The course takes place over three months online. Participants receive a three-month training on human rights, national and international mechanisms for the protection of human rights and public interest activities.

<https://www.facebook.com/officeofcivil/posts/2645824692336249>

Autumn School of Human Rights. From 18 to 20 September 2020, a three-day human rights school (training for trainers) was held in the Romit Gorge, with the participation of 25 OCL volunteer graduates (Alumni OCL). The School participants were taught various methods of

⁵⁴ The book was prepared with financial support from the Open Society Institute - Assistance Foundation in Tajikistan, the Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights, the European Union and the OSCE Programme Office in Tajikistan. Photos for the book were taken by Nozim Kalandarov. Authors: Jamshed Marupov, Guzal Mahkamova. Editors: Nargis Khamrabaeva, Fazliddin Khojaev

teaching human rights and under the guidance of instructors prepared their parts of the educational classes. <https://www.facebook.com/officeofcivil/posts/2630161277235924>

Campaign “10 days of Human Rights”. From 1 to 10 December 2020, the "10 Days of Human Rights" campaign was held in the cities of Khujand and Dushanbe to commemorate International Human Rights Day, in order to promote understanding of human rights, raising the legal awareness and legal literacy among youth through trainings and art - activism. The campaign focused on the fight against corruption as a factor affecting human rights. More than 100 OCL volunteers participated in the campaign. At the conclusion of the event the organizers conducted Human Rights Activist Talks.

<https://fb.watch/2HVAQFkDUo/>

<https://www.facebook.com/officeofcivil/photos/pcb.2697170610534990/2697168177201900/>

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/309240506320325/permalink/794441911133513/>

<https://www.instagram.com/p/CIqZrEalHOo/>

<https://www.instagram.com/p/CI6DypZFpMb/>

<https://www.instagram.com/p/CJGR2s8hKe5/>

The Juicy Rights Podcast was launched by the OLC to increase public engagement in promoting human rights. Ten podcasts were released in 2020 on human rights, national and international mechanisms for the protection of human rights and conscription, which are posted on the Juicy Rights Telegram channel (t.me/sochniePrava), the OLC social networks on Facebook and Instagram, TUT - co-working space, the Tajikistan Human Rights Organizations Network page, and other popular groups and public interest groups.

COOPERATION WITH CIVIL SOCIETY INSTITUTIONS

Network of Human Rights NGOs of Tajikistan. The Tajikistan Human Rights Organizations Facebook Network continues to expand further. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1531616163740269/?ref=bookmarks>. The group currently has over 1,100 members, and there are over 600 activists and organizations on the network Google mail list. The Network provides daily updates about NGO activities and projects, competitions, grants, trainings and webinars, organizes campaigns and collects signatures on various issues of public interest.

NGO Consultations. The organization’s lawyers provide regular consultations to local activists on various issues of NGO activities (office work, financial and tax reporting, inspections, establishment and liquidation of NGOs, etc.) and also provide legal support for NGOs, journalists and activists.

<https://www.facebook.com/officeofcivil/posts/2620251701560215>

Social videos about human rights defenders and volunteers. In 2020, social videos about the volunteer movement, advocacy and non-governmental organizations were prepared and published on the UGC Facebook page, human rights groups and other youth groups. <https://www.facebook.com/officeofcivil/posts/2629039304014788>

<https://fb.watch/1FCLr-x8eY/> - A social video about NGOs

<https://fb.watch/1FCPH0jbAg/> - A social video on the work of lawyers

<https://fb.watch/1FCSTv2xZ7/> - A social video about volunteer work

3.6.2. PUBLIC FOUNDATION “LEGAL INITIATIVE”

AWARENESS RAISING

Three training modules for judges of the Supreme Court, the Union of Lawyers and the Academy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs on national and international mechanisms for the protection of the rights of the child in criminal proceedings have been prepared and approved. The modules were developed with the expert support of Asror Aliyev (Adult Education Expert), Mavdjud Pulodi (Supreme Court Judge), Navruzshoh Nazarov (Bar Association lawyer), Anwar Aripov (Academy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs) and Gulchera Rahmanova (Head of PF “Legal Initiative”).

Ten trainers from the judiciary, 10 from the Bar and 10 from the Child and Youth Crime Prevention Service of the Ministry of Internal Affairs were trained in national and international child justice standards on the basis of the training module developed.

Trainings. Forty-one judges were trained on child rights issues, including psychological aspects of protection.

10 staff members of the Ombudsman, 5 representatives of children’s rights departments of Dushanbe city and districts and 4 officials of the Department for the Prevention of Crimes and Juvenile Delinquency of the Ministry of Internal Affairs were trained and increased their capacity to protect children, victims and witnesses of crime (including psychological aspects).

JUVENILE JUSTICE

Analysis of national legislation for compliance with international standards in the sphere of rehabilitation of children in conflict with the law, including children, who have served their sentences in places of deprivation of liberty and restrictions of freedom was conducted and prepared. The report was sent to the working group under the Ministry of Justice on child justice reform in Tajikistan, on the basis of which the national program and action plan for the social rehabilitation of children in conflict with the law, including children in detention, for the period 2020-2024 was developed. As a result of the above-mentioned activities, the Inter-Agency Working Group on Juvenile Justice System Reform is now equipped with a full analysis of the national legislation in accordance with the international standards on rehabilitation of children in conflict with the law, including children who have served their sentences in places of detention and restrictions of freedom. The National Program and Action Plan was approved by the Government of Tajikistan on June 25, 2020 with number 387. In order to implement paragraph 12 of the Action Plan for the Implementation of the Program for the Rehabilitation and Social Reintegration of Juveniles Served in Penitentiary Institutions or Restrictions for 2020-2024, the Public Foundation “Legal Initiative” with financial support from EU and PRI provides social and psychological support to children to prepare for release from penitentiary institutions. During

2020, social support was provided to 13 children who left the walls of the institution. Activities such as an assessment of the needs of the child and family, weekly meetings with the child in order to reintegrate them successfully, family meetings and family conferences were held. At the moment 1 child is studying computer skills and at the same time he got a job there, 10 children got their IDs restored and after that they will be registered at the Employment Agency (for the first three months they will receive 400 somoni per month), also these children after receiving their documents will attend courses of mechanic skills, English, electrician, welder and etc. (based on the wishes of the children). (based on the wishes of the children themselves). Children take courses at the State Unitary Enterprise Training Center in Dushanbe. Children from the regions were referred to partner NGOs Ghamkhori in Bokhtar and a branch of the Bureau for Human Rights and Rule of Law in Khujand, where their documents are currently being restored.

Psychological help and support were also provided to 17 children, who underwent individual and group courses in psychocorrection using various techniques. In parallel, the psychologist of the organization trains the psychologist of the children's colony to work with children.

It is important to note that during the pandemic COVID-19, from May 1 to August 31, 2020, access to the children's colony was temporarily suspended. During this period, humanitarian aid to children and staff was organized in the form of medicines, food and protective and decontamination equipment with the support of MDO Khumo, PRI, Avesta and through fundraising from the public.

Violence against children. During the reporting period, legal aid was provided for 9 cases of child victims of sexual violence. Assistance is provided in conjunction with the Korvoni Umed NGO, which in turn additionally provides rehabilitation services (medical, psychological and social assistance and support) free of charge.

Provision of legal aid. In 2020, the organization's lawyer provided assistance to 56 children and their families. Due to the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic in the country, the office was forced to work remotely from 1 April to 1 June, so that children could receive legal aid The Child Helpline has been advertised on all online sources.

The announcement was posted on the Facebook page and distributed through various social network, including Instagram and the Coalition website, and flyers and posters were developed and distributed to children, students in schools and care institutions, including institutions. The duty lawyer for the project provided legal advice on all matters relating to children on a daily basis (Monday to Friday). The Database Scheme developed by the organization works on the case where redirection is needed. All requests are strictly recorded and entered into a special database, where statistics are kept and the progress of each application is monitored.



3.6.3. NGO “Najoti Kudakon” Kulyab

ACTIVITIES TO RAISE PUBLIC AWARENESS OF THE PERCEPTION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, TORTURE, AND IMPUNITY

Information sessions

As part of the Sigrid Rausing Trust project, funding was provided to the NGO “Najoti Kudakon” to raise public awareness on the perception of domestic violence, torture and impunity in remote areas of Khatlon province. As part of this activity, a mobile group (MG) was formed consisting of a lawyer, a psychologist and a social worker, that were initially participated in the introductory training on documenting cases of torture and ill-treatment conducted by LAG specialists.

The organization agreed to hold informational sessions with local authorities and signed memorandums of cooperation and understanding with the khukumats of Shamsiddin Shokhin and Muminabad districts of Khatlon province.

In December, information sessions were held in three jamoats in the Kulyab region of Khatlon Province (Zarbdor, Dehoti Kulob Ziraki) with the participation of local authorities and the population. All anti-epidemic precautions were observed during the sessions. Fifty-five people, including 42 women and eight men, participated in the events. The information sessions revealed that the local population had no information about the Coalition. As a result of the meetings, booklets (500 copies) and banners containing information about the Coalition were developed. Informational materials were prepared together with the Coalition's media group and published in 500 copies.

LEGAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSISTANCE

The organization also provides legal and psychological assistance to victims of domestic violence, as well as on other issues of law and human rights.

Thus, during the reporting period, MG specialists documented 127 appeals, including: 115 women aged 25 to 67, 6 underage girls and 6 men. All applicants were provided with information booklets about the activities of the Coalition.

Of the total number of appeals, 46 are related to domestic violence, 1 appeal on violence in an educational institution, 2 cases on the protection of the rights of migrants, 2 relatives of prisoners on the restoration of their health, 3 on the rights of the child.

Legal assistance was provided to 34 people, including consultations, preparation of procedural documents, and representation in state bodies. Fifteen people received psychological assistance and 24 people received rehabilitation services.

ACTIVITIES IN SUPPORT OF WOMEN'S RESOURCE CENTRES

In 2020, the NGO "Najoti Kudakon", in collaboration with the International Partnership for Human Rights, worked to assist and build the capacity of active women's groups in remote regions through established women's resource centers. During the worsening of the pandemic in the country, the organization, with the help of the Coalition against Torture in Tajikistan, the IPHR, the Urgent Foundation and the TFUO, was able to provide resource centers to continue providing assistance to victims of domestic violence. These activities included the following:

- Ensuring the safety of personnel (disinfection, protective suits, medicines)
- Strengthening of telephone counselling (the hotline is open 24 hours a day and is linked to the personal telephone of the organisation's lawyer)
- Providing targeted assistance to women victims of domestic violence
- publication of information booklets

The organization has also been active in educating the population on the response to the Covid 19 pandemic. It should be noted that one of the main problems of the organization is the lack of accessible information about the virus in Tajik. Targeted assistance was also provided, especially to the most vulnerable groups: the elderly and families with children with disabilities (masks, food, medicines and antiseptics).

16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence awareness campaign

The organization's staff participated in the 16 Days of Activism against Gender Based Violence awareness campaign, during which the following activities were carried out:

- 32 information meetings held
- 169 brochures were distributed, 150 of them in Tajik
- Information about the organization was disseminated through social media
- The hotline received 40 calls

The following materials were prepared and published during the campaign:

- Violence against Women is a Crime! Seek help from women's support groups. #non-terpinationalviolence <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=taMqWokxFsw&t=3s>
- 97% of men and 72% of women in Tajikistan believe that a woman must endure violence to keep her family together . #neterpinasilie! Get help today, learn more about self-help groups in your area! #non-tolerant violence #non-domestic violence <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=taMqWokxFsw&t=3s>

- Women and girls across the country and beyond are demanding that the authorities in Tajikistan: (1) criminalize all forms of violence against women (2) publicly condemn domestic violence (3) provide free assistance to all victims. #non-tolerance
- The UN's #16daysofactivism campaign launches 16 days against gender-based violence to support strong women who help themselves and others cope with trauma and start their lives anew. #nonpinalationalviolence #strongwomenoftajikistan #orangetheworld, #spreadtheword <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=taMqWokxFsw&t=3s>
- Violence doesn't stop on its own. Ask for help, even if it's hard to break your silence. #strongwomenoftajikistan #spreadtheword <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=taMqWokxFsw&t=3s>

3.6.4. Public Association “The World of Law”

In 2020, the public organization "The World of Law" conducted a monitoring of civil proceedings on the transparency and openness of judicial proceedings⁵⁵. The monitoring took place in the courts of Dushanbe and included observation of trials and interviews with judges, lawyers, jurists and members of the public.

As part of the monitoring, an analysis of the legislation was made, which showed that, in general, Tajikistan’s legislation on the right to a fair trial conforms to international standards. At the same time, challenges to judicial independence and access to justice for vulnerable groups were identified. The Constitutional Law on Courts provided for rules whereby the appointment of judges depended on the executive branch or on the presidents of the courts and the Supreme Court, and recent amendments to that law had worsened the material situation of judges, which was not conducive to their independence. There are gaps in the Civil Procedure Code on the use of Braille for PWDs with visual problems, and there are shortcomings in the provision of opportunities to write pleadings and other written documents, petitions and court acts in minority languages and Braille. The question of the payment of interpreters, including sign-language interpreters, is not regulated in the legislation on civil procedure. On the question of the disqualification of judges, the rules of the Civil Procedure Code do not facilitate an objective and impartial examination of the matter. Thus, the article. The Civil Procedure Code states that, when a case is heard by a court of first instance, the disqualification of a judge is decided by the judge hearing the case alone. According to the organization’s lawyers, the rule granting the right to decide the challenge on its own is not objective and may lead to a violation of the principle of objectivity and impartiality. The Civil Procedure Code of the Russian Federation contains no provisions on the time limits within which the courts must notify the parties of the acceptance or refusal of applications or applications from natural or legal persons. There were also no rules on the time limits for the courts to respond to any written communication from citizens.

The results of the monitoring showed that the principle of transparency and openness of court proceedings, enshrined in law, had not become a norm of everyday judicial practice in the Republic of Tajikistan. In most cases, observers had to obtain permission from judges and explain the purpose of visiting the process, although all trials were open. Also, the permission of

⁵⁵ The study was conducted as part of the Trial Monitoring Project on Transparency and Transparency in Civil Proceedings with the support of the National Endowment for Democracy (USA).

the court president had to be obtained. Most civil trials were heard in the judge's office, which did not always have enough seats for persons wishing to attend. Courtrooms were usually open to outside visitors. Lawyers and citizens interviewed also confirmed that 90% of civil cases were heard in the judge's chambers without an explanation, which has become the norm.

Almost all monitored courts have a permit system and guards at the entrance. This fact actually creates conditions for restricting the right of citizens to visit the court and attend open trials.

The reform of the system in terms of transparency of the judiciary has had some achievements, for example, almost all courts now have official websites designed to provide information to the public about the activities of the courts. Of the four courts in the capital, only the Sino District Court continuously updates information about ongoing trials. The Firdavsi and I. Somoni district court website lacks information on scheduled court hearings, and the Shohmansur district court website does not have up-to-date information. The issue of using elements of electronic justice is still unresolved. The websites of the courts do not provide fonts for the visually impaired.

The information presented on the stands in the courts is in the state language, in small print, the stands are high for persons of low stature and for the disabled people, especially those with visual and mobility problems.

Citizens and lawyers interviewed noted that judges at trials are distracted by phone calls, by conversations with other court employees who are not related to trials, and that the television or radio may be on during court sessions, which interferes with the process itself.

Access to the courthouse is restricted for persons with disabilities and persons with reduced mobility, and there are no ramps or elevators. The entrance to the building itself begins with a staircase. The citizens interviewed, in particular the PWDs, as well as lawyers, noted that there were no waiting places, and that the existing toilets were closed to visitors to the courts, used only by judges and court staff, and had no drinking water.

Regarding the use of audio and video recording in courts, lawyers noted that in most cases, when they apply for permission from a judge, not all judges make a reasoned decision to refuse. Some judges noted that the use of audio or video recording requires permission from the court president, which demonstrates the lack of independence of judges.

With the exception of witnesses who have to leave the courtroom in accordance with the Civil Procedure Code, other participants in the proceedings have not been removed without good cause. According to the lawyers, if the judges asked anyone to leave, it was mainly for violations of the order of the process.

90% of NGO lawyers/lawyers indicated that judges did not provide a reasoned decision within the time limit specified in the Civil Procedure Code.

The use of professional interpreters is a problem in civil court practice, as is the provision of court documents in a language that the parties to the proceedings understand.

Gender-based surveys have shown that women are more vulnerable in the administration of justice in civil trials.

There is also no accessible environment for PWDs with visual impairments - glow or voice placards with ads, judges' offices, assistants, large text and Braille.

Lawyers with experience in protecting people living with HIV in civil cases noted that judges and court officials do not respect the right of PLHIV to confidential information about their status. Some judges and court officials treat PLHIV with apprehension because they do not have exhaustive information about HIV and the ways it is transmitted.

The prosecutor's involvement in civil cases does not guarantee a fair trial, although under the Article 47 of the CPC of the RT, the prosecutor is obliged to protect the interests of persons who cannot defend themselves on their own for valid reasons. Most lawyers indicated that prosecutors did not participate in the proceedings to defend anyone's interests, but only because the law required them to do so, and therefore formally assumed their functions. Two lawyers pointed out that when the respondent in a dispute was a public authority, as a rule, the prosecutor did not protect the interests of citizens but, on the contrary, sided with a public authority, even if it did not involve State security issues.

Based on the results of the monitoring, the following recommendations were made:

Legislation

- Conduct a gender and anti-discrimination analysis of the Civil Procedure Code.
- Amend the Civil Procedure Code to allow the courts to raise issues relating to the rights of minors in family disputes, to detect domestic violence and to help victims of violence to defend their rights.
- To amend the Civil Procedure Code with regard to the time limits for notification of the court's acceptance of claims and the time limits for any written applications to the court, so as not to prolong the proceedings, the time limits should be as short as possible; On the accessibility of judicial proceedings and acts and the submission of applications in the language of international communication.
- Conduct an anti-corruption audit of the Code of Criminal Procedure with a view to minimizing corruption risks.
- Adopt the Law on the Right of Access to Information, which provides for the possibility of filing applications, filing complaints with the courts and receiving responses in electronic form, thereby facilitating the accessibility of legal proceedings in civil cases involving PWDs, the courts websites should contain information not only about the trial schedule, but also the full texts of the judgements in these cases. All information must also be in at least two languages - the State language and the language of inter-ethnic communication - Russian.
- Establish a specific living wage in the Law "On Targeted Social Assistance" and determine which groups qualify as low-income citizens eligible for secondary legal aid in civil cases, taking into account the interests of PWDs, women, and minors.

- Define a mechanism to provide free secondary legal aid and allocate funding from the state budget for the implementation of this right.

Law Enforcement

- Introduce elements of e-justice in judicial practice. Update court websites in the Tajik and Russian languages.
- Post information about court hearings on the court boards in large print in two languages, indicating the parties to the process and the subject of the dispute. The name of the judge hearing the dispute and the location of the court session. The boards should be lighted and there should be voice announcements in the courts. If a court hearing is cancelled, make timely changes to the boards.
- Court buildings should, at a minimum, be equipped with ramps to provide access for persons with disabilities
- Ensure access to an open trial for all and to control free access to the courts, within the limits prescribed by the applicable procedural law, in an environment that ensures the safety of the court and the proper functioning of the court.
- If the case before the court is of public interest, take all necessary measures at the court's disposal to hold the hearings in the premises providing broad public access to the courtroom.
- Fully respect the right to an interpreter and ensure the participation of a professional interpreter rather than court staff in the process.
- Judges should contact NGOs that have the ability to hire and pay for a lawyer for vulnerable persons, as well as refer for free legal aid to the entities specified in Article 8 of the Law on Legal Aid.
- In trials involving people with disabilities who cannot attend court hearings, judges should hold mobile hearings even without a defense motion.
- In family disputes, courts must pay special attention to the interests of children and victims of domestic violence.
- To the extent that the courts are able to take measures to create the necessary conditions for waiting for trials in court buildings for visitors and citizens participating in court proceedings (access to toilets, drinking water).
- To ensure that summonses are served to persons involved in the case, as well as to their representatives, in accordance with the provisions of the Civil Procedure Code.

The monitoring report is available at: <https://notorturetj.org/library/o-t-ch-e-t-po-rezultatam-monitoringa-sudebnyh-processov-po-grazhdanskim-delam-v-respublike>

3.7. MEDIA COVERAGE OF TORTURE RELATED ISSUES

The Coalition pays great importance to working with mass media on covering the problems of torture and promoting government policy on "zero tolerance for torture". The coverage of individual cases and trials brings the attention of the general public, government bodies, national and international human rights organizations to these issues and generates support for efforts to combat torture and impunity.

The work of Coalition's Media Group is aimed at systematic media coverage of Coalition's work, raising the level of legal awareness of the population and engaging the population in efforts to eliminate torture. The Media Group brings together Coalition members and individual journalists. The Secretariat of the Media Group consists of the Coordinator, three experts and one IT specialist. In 2020, the Media Group's activities were carried out through projects: "Coordinated civil society action to monitor the implementation of international and national human rights obligations in Tajikistan" (with the financial support of the European Union) and "Support to the Coalition of Civil Society against Torture and Impunity in Tajikistan" (Zigrig Rausing Trust).

ACTIONS, PHOTO EXHIBITIONS, PUBLIC EVENTS

Actions and campaigns to mark International Day for the Protection of Torture Victims - 26 June⁵⁶

From 26 May to 26 June 2020, the Coalition against Torture and Impunity ran a month-long public awareness campaign in support of victims of torture.

During the month, **videos on freedom from torture** were broadcast on monitors in supermarkets, shopping centres, business centres and other places throughout Dushanbe.

Information on the implementation of each paragraph (22 in total) of the **National Plan of Action for the Implementation of the Recommendations of the UN Committee against Torture 2019-2022** was posted on the Coalition's website and social media pages.



The NGO "Office of Civil Liberties", a member of the Coalition against Torture, has prepared a book for the International Day of Torture Victims: **The story of 13 soldiers, or Lost Dreams**, which tells the tragic story of 13 soldiers, who were victims of torture and abuse in the Tajik army.

⁵⁶ Commemoration of the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture was made possible within the framework of the European Union funded project "Strengthening Action to Prevent Torture and Support Human Rights Organizations in Tajikistan"



On 26 June 2020, in the mountain jamoat of Childukhtaron, experts from the NGO "Najoti Kudakon", a member of the Coalition against Torture and Impunity in Tajikistan, held an information meeting with communities on the occasion of the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture.

As part of the campaign, information materials were prepared on combating torture and impunity in Tajikistan:

- Torture is a terrible virus; the vaccine against it is publicity. Don't be silent!⁵⁷
- Rehabilitation of survivors of torture and/or their family members.⁵⁸
- Statement for the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture.⁵⁹
- Presentation of the Book: "The Story of 13 Soldiers, or Lost Dreams"⁶⁰
- Official understatement, or how much information about torture is available on the websites of state bodies⁶¹
- Infographics⁶²



On June 4, 2020, the program "**Time to Know! (Fursati donistan!)**"⁶³, which is broadcast daily on Radio Asia-Plus from 11:00 to 12:00, held a live broadcast titled "We help victims of torture, their relatives and people who want justice. And you can help us!" where listeners asked questions about freedom from torture to lawyers of organizations - members of the

⁵⁷ <http://notorturetj.org/news/pytki-strashnyy-virus-vakcina-protiv-nego-publichnost-ne-molchi>

⁵⁸ <http://notorturetj.org/news/reabilitaciya-lic-perezivshih-pytki-iili-chlenov-ih-semey>

⁵⁹ <https://notorturetj.org/news/prekratit-pytki-v-centralnoy-azii-ne-tolko-na-bumage-no-i-na-praktike>

⁶⁰ <https://notorturetj.org/news/istoriya-13-soldat-ili-poteryannye-mechty>

⁶¹ <https://notorturetj.org/news/oficialnaya-nedokazannost-ili-naskolko-dostupna-informaciya-o-pytkah-na-saytah-gosorgano>

⁶² https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=2886151128174663&id=277139982409137

⁶³ <https://notorturetj.org/news/radio-aziya-plyus-v-ocherednom-vypuske-peredachi-vremya-znat>

Coalition: Abdurakhmon Sharipov (Independent NGO Center for Human Rights Protection) and Khushbakht Isoev (NGO “The World of Law”).

What day is celebrated on June 26?⁶⁴

From 22 to 25 June, as part of the action for the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, members of MIG - SDG Tajikistan (Youth Initiative Group - Sustainable Development Goals) that operates under the NGO "Independent Centre for Human Rights Protection", a member of the



Coalition, conducted a campaign among the country’s youth to commemorate the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture. Questions were addressed to the youth audience. The event was attended by 31 people who received memorable gifts, and were able to obtain new information.

Improved reporting skills on combating torture⁶⁵

From 17 to 18 August 2020, the Coalition against Torture and Impunity in Tajikistan held a training seminar⁶⁶ for journalists from the State media and public relations specialists from law enforcement agencies and State institutions on: Cooperation and improvement of skills in reporting on freedom from torture and ill-treatment. The training provided information on international and national standards on freedom from torture and ill-treatment and on the implementation of the National Plan of Action for the Implementation of the Recommendations of the Committee against Torture for 2019-2022, as well as the activities of the Coalition against Torture and Ill-Treatment in Tajikistan.

The event was held within the framework of the project "Strengthening Actions to Prevent Torture and Support Human Rights Organizations in Tajikistan", funded by the European Union and "Promoting the Rights of Victims of Torture and Ill-treatment" with the financial support of the Open Society Institute.



⁶⁴ <https://notorturetj.org/news/kakoy-den-otmechaetsya-26-iyunya>

⁶⁵ <http://ichrptj.org/ru/blog/sovershenstvovanie-navykov-osveshcheniya-protivodeystviya-pytkam-den-pervyy>

⁶⁶ <http://ichrptj.org/ru/blog/sovershenstvovanie-navykov-osveshcheniya-protivodeystviya-pytkam-den-vtoroy>

The 30-day campaign⁶⁷ "Rights! Dignity! Development!" in honor of World Human Rights Day⁶⁸

The Civil Society Coalition against Torture and Impunity in Tajikistan organized a 30-day campaign entitled "Rights! Dignity! Development!".

From 10 November to 10 December, posters based on 30 articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights were produced and posted daily on the Coalition's website and social media pages.



On November 10, 2020, the Coalition held a "COVID-19 and Human Rights" action in four districts of the capital (near the Bozori Varzob Market (I. Somoni district), the Sadbarg Trade Center (Shohmansur district), the Bozori Yakachinor Market (Firdavsi district), and the Bozori Zarafshon (Sino district). During the event, coalition members provided individual legal counseling and handed out personal protective equipment, including masks, gloves, and antiseptics. Among other issues, citizens expressed concern about issues such as employment and the settlement of labor relations with the employer, COVID-19 related disability pay, housing issues related to investments in the construction of new apartment buildings and the correct registration of the transition of ownership, access to information and timing of responses to citizens' appeals, etc.

13 ноября 2020 года, On November 13, 2020, a radio quiz and online consultations⁶⁹ were held during the live broadcast of the "Come back show"⁷⁰ on Radio Asia-Plus, hosted by Bakha Nazirbayev and Darya Kristolubova. The program began with a short video about human rights, followed by presentations of the Coalition's members Sayfulloev Salim, Urokov Zafar, Shozodaeva Gulguna and Khisomov Daler, who infiltrated the audience on the occasion of International Human Rights Day and answered questions from the audience. At the end of the program a quiz was held and winners were awarded valuable prizes: Thermocup Rondell Infinity RDS 923, iron Maxwell MW 3039,



⁶⁷ The events were made possible with the financial support of the European Union within the project: "Strengthening Actions to Prevent Torture and Support Human Rights Organizations in Tajikistan", UNDP project "Rule of Law and Access to Justice", and project of the Sigrid Rausing Foundation "Support to Civil Initiatives to Prevent Torture in Tajikistan".

⁶⁸ activities were conducted under precautionary measures in connection with the COVID-19 pandemic

⁶⁹ <https://notorturej.org/news/radioviktorina-na-radio-aziya-plyus-i-onlayn-konsultacii>

⁷⁰ <https://notorturej.org/news/pobediteli-radioviktoriny-po-pravam-cheloveka-poluchili-prizy>

hair dryer Grundig HD 2509, electronic scales Maxwell MW 2666 and electronic weights Maxwell 2667.

On November 18, 2020, a movie club meeting was held at the "Kayhon" Cinema in the capital city⁷¹. Following the screening of the film "The Green Mile"⁷² (directed by Frank Darabont, written by Stephen King) debates were held on the issues related to international standards of human rights and national legislation which was attended by more than 70 participants of the movie club.

Everyone over the age of 16 participated in the free film screening. The aim of the movie club was to draw the attention of citizens to human rights.



Over 60 people participated in the Human Rights Marathon, which took place **November 23-25, 2020**⁷³. The event was held in the "Parking" cafe with COVID-19 precautionary measures⁷⁴.

The participants were introduced to the history of human rights, shown a film about the emergence of human rights and the Bill of Rights, followed by a discussion on the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Constitution, International Standards on the Right to Adequate Housing, facilitated by experts of the Coalition. At the end of the event, a quiz was held on the Kahoot platform, and the most active participants were awarded prizes.



On 1 December 2020, the Coalition produced a flip-flap wall calendar for 2021 with a human rights theme and distributed it among partners. Each page of the calendar features articles from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

⁷¹ <https://notorturetj.org/news/bolee-70-chelovek-prinyali-uchastie-v-kinoklabe-posvyashchennom-vsemirnomu-dnyu-prav-cheloveka>

⁷² <https://notorturetj.org/news/kinoklab-v-chest-vsemirnogo-dnya-prav-cheloveka>

⁷³ <https://notorturetj.org/news/svyshe-60-chelovek-stali-uchastnikami-marafona-treningov-po-pravam-cheloveka>

⁷⁴ <https://notorturetj.org/news/marafon-treningov-po-pravam-cheloveka>

The debate tournament «The Law Cup»⁷⁵ was held in Dushanbe on **December 6, 2020** at the German Language Learning Center "DEX"⁷⁶. The tournament judging staff included Mikhail Druzhinin, Manucher Gafarov, Alexandra Smirnova and Nuriddin Ishonkulov, the chief judge of the tournament. 16 teams registered to participate in the tournament, two people from each team (32 people in total), 4 judges and 10 spectators. The winner of the tournament «Cup of Law» was the team Sky, the second place was taken by the team «Privetik», the third place was awarded to the team "CHBD", and the last place was taken by the team "Cloud". Alexander Smirnova and Mikhail Druzhinin won the award of the best judges of the tournament. The best speaker of the tournament was recognized representative of the team «We for Juba» Bakhtie Kurbonov, - took second place Manizha Kadamova from the team «Cloud», and Tamanno Sharipova - third place.



In addition, the following multimedia materials were prepared:

1. Infographics: "International human rights mechanisms" <https://notorturetj.org/news/infografika-mezhdunarodnye-mehanizmy-v-zashchitu-prav-cheloveka>
2. Infographic: "Moral Harm to Victims of Torture and Ill-Treatment: How It Is Repaired" <https://notorturetj.org/news/infografika-moralnyy-vred-zhertvam-pytok-i-zhestokogo-obrashcheniya-kak-vozmeshchaetsya>
3. Multimedia: "Do you know your rights?" <https://notorturetj.org/news/infografika-moralnyy-vred-zhertvam-pytok-i-zhestokogo-obrashcheniya-kak-vozmeshchaetsya>

MEDIA SUPPORT FOR COALITION ACTIVITIES

In 2020, the Coalition's Media Group prepared and published 454 articles, including 230 in Russian language, including 12 Press releases, 12 Analytical materials; multimedia/video/audio materials - 19, information materials - 87, from other sources - 12, materials for the campaign - 88); in Tajik - 149 materials (press release - 7, analytics - 8, multimedia/video/audio materials - 13, information materials - 42, from other sources - 3, materials for the campaign - 76); in English: materials for the campaign and campaign - 75.

All information is duplicated on the social media pages of the Coalition against Torture and Impunity in Tajikistan: which is a primary source of qualitative and objective information on freedom from torture and impunity. In particular, leading Tajik mass media publish or quote information from Coalition sources.

⁷⁵ <https://notorturetj.org/news/v-dushanbe-opredelili-pobediteley-debatnogo-turnira-kubok-prava>

⁷⁶ <https://notorturetj.org/news/debatnyy-turnir-kubok-prava>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/notorture.tj>

Google+: <https://plus.google.com/107767311153916349012>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/NoTortureTj>

Soundcloud: <https://soundcloud.com/notorture-tj>

Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCWfjfabt9tacFgj-rcJZqtw>

Odnoklassniki: <https://ok.ru/group/54476259131498>

Telegram: <http://t.me/notorturetj>

Instagram: notorture.tj

The Coalition's website is a primary source of high-quality and objective information for other Tajik media. In particular, leading Tajik media outlets dub or quote information published on the Coalition's website.

Apart from Tajikistan, the site is visited most often from Russia, Ukraine, Belarus and Turkey.



During the reporting period there were 152992 new visitors. The depth of viewing is from 1.7 to 1.39 minutes.

The age of the persons who visited the site: 18-24 (9.87), 25-34 (61%), 35-44 (17.3%), 45-54 (6.93%), the rest - 4.9%.

In transitions from search engines - 36.7%, through



links on the sites - 27.8%, direct visits - 27.5%, transitions by advertising - 4.99%, internal transitions - 2.33, and the rest - 0.68%.

An analysis of the activities of the Media Group shows that not all journalists are willing to cooperate in the preparation of materials on human rights, in particular on freedom from torture and ill-treatment. Also, persons who apply to the Coalition against Torture and Ill-treatment for legal aid do not want to cover their communications in the media.

ATTACHMENTS

PRESS-RELEASES - REVIEWS:

1. Seminar on Reporting Freedom from Torture for Journalists, 17.12.2020
<https://notorturetj.org/news/seminar-po-osveshcheniyu-voprosov-svobody-ot-pytok-dlya-zhurnalistov>
2. Court's decision: to recover damages not from the authorities, but from the employees themselves, In Tajik language 14.11.2020
<https://notorturetj.org/tj/news/khalmomai-sud-zararro-na-az-makomot-balki-az-hudi-kormandon-ruyoned>
3. “Case Management - Technology for Integrated Social Rehabilitation of Torture Survivors and/or Family Members”, 10.11.2020
<https://notorturetj.org/news/keys-menedzhment-tehnologiya-kompleksnoy-socialnoy-reabilitacii-lic-perezshivshih-pytki-iili>
4. A new project against torture was launched, 10.09.2020
<https://notorturetj.org/news/startoval-novyy-proekt-po-borbe-protiv-pytok>
5. A new project against torture was launched, Tajik version, 10.09.2020
<https://notorturetj.org/tj/news/amalishavii-loikhai-nav-oid-ba-muboriza-bo-shikancha-ogoz-gardid>
6. Civil society organizations in Tajikistan call for a thorough investigation of the attack on the journalist, 02.06.2020
<https://notorturetj.org/news/organizacii-grazhdanskogo-obshchestva-tadzhikistana-prizvali-k-tshchatelnomu-rassledovaniyu>
7. Civil society organizations in Tajikistan call for a thorough investigation of the attack on the journalist, Tajik version. 02.06.2020
<https://notorturetj.org/tj/news/tashkilotkhoi-chomeai-shakhrvandii-tochikiston-ba-taftishi-chiddii-khamla-ba-ruznomanigor-davat>
8. A new project of the Coalition Against Torture is aimed at combating torture and supporting human rights initiatives, 05.05.2020
<https://notorturetj.org/news/press-reliz-1>
9. Fact sheet, in Tajik language 05.05.2020
<https://notorturetj.org/tj/news/varakai-ittilooti-1>
10. Tajik civil society called on the Foreign Ministry to help Tajik migrants stranded outside the country during the pandemic, 05.05.2020

- <https://notorturetj.org/news/grazhdanskoe-obshchestvo-tadzhikistana-prizvalo-mid-pomoch-tadzhikskim-migrantam-okaza.vshimsya>
11. Tajik civil society called on the Foreign Ministry to help Tajik migrants stranded outside the country during the pandemic, Tajik version 05.05.2020
<https://notorturetj.org/tj/news/chomeai-shakhrvandii-tochikiston-az-vkh-host-ba-mukhochironi-tochiki-dar-zamoni-pandemiya-berun>
 12. Appeal by civil society organizations to WHO, 01.05.2020
<https://notorturetj.org/news/obrashchenie-organizaciy-grazhdanskogo-obshchestva-k-voz>
 13. Appeal by civil society organizations to WHO, Tajik version 01.05.2020
<https://notorturetj.org/tj/news/murochiati-tashkilotkhai-chomeai-shakhrvandi-ba-sut>
 14. Tajikistan: civil society calls on the authorities to release the convicted journalist Daler Sharipov, 17.04.2020
<https://notorturetj.org/news/tadzhikistan-grazhdanskoe-obshchestvo-prizyvaet-vlasti-osvobodit-osuzhdenного-zhurnalista>
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