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*Committee against Torture*

REFERENCE: CAT/Follow-up-North Macedonia

28 August 2025

Excellency,

In my capacity as Rapporteur for Follow-up to Concluding Observations of the Committee against Torture, I have the honor to refer to the follow-up to the consideration of the fourth periodic report of North Macedonia, in accordance with the Guidelines for follow-up to concluding observations (CAT/C/55/3).

At its 79th session, held from 15 April to 10 May 2024, the Committee transmitted its concluding observations to your Permanent Mission. The Committee's concluding observations (CAT/C/MKD/CO/4, para. 44) requested the State Party to provide within one year further information on the specific areas of concern identified in paragraphs 13, 17 (c), 19 (a) and 27 (c) of its concluding observations.

On behalf of the Committee, allow me to express appreciation for your letter of 7 May 2025 providing your Government's response on the above-mentioned paragraphs (CAT/C/MKD/FCO/4) and to make the following comments:

National preventive mechanism (para. 13 of the concluding observations)

While noting the persistent challenges related to the insufficient resources allocated to the National Preventive Mechanism for its effective functioning, as acknowledged by the State Party, the Committee regrets the absence of detailed information on the steps taken to increase the number of qualified and multidisciplinary personnel within the mechanism, such as medical professionals, social workers and other relevant experts, in accordance with article 18 of the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. The Committee also regrets the lack of detailed information on the visits carried out by the mechanism to different types of places of deprivation of liberty, including social and other closed-type institutions and the efforts made by the State Party to ensure adequate follow-up and implementation of the mechanism's recommendations arising from its monitoring activities, as foreseen by article 22 of the Optional Protocol (1/D).

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H.E. Ms. Natasha Hroneska  
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Prison violence and deaths in custody (para. 17 (c) of the concluding observations)

The Committee takes note of the information provided by the State Party, including on the development and approval of the Plan for the Employment of Prison Staff on 10 April 2025.

This plan allocates financial resources for the recruitment of a total of 171 prison personnel—83 of whom are to be deployed at the Idrizovo Correctional Facility, 45 at Skopje Prison, with the remaining personnel assigned to other institutions. The Committee also appreciates the information regarding the adoption of the 2025 Annual Training Plan by the Director of the Administration for the Enforcement of Penal Sanctions, which provides for mandatory training for all prison personnel, covering topics such as dynamic security, intervention units, treatment of female prisoners, working with violent inmates, and preventing burn-out, among others. However, the Committee would appreciate receiving further information, in particular regarding the timeline and specific plans for the withdrawal of armed forces currently deployed at Idrizovo Prison. In this regard, the Committee takes note of the State Party's indication that it might end the crisis situation declared at the facility, which led to the deployment of armed forces there, and potentially engage personnel from the Ministry of the Interior—once recruited under the aforementioned 2025 Plan—alongside members of the Ministry of Defense. Lastly, the Committee reminds the State Party that prison security should primarily be ensured by prison police, and the deployment of armed forces should be strictly limited to situations of absolute necessity (3/B1).

Investigation and prosecution of acts of torture and ill-treatment, including excessive use of force (para. 19 (a) of the concluding observations)

The Committee takes note of the information provided by the State Party on the recorded cases of torture and ill-treatment committed in the performance of duties, as criminalized under Articles 142 and 143 of the Criminal Code between 2023 and 2024, as well as the updates on the progress and outcome of the investigations opened into those cases. It is also cognizant of the explanation provided by the State Party that the majority of these cases fall under the previous legal framework—prior to the amendments to Articles 142 and 143 introduced in February 2023—which prescribed more stringent penalties. However, the Committee expresses concern over the high number of cases that have been dismissed and requests the State Party to provide further details on the grounds for such dismissals, as well as the updates on the status and outcomes of ongoing investigations and prosecutions, in its next periodic report. Furthermore, the Committee requests clarification on whether any probationary or suspended sentences have been handed down in cases following convictions for torture and ill-treatment based on articles 142 and 143 of the Criminal Code. The Committee also notes the State Party's assertion that no cases of excessive use of force by members of the prison police were recorded during the reporting period. In this connection, it takes into account the information contained in the State Party's replies about 42 Standard Operating Protocols having been drawn for the use of means of coercion by prison police in 2024, 15 of which related to the use of physical force and restraint within the framework of the justified use of proportionate force. The Committee requests that the State Party submit further details regarding the circumstances of these operations, including the institutions in which they occurred, their duration, the types of

intervention equipment used, and any injuries or incidents recorded, if applicable (3/B1).

Juvenile justice (para. 27 (c) of the concluding observations)

The Committee appreciates the information provided in the State Party's follow-up replies regarding the adoption of an Action plan for mental health of child and adolescent in October 2024, which envisages the application of modern diagnostic tools for work with children and adolescents, inclusion of WHO Mental Health Gap Action Programme (mhGAP) into the medical education curriculum to promote a holistic approach to mental health, as well as various trainings foreseen for healthcare professionals. The Committee also takes note of the ongoing meetings aimed at formalizing a memorandum of cooperation between the Tetovo Health Center and the Department of Psychiatry at the Mother Teresa University Clinic for the recruitment of a child psychiatrist, among other measures. In this connection, the Committee requests further information on the implementation of the above-mentioned action plan in practice, including any achievements to date or challenges encountered. It also asks the State Party to clarify whether any specific protocols or other measures have been adopted to explicitly prohibit automatic overmedication of children in conflict with the law who have mental health conditions and coercive practices in correctional institutions, what procedure has been put in place to routinely inform and seek conscious consent from these children and/or their legal guardians about any treatment that they are to receive as well as any comprehensive data on those children who have been placed in institutions (2/B1).

Implementation plans (para. 44 of the Committee's concluding observations)

The Committee regrets the lack of information about specific plans for implementing, within the coming reporting period, the recommendations included in its concluding observations (C).

The Government of North Macedonia is encouraged to provide additional information, if there is any, which would further contribute to the Committee's analysis of the progress made regarding the specific issues of concern cited above. This additional information may be provided in any subsequent report by the State Party pursuant to the Committee's request in its concluding observations on the fourth periodic report of North Macedonia or other future periodic reports.

The Committee looks forward to a continued constructive dialogue with the authorities of North Macedonia on the implementation of the Convention.

Accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.



Bakhtiyar Tuzmukhamedov  
Rapporteur for Follow-up to Concluding Observations  
Committee against Torture