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REFERENCE: cc/jmnf/jli/follow-up/CAT

19 November 2010

Excellency,

In my capacity as Rapporteur for Follow-up on Concluding Observations of the United Nations Committee against Torture, I refer to the examination of the third periodic report of Iceland (CAT/C/ISL/3) on 9 May 2008. The Committee adopted its concluding observations (CAT/C/ISL/CO/3), in which it requested further comments by the State party in relation to specific concerns listed in paragraphs 9, 14 and 15.

On behalf of the Committee, allow me to thank you for your response of 22 December 2009 providing comments by your government on those paragraphs, which I have reviewed with care. The additional information provided assists the Committee in its ongoing analysis of the issues identified for follow-up in the paragraphs above. As Rapporteur on Follow-up, I would be grateful for clarification on the following matters, where sufficient information is not yet provided to complete an analysis of the progress made regarding implementation of the recommendations of the Committee.

The Committee thanks the Government of Iceland for the information provided regarding paragraph 9, the resort to solitary confinement in prisons. These statistics help us understand the overall situation prevailing in the prison system and the rules governing the use of solitary confinement. According to information before the Committee, the total number of persons in penal institutions including pre-trial detainees is relatively small, reportedly 140 in 2008. In light of this, the Committee would be grateful to receive clarification of the figures provided as to the proportion (in percentage) of the prison population that has been assigned to be held in solitary confinement (for a day or more) for 2001-2010. In addition, the Committee requests confirmation from the government as to the total number of prisoners held in Icelandic penal institutions each year from 2001-2010, as well as any updated information available on the use of solitary confinement in 2009 and 2010.

With regard to paragraph 14 of the concluding observations, regarding trafficking, the Committee commends the authorities of Iceland for the adoption of the Government Action Plan against trafficking in human beings, which is already being implemented. We would be grateful to receive further information on some of the measures taken to implement the Action Plan. Specifically, please clarify who makes up the specialist and coordination team established by the Minister of Justice and Human Rights, as mentioned in your response as well as what kinds of educational activities has this team carried out and for whom.

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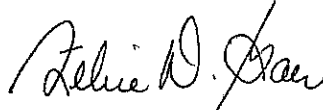
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Updated information on the awareness seminars that were to be organized by the Icelandic National Police College and the courses designed for Border Police officers by the National Commissioner of Icelandic Police, as mentioned in your response, would also be appreciated. In addition, please provide updated information on the measures taken to expand the time and content devoted to education on human trafficking in basic training for students at the Icelandic National Police College. The Committee would also appreciate receiving updated information on the status of the amendment to the Act on Foreigners aimed at enacting articles 13 and 14 of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, as well as the bill put before Parliament by the Minister of Justice and Human Rights aimed at defining trafficking in human beings according to the wording of the above-mentioned Convention and the Palermo Protocol. Further information on whether the Action Plan has implemented any awareness raising measures for ordinary individuals would also be appreciated—for example, has a hotline been established and advertised which victims can call to seek assistance and by which individuals can report suspected cases of trafficking?

In paragraph 15 of the concluding observations, the Committee encouraged the State party to develop a national public information campaign on the subject of domestic violence. In this regard, the Committee is pleased to learn of the five manuals that were published in 2008 on this issue, mentioned in the response from the Government of Iceland. The Committee would be grateful to receive updated information on other measures that have been taken to implement a national public information campaign, as recommended by the Committee. For example, were these manuals accompanied by any training or other awareness raising efforts? Regarding the two surveys mentioned in the State party response which were introduced to the public in 2009, aimed at focusing on how the issue of domestic violence is addressed at schools and by social services, please describe the content of these surveys, and how they were introduced to the public—were they accompanied or followed by awareness raising efforts?

The Committee looks forward to pursuing a constructive dialogue it has started with the State party on the implementation of the Convention, and in this context, to receiving clarification to its follow-up questions.

Accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.



Felice D. Gaer

Rapporteur for Follow-up on Concluding Observations  
Committee against Torture