

I N F O R M A T I O N
**of the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina on the implementation of the recommendations of
the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or
Punishment (CPT), for the period 2024 and 2025**

In July 2002, Bosnia and Herzegovina ratified the European Convention for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, and has consistently fulfilled the obligations arising from the Convention. One of these obligations includes following the visits of the Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT), which are carried out as periodic, announced, or *ad hoc* visits to our country. The purpose of these visits is to monitor the conditions and treatment of persons deprived of their liberty in police stations, detention facilities, prisons, immigration centers, and institutions for social care and elderly care.

In accordance with Article 7 of the European Convention for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, a delegation of the Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT) carried out its 10th periodic visit to Bosnia and Herzegovina from 2 to 13 September 2024.¹ The primary objectives of this visit were to conduct a detailed assessment of the treatment of persons arrested and detained by police authorities at the state, entity, and cantonal levels, with a particular focus on the prevention of abuse and ill-treatment. The delegation also assessed the conditions of detention for convicted and remand prisoners in correctional facilities under the jurisdiction of the state and entity ministries of justice. Special attention was given to the situation in social welfare institutions in both entities, as well as the conditions of detention for foreign nationals deprived of liberty in accordance with the applicable immigration legislation.

Following the periodic visit of the CPT delegation and the receipt of its recommendations, the Ministry for Human Rights and Refugees of Bosnia and Herzegovina undertook a detailed analysis of the recommendations. To this end, the competent institutions were informed of the recommendations to ensure their timely and effective implementation. On 9 April 2025, the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina officially received the recommendations, comments, and requests for additional information from the visit report adopted by the CPT at its meeting held on 14 March 2025.

During the visit, the delegation visited a number of institutions, including police stations in Sarajevo, Tuzla, Kalesija, Banja Luka, Dobož, and Višegrad; the detention unit at the Novo Sarajevo Police Station premises and in Zalužani; as well as the headquarters of the Court Police in Sarajevo. Among prison institutions, the delegation visited the State Prison of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as prisons in Tuzla, Zenica, Istočno Sarajevo, Banja Luka, and Dobož.

In terms of social care institutions, the delegation visited the Drin Institute for Social and Health Care in Fojnica, the Pazarić Institute for Social and Health Care, Upbringing, and Education, and the Home for Persons with Disabilities in Višegrad. Finally, they also visited immigration detention centers, including the premises of the Border Police and the holding area in the restricted zone of Sarajevo Airport, as well as the Immigration Detention Center in Lukavica.

In this context, after the Report was translated into local languages (Bosnian, Croatian, and Serbian), it was forwarded to the competent institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina for review and for providing comments. Subsequently, the responsible officials from the Ministry for Human Rights and Refugees of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as the coordinating body, prepared a dynamic plan for the implementation of the recommendations contained in the CPT Committee's Report.

The following institutions are responsible for implementing the recommendations: Ministry of Security of Bosnia and Herzegovina; Ministry of Justice of Bosnia and Herzegovina; Institution of the Human Rights Ombudsman of Bosnia and Herzegovina; Judicial Commission of the Brčko District of Bosnia

¹ The Reports on visits and the Responses of the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina to all previous visits (five periodic and four *ad hoc* visits) are available on the CPT Committee's website: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/cpt>

and Herzegovina; Ministries of Interior of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Republika Srpska, as well as the Ministries of Interior of all cantons.

The key observations and recommendations of the CPT Committee delegation focused on the following aspects:

- Regarding law enforcement institutions, it is essential to address effectively and decisively the issue of ill-treatment of detainees by police officers at all levels of government in Bosnia and Herzegovina;
- A reform of the legal framework and detention regime at the entity level is recommended, with particular emphasis on ensuring that detainees have the right to spend at least eight hours per day outside their cells;
- In social welfare institutions, there is a highlighted need to prevent abuse through improved staff recruitment, training, and supervision, as well as to enhance the living conditions of residents. Additionally, the use of means of restraint must be regulated and strictly controlled to prevent their inappropriate application;
- Following visits to immigration detention centers, the delegation recommended the adoption of legal measures to regulate the detention of foreign nationals who are denied entry into Bosnia and Herzegovina. Special attention should be given to the psychological and psychiatric care of vulnerable migrants, with a focus on a proactive and therapeutic approach.

The delegation also recognized and highlighted good practices in treatment, including:

- The professional and lawful conduct of officers of the State Investigation and Protection Agency (SIPA) during arrests, with the proportional use of force, which was evaluated as an example of good practice;
- In the State Prison of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the delegation noted commendable practices related to detainees' rights to leave their cells and the provision of adequate living conditions.

Considering that the CPT Committee Report contains a total of 137 recommendations addressed to the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Ministry for Human Rights and Refugees of Bosnia and Herzegovina has prepared an electronic table that includes the text of each recommendation from the CPT Report, along with proposed concrete measures for their implementation, assigned to the competent institutions.

In addition to general recommendations, the Committee also provided a range of specific suggestions, which include the establishment of a Preventive Mechanism in Bosnia and Herzegovina, improvement of conditions in law enforcement institutions, strengthening of safeguards against ill-treatment, enhancement of conditions in prison facilities, as well as improvement of conditions in the Lukavica Immigration Detention Center.

As part of fulfilling its international obligations related to the establishment of a Preventive Mechanism, the competent authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina informed the Committee that the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina, on August 30, 2023, adopted the Law on Amendments to the Law on the Institution of the Human Rights Ombudsman of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The law entered into force on September 14, 2023, officially authorizing the Ombudsman Institution to act as the Preventive Mechanism for the prevention of torture, in accordance with the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention against Torture, which Bosnia and Herzegovina signed on October 24, 2008.

The NPM plays a key role in protecting persons deprived of liberty from torture, abuse, or inhuman treatment.

Key changes introduced by the amended law include the expansion of the ombudsman's mandate, granting them the authority to conduct unannounced visits to places of deprivation of liberty, access premises and records, and speak with detained persons without the presence of official staff. Furthermore, the Law introduced a requirement for regular thematic consultations with civil society,

academia, and international organizations, while ensuring the financial and operational independence of the institution by Law.

Additionally, certain institutions have submitted information to the Ministry for Human Rights and Refugees of Bosnia and Herzegovina regarding ongoing activities and adopted documents aimed at implementing the above-mentioned recommendations. Competent ministries of justice at all levels of government will continue to work intensively on securing funds for the ongoing improvement of infrastructure in correctional facilities, including maintenance, hygiene, and the enhancement of living conditions. There are also plans to establish mechanisms for regular inspection oversight to monitor the conditions and treatment of detainees and prisoners.

The competent ministries of interior will continue to provide regular training for police officers on the protection of the human rights of detainees and prisoners, lawful procedures, and the application of proportional force. Activities are also planned to establish effective systems for reporting and investigating allegations of abuse or misconduct by police officers, with clearly defined sanctions for violators.

Regarding the conditions of detention facilities and police stations, the competent Ministries of Interior are planning to secure the necessary funds to create adequate and more humane conditions, including improved ventilation, lighting, and access to basic sanitary needs. In addition, assessments are being conducted to determine the feasibility of regular monitoring of detention units and the removal of any elements that could lead to inhuman or degrading treatment.

Following the recommendations of the CPT Committee delegation concerning the urgent need to improve the Immigration Center located in the restricted area of Sarajevo Airport, the Ministry for Human Rights and Refugees of Bosnia and Herzegovina informed the competent Ministry of Security of Bosnia and Herzegovina of the suggestions. The Ministry of Security will take the necessary steps as soon as possible to address the identified shortcomings, carry out an inspection, and implement all required measures in accordance with the findings.

All of these measures require coordinated and harmonized cooperation among all relevant state, entity, and cantonal institutions in order to ensure the effective implementation of the CPT Committee's recommendations and to improve the human rights protection system in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Given the extensive nature of the CPT Committee's recommendations and requests for information, the institutions have presented their planned activities for implementation in a table attached to this Information, to allow for better clarity and easier monitoring of progress.