**Protecting human rights during and after the COVID-19 Pandemic**

Joint questionnaire by Special Procedure mandate holders

**Common questions**

Impact on human rights

* The COVID -19 pandemic has turned our lives upside down leaving in its wake human suffering, loss of lives and devastating psychological and socioeconomic consequences. COVID-19. To protect and save lives and maintain Public Health, compromises had to be made as regards the enjoyment of human rights. The state has immediately intervened by declaring a state of emergency, setting up a crisis management team, national hotlines and release of an emergency fund to cover the needs of vulnerable people, ill, disabled and workers.
* **Restriction** in movement from March 16th lockdown March 21 and curfew were imposed until gradual lifting of measures from April 21st 2020. During this time, people had to send SMS messages permission to leave their houses for essential activities e.g. shopping, exercise and this had to be approved by the police. Persons repatriated to Cyprus were put under 14 days quarantine in accommodation designated by the state and healthcare was provided. Also, any proven cases and close contacts of COVID-19 were put under isolation for 14 days to curb the spread of infection. General quarantine measures have been abolished by June 21st due to favourable epidemiological data. Occupants of care homes and the elderly were especially shielded from the threat of infection so regular visits were temporarily suspended until end of April. All non- essential services were temporarily postponed as all effort was targeted towards dealing with the pandemic, e.g.; routine hospital appointments, court appearances. All persons in vulnerable categories were shielded at home for protection. Places of worship, education and culture were temporarily closed to curb the spread of the virus. The lifting of restrictive measures is gradual and in phases depending on the epidemiological data.
1. All restrictive measures were declared in the form of Decrees based on the **Quarantine Law** Act 1932 and were imposed. Lack of compliance with the National Decrees were monitored by the health inspectors and the police force and perpetrators causing increased risk to Public health were given hefty **fines** and those who repeatedly violated the Decrees their businesses were temporarily suspended.
2. The measures were **necessary t**o respond to the COVID-19 pandemic in order to protect the health and life of people in the Republic of Cyprus and prevent the spread of infection especially to vulnerable groups
3. Taking into account the imminent threat of illnesses, loss of life and overwhelming of the healthcare system, these measures were **proportionate** to the threat.
4. The protective measures were particularly difficult for **elderly** people who depend on close communication with their families and social support.
* Places of faith and healthcare and business **services** have been made accessible online and they are now reopened for easier access. Access to non- essential services were temporarily delayed due to provision of urgent care for COVID patients and these services are now gradually catching up. There have been no recorded serious violations of human rights during this crisis period.
* The **long-term impact** of the pandemic has yet to be realized and will be a rich ground for clinical research. Certainly, we are aware of the negative effects of social isolation and our mental health services have been offering their services for support of whoever is in need. A strong sense of community with support for elderly and vulnerable groups, and offering delivery of shopping, transport of essential services with a very strong response from vulnerable groups e.g. up to serve the population. The restrictions were in place from March 16th until April 21st.
* Economic recovery and financial assistance are essential measures to support human rights and details of support packages are available from the Ministry of Finance

**Statistic information**

* Total number of cases of COVID-19 in Cyprus up to now is 985 (M=F) in a population of 870,000 people, 807 have completely recovered, there were 18 COVID- related deaths, and the majority of cases and loss of lives are Cypriot citizens. testing for COVID-19 117,133/million population, less than 10 % bed occupancy, R (t) 0.7 effective reproductive number. The majority of cases of death occurred in individuals with preexisting and complex medical conditions.

<https://www.pio.gov.cy/coronavirus/en/pdf/i11062020en.pdf>

<https://www.pio.gov.cy/coronavirus/en/pdf/ep206en.pdf>

* From the 18 deaths, the majority were over 60 years of age and no deaths are recorded in the available statistics from occupants of care homes or persons under detention or asylum seekers. [www.pio.gov.cy/coronavirus](http://www.pio.gov.cy/coronavirus)
* Cyprus has a general healthcare system and the majority of people are covered by this. Special COVID clinics and in care settings were established. Asylum seekers are given special access to healthcare. A free testing strategy has been carried out to cover population testing, special vulnerable groups, close contacts, frontline workers, people in detention., asylum seekers, occupants of care homes, people and carers of special needs individuals, repatriated citizens and random sampling. Personal protective equipment has been made available to those in need e.g. frontline workers, healthcare professionals, carers at care homes, care centres for people with special needs. Doctors have been assigned to care for persons in detention and seeking asylum.
* Data about the socioeconomic impact are available from the Ministry of Labour and Social Services

**Protection of various groups at risk and indigenous peoples**

* The high-risk group populations mentioned in the questionnaire have been protected from COVID-19 by the implementation of health and safety protocols, provision of information, strict protection for infection control, provision of healthcare services and economic and social support.
* Cyprus recognizes the rights and the needs of persons deprived of their liberties in accordance with the International Declaration of Human Rights and the coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic as a valuable framework and resource for implementing preventive measures in the Republic of Cyprus and in Europe as a whole.
* Protocols for cleaning and disinfection of establishments have been issued and circulated to all establishments by the Public Health Services, regular inspection is carried out to ensure adherence to all recommendations.
* Measures to prevent overcrowding are put in place whenever possible and there is an attempt to place persons with more physical distancing. The reality of implementing all preventive measures during a pandemic is an enormous challenge, but the authorities are doing their utmost to protect the health and the rights of all people.
* A targeted health communication campaign was carried out, a dedicated website was set up with information leaflets in many languages www.pio.gov.cy/coronavirus A rigorous campaign of testing for COVID in vulnerable groups is carried out with active contact tracing and follow with quarantine of proven cases, isolation of suspect cases and follow up with special emphasis on protection of vulnerable groups and financial support.
* Victims have access to social and health services and access to protected accommodation
* Healthcare and psychosocial services have been made available
* Single parents are entitled to benefits and they can work from home or claim special benefits to care for their children
* Special support from mental, social health and health visitors has been made available to any persons requiring extra support. The only discrimination is caused by the COVID-19 virus itself,