

Feedback from ICPO clients and their families:

*'I would like to thank everybody at ICPO for all their support, it was a great comfort to know that there were people outside who care at what I can only describe as the lowest point of my life ... If there is any way I can help others in the same position as I was in I would like to.'*



*'Words almost fail me to thank you for your visit yesterday. It was without a doubt the highlight of my year to date and chatting with you was, to say the least, invigorating. Thank You.'*



*'Many thanks for all your help and assistance; you have been great help to me during this difficult time. The welcome and support for me on the family day was overpowering, I don't feel alone anymore here in Ireland.'*



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## Irish Council for Prisoners Overseas

Responding to the needs of  
Irish prisoners overseas  
and their families

The Irish Council for Prisoners Overseas (ICPO) is a charitable organisation established by the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference in 1985, which works on behalf of Irish prisoners overseas to provide information and support to these prisoners and their families.

Irish prisoners overseas face significant difficulties, including discrimination, language barriers and dealing with an unfamiliar legal system. Some prisoners experience extreme hardship, with limited access to basic necessities such as food and water.

The ICPO works for all Irish prisoners wherever they are. We do not make any distinction in terms of religious faith, the nature of the conviction or of a prisoner's status.

#### Our objectives are to:

- Identify and respond to the needs of Irish prisoners abroad and their families;
- Research and provide relevant information to prisoners on issues such as deportation, repatriation and transfer;
- Focus public attention on issues affecting Irish prisoners;
- Engage in practical work in aid of justice and human rights for Irish migrants, refugees and prisoners at an international level;
- Visit Irish prisoners abroad when possible in the UK and elsewhere.



#### Our services include:

- Providing information and support to prisoners in relation to a wide range of issues, including repatriation, deportation, health and legal matters, discrimination and ill-treatment;
- Keeping in contact with prisoners through letter writing, newsletters and cards for Christmas and St Patrick's Day;
- A pen friend scheme, which involves volunteers in Ireland corresponding on a regular basis with ICPO clients;
- Representing prisoners' interests to relevant parties (Irish embassies and consulates, welfare agencies, probation and legal officers);
- Monitoring repatriation applications with the Department of Justice and Equality;
- Providing assistance to prisoners in preparation for their release;
- Access to a Hardship Fund for those who are experiencing extreme hardship and are unable to access basic necessities;
- Visiting prisoners and assisting families with travel and accommodation for prison visits;
- Providing support and advice to the families of Irish prisoners overseas who face many challenges as they deal with an extremely distressing situation. We hold Family Information Days twice a year to provide families with information and support and to give them the opportunity to meet other people who have a relative in prison overseas.