



● **PUBLIC STATEMENT**

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UN Standard Minimum Rules: Welcoming the adoption of the revised Rules by the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice

Today, during the 24th session of the UN Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (the “Commission”), the Commission adopted the revised text of the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners.

The UN Standard Minimum Rules were first adopted in 1955 by the first UN Congress on the Prevention of Crime and Treatment of Offenders and are widely seen as being the main document related to the treatment of prisoners. In December 2010, a resolution by the UN General Assembly called for a targeted revision of the Rules. While acknowledging that the Rules stood the test of time, updates were needed to mirror the developments in international standards, as well as to reflect advances and best practises in correctional science. The Intergovernmental Expert Group created to carry out this revision met at four occasions and, during their last meeting in March 2015 in Cape Town, adopted the revised UN Standard Minimum Rules. This revised text has today been endorsed by the UN Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and are now called the “Mandela Rules” to honour the former President of South Africa who spent many years as a prisoner.

APT welcomes the revised Rules that provide for better protection of persons deprived of their liberty. In particular, the revised Rules introduce in the preamble the basic principle of the absolute prohibition of torture and ill-treatment under any circumstances. Besides, the revised Rules also broaden and clarify the standards on discipline and sanctions, prohibiting several practises like solitary confinement in excess of 15 consecutive days, collective punishment or reduction of diet or drinking water. Important safeguards such as access to a lawyer have been strengthened. The revised Rules now provide for external inspections by independent bodies to ensure that procedures and practises are in accordance with the law and implemented. This task of external inspection is at the heart of the work carried out by the National Preventive Mechanisms established under the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention against Torture.

The revised Rules will now have to be considered by the UN General Assembly during its 70th session in December 2015.