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Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

NATIONAL PREVENTIVE MECHANISM

Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka

June 2026

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PREFACE

Sri Lanka, as a state party to the Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (OPCAT), has undertaken an obligation to prevent torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment in all places where individuals are deprived of their liberty. The establishment of the National Preventive Mechanism (NPM) is a cornerstone of this preventive approach—one that prioritises foresight, vigilance, and systemic reform over reactive responses.

The Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka (HRCSL) was designated the NPM in 2017 and carries the mandate to *prevent* the occurrence of torture and other forms of cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment through regular, unannounced visits to places of deprivation of liberty, continuous monitoring, and constructive engagement with duty-bearers. Prevention, in this context, is not only about identifying and addressing existing violations, but more importantly, about recognising early warning signs, reducing risk factors, and strengthening institutional safeguards that uphold the inherent dignity of every person.

This Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) has been developed to institutionalise this preventive mandate. It provides comprehensive guidance on how the NPM carries out its work, from strategic planning, visit methodology, documentation, and reporting, to follow-up and advocacy. The SOP ensures that NPM interventions are guided by international human rights standards, grounded in professional ethics, and implemented with sensitivity to Sri Lanka’s legal, social, and cultural landscape.

Prevention requires more than inspection; it demands continuity, dialogue, transparency, and cooperation. This SOP reflects that philosophy and aims to strengthen the preventive impact of the NPM’s work by promoting consistency, accountability, and a victim-centered approach across all its activities.

By presenting this SOP, the HRCSL reaffirms its commitment to a future where places of deprivation of liberty are safe, rights-respecting environments, and where torture and ill-treatment have no space to take root. The SOP serves as a practical tool that facilitates the fulfilment of Sri Lanka’s human rights obligations and advances a culture of prevention and dignity for all.

INTRODUCTION

The National Preventive Mechanism (NPM) derives its mandate from Sri Lanka's international obligations under the Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (OPCAT), which Sri Lanka ratified in 2017. Under this Protocol, States Parties are required to establish independent visiting bodies at the domestic level, known as National Preventive Mechanisms (NPMs), with the authority to conduct regular visits to places where individuals are deprived of their liberty with the objective of preventing torture and other forms of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

In Sri Lanka, the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka (HRCSL) was officially designated the NPM in 2017 through a decision of the Cabinet of Ministers. As the designated body, the HRCSL exercises its powers under the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka Act, No. 21 of 1996, which grants it broad authority to:

- Monitor and inspect detention facilities, prisons, police stations, and other places of deprivation of liberty;
- Make recommendations to the state and relevant institutions to improve conditions of detention and prevent violations; and
- Advise and assist the government in formulating legislation and administrative directives and procedures, in furtherance of the promotion and protection of the fundamental and human rights of detainees;
- Make recommendations to the government regarding measures which should be taken to ensure that national laws and administrative practices relating to the deprivation of liberty are in accordance with international human rights norms and standards; and
- Collaborate with international and regional human rights mechanisms.

In February 2022, the NPM was formally established within the Research & Monitoring Division of the HRCSL. This marked an important step in fulfilling Sri Lanka's international obligations under OPCAT. The NPM now plays a role in protecting persons deprived of their liberty and preventing torture and other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment in places of deprivation of liberty, such as police stations, prisons, and other custodial institutions.

This Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) sets out the process to be followed by officers of the HRCSL with respect to the NPM. The objectives of this SOP are as follows:

- (a) To establish a clear operational framework (i.e., to define the roles, responsibilities, and procedures of the NPM team, ensure compliance with international human rights standards, and provide a systematic approach to conducting preventive visits and follow-ups) that delineates the difference between the NPM and the other functions of the HRCSL;
- (b) To standardise inspection and monitoring processes (i.e., to outline procedures for regular and unannounced visits to places of deprivation of liberty, such as prisons, police stations, immigration detention centres, psychiatric institutions etc., set guidelines for interviews with detainees, prison officials, and medical staff, and establish protocols for documenting

- conditions, treatment, and incidents of abuse); and
- (c) To prescribe processes for reports and other documents (such as the annual report, special reports, and comments on draft legislation); and
 - (d) To ensure ethical and confidential practices (i.e., upholding the ‘do no harm’ principle, to protect the confidentiality of detainees and whistle-blowers, establish ethical standards for data collection and reporting, and prevent retaliation against detainees who provide testimonies).

1. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

- 1.1 The mandate and functioning of the NPM in Sri Lanka are grounded in both international and national legal instruments aimed at preventing torture and other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment. These legal instruments establish a comprehensive framework to uphold human dignity, ensure accountability, and strengthen safeguards against torture and other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment in all forms of detention.
- 1.2 All officers involved in the NPM at the HRCSL Head Office and Regional Offices should be well-versed in the applicable provisions of these international and national legal instruments.
- 1.3 International legal instruments:
 - a) **United Nations Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (UNCAT)**: Sri Lanka acceded to UNCAT in 1994, thereby committing to take effective legislative, administrative, judicial, and other measures to prevent acts of torture in any territory under its jurisdiction. UNCAT obliges State Parties to ensure prompt and impartial investigation of torture, prosecute perpetrators, and provide redress to victims.
 - b) **Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (OPCAT)**: Sri Lanka ratified OPCAT in 2007. OPCAT establishes a system of regular visits to places of deprivation of liberty by independent international and national bodies. As per article 3 of OPCAT, Sri Lanka is required to establish, designate, or maintain a ‘National Preventive Mechanism’ for the prevention of torture and other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment at the domestic level.
- 1.4 National legal framework:
 - a) **Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment Act, No. 22 of 1994**: This Act gives domestic effect to Sri Lanka’s obligations under UNCAT. It criminalises torture and prescribes penalties for public officers found guilty of committing such acts.
 - b) **Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka Act, No. 21 of 1996**: Sections 11(d) and 28

of this Act empower the HRCSL to monitor places of deprivation of liberty and advise the government on measures to promote and protect human rights.

1.5 Supportive legislation

- a) **International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance Act, No. 5 of 2018:** Sections 15(3) and 18 of the Act provide that the HRCSL shall have access to the places where persons are deprived of liberty.
- b) **Prevention of Terrorism Act, No. 48 of 1979 as amended by Act, No. 12 of 2022:** Section 9A of the Act provides that the detention of any person under section 9 of the Act shall be communicated to the HRCSL in terms of section 28 of the HRCSL Act to enable officers of the HRCSL to visit places of deprivation of liberty. This provision strengthens procedural safeguards and transparency by mandating notification and access for the HRCSL to monitor counter-terrorism-related detention.
- c) **Bureau of Rehabilitation Act, No. 2 of 2023:** Section 22(7) of the Act provides that the HRCSL is empowered to visit any centre to ensure that the rights of the persons undergoing rehabilitation at the centre are protected.

2. PLACES OF DEPRIVATION OF LIBERTY

2.1 According to the definition provided under article 4 of the OPCAT, the NPM covers a broad range of places where individuals may be deprived of their liberty. These include, but are not limited to:

- a) Prisons:
 - Remand prisons;
 - Closed and open prisons;
 - High-security facilities;
 - Women’s and juvenile correctional centres; and
 - Work camps.
- b) Police stations and detention cells:
 - Temporary detention facilities at police stations;
 - Places of deprivation of liberty used by special units, such as the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) and Counter-Terrorism and Investigation Division (CTID) of Sri Lanka Police; and
 - Lockups.
- c) Psychiatric hospitals and mental health institutions:
 - State-run psychiatric hospitals;
 - Secure wards in general hospitals;
 - Long-term care institutions for persons with psychosocial disabilities; and
 - Private psychiatric care centres.

- d) Juvenile detention facilities:
 - Certified schools;
 - Detention homes;
 - Rehabilitation and probation centres; and
 - Youth correctional centres.
- e) Immigration detention centres, i.e., facilities operated by immigration authorities for undocumented migrants and asylum seekers.
- f) Military detention facilities, i.e., detention centres operated by military forces.
- g) Elder care and social welfare institutions, i.e., homes for the elderly, persons with disabilities, or individuals under protective custody, where freedom of movement may be restricted.
- h) Drug rehabilitation centres, i.e., compulsory and voluntary rehabilitation facilities.
- i) Detention cells operated by the Wildlife Department, Forest Department or and Excise Department, i.e., cells located at the department offices used to hold suspects before producing them before a Magistrate's Court.
- j) Leprosy treatment hospitals.
- k) The National Institute of Infectious Diseases.

2.2 The visiting schedule of the NPM should cover all the above places of deprivation of liberty.

3. ETHICAL PRINCIPLES

- 3.1 The ethical principles of the NPM are foundational to ensuring that its work in monitoring places of deprivation of liberty is carried out responsibly, effectively, and in line with international human rights standards. These principles guide how NPM staff and members interact with detainees, state authorities, and other stakeholders, such as lawyers, family members of detainees, the International Committee of the Red Cross, and the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.
- 3.2 Every officer involved in the NPM should abide by the ethical principles of the NPM set out below.
- 3.3 Respect for human dignity
 - a) Respect for dignity is the core reason that torture and cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment are absolutely prohibited.
 - b) Respect for human dignity means acknowledging and honouring the intrinsic value and

worth of every human being. It requires that individuals are not treated merely as means to an end, degraded, humiliated, or subjected to inhumane or degrading treatment.

- c) The right to a fair trial and due process must be respected at all times. Individuals must be presumed innocent and treated with dignity even when suspected of or accused of a crime, and regardless of the nature or severity of the crime(s).
- d) Detainees should be addressed respectfully and not subjected to demeaning or humiliating treatment.

3.4 Do No Harm

- a) This principle means that NPM activities – such as visits, interviews, and reporting – should never put individuals at increased risk of harm, retaliation, or punishment.
- b) Interviews with detainees should be conducted in private, without the presence of state officials.
- c) Where staff members or officers of the relevant place of deprivation of liberty wish to be whistle-blowers or volunteer information on issues in detention conditions or procedures, the NPM staff should endeavour to conduct such interviews in private.
- d) When risks of reprisals are identified during a visit, NPM staff should follow up with the authorities to ensure no reprisals have taken place and advocate for protective measures.

3.5 Non-discrimination

- a) NPM staff should treat all persons equally, without discrimination of any kind, such as on the basis of race, sex, gender, religion, language, nationality, political opinion, disability, sexual orientation, or other status. Other statuses include the fact that they may have committed a crime or may have mental health issues.
- b) Attention should be paid to the specific needs and vulnerabilities of marginalised groups (e.g., women, children, persons within the LGBTQI community, persons with disabilities, and elderly detainees).
- c) The NPM visiting teams should have adequate representation in terms of gender, ethnicity, minority groups and language proficiency to promote inclusivity and understanding of different perspectives. The representation of the NPM team for each visit should be determined in accordance with the diversity of the place(s) of detention that will be visited, and the identity of detainees at such place of deprivation of liberty.

3.6 Confidentiality and anonymity, i.e., information gathered during visits, including through interviewing detainees, should be kept confidential to ensure that detainees are not exposed to retaliation for cooperating with the NPM. This obligation is subject to the provisions on

informed and voluntary consent outlined in 3.8 below.

3.7 Independence and impartiality, i.e., the NPM must operate free from external influence, especially from state or political actors, and NPM staff should avoid conflicts of interest, ensuring impartial and fact-based reporting.

3.8 Informed and voluntary consent:

- a) NPM staff should seek the informed consent of detainees before conducting interviews or gathering audio or visual evidence. The purpose of the visit, the detainees' rights, and the potential impact of sharing information should be clearly explained to the detainees. Informed consent should also be obtained for use of information gathered in such interviews, whether directly attributed or anonymised.
- b) NPM staff should ensure that the consent of detainees is obtained without coercion. Detainees must voluntarily agree to participate in interviews, provide information, or be photographed or recorded.
- c) Informed consent shall be documented in writing (**Standard Form 1**).

3.9 Transparency and accountability

- a) NPM staff should maintain accurate records of visits and findings.
- b) NPM reports should present findings truthfully while ensuring confidentiality with respect to the identities of detainees who provided information.

3.10 Cultural sensitivity

- a) NPM staff should be aware of religious and cultural norms when interacting with detainees.
- b) NPM staff should use appropriate language when communicating with detainees and seek interpreters when necessary.

3.11 Credibility, objectivity and accuracy

- a) NPM staff should be able to clearly explain the mandate of the NPM and should make sure staff and detainees are aware of their mandate and methodology.
- b) NPM staff should not make any promises or commitments that cannot be kept.
- c) Information should be collected in a sound, accurate and objective manner during visits.

3.12 Supporting victims of crime and witnesses

- a) Under the Assistance to and Protection of Victims of Crime and Witnesses Act, No. 10 of 2023, victims of crimes have the right to:
 - Equal, fair, and respectful treatment;
 - privacy and dignity;
 - Protection from threats, intimidation or reprisals;
 - Medical and psychological care;
 - Full information on rights, progress of investigations and legal remedies;
 - Legal representation;
 - Certified copies of official reports and participation in proceedings;
 - Financial redress for expenses incurred in participating in proceedings and for treatment or rehabilitation

- b) Under the Assistance to and Protection of Victims of Crime and Witnesses Act, witnesses are entitled to:
 - Fair and respectful treatment;
 - Protection from harm or retaliation throughout participation in any legal process.

- c) Where the Focal Director in charge of the NPM is of the view that a person held in custody requires protection from injury, intimidation, reprisal, or retaliation, they shall report the matter to the Board of Commissioners of the HRCSL. The Board may, if it is of the view that the person concern requires protection, direct the National Authority for the Protection of Victims of Crime and Witnesses to take necessary measures to provide protection to such victim of crime or witness in terms of the Assistance to and Protection of Victims of Crime and Witnesses Act.

4. MANDATE

- 4.1 NPM staff should understand the distinctions between the prevention mandate of the NPM and the general protection mandate of the HRCSL. These two mandates operate concurrently and complement each other. However, they remain distinct and serve different purposes.

- 4.2 The key features of the prevention mandate include the following:
 - a) Regular, unannounced visits to places of deprivation of liberty;

 - b) Systemic focus, i.e., it aims to identify and address structural and procedural issues that may lead to torture or other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment;

 - c) Dialogue-based approach, i.e., the NPM engages authorities in a cooperative, non-adversarial manner with the aim to improve conditions when possible.

 - d) Forward-looking, i.e., the emphasis is on identifying risks and recommending measures to prevent violations before they occur.

- e) Holistic approach, i.e., NPM staff should analyse relevant laws, practices, and institutional cultures that may contribute to torture or other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment. The government is expected to implement the recommendations and reform measures introduced by the NPM to protect the rights of detainees and ensure that all detainees are treated without discrimination and with dignity.

4.3 The protection mandate of the HRCSL includes the following key features:

- a) Complaint handling and investigations, i.e., the HRCSL receives and investigates individual complaints of alleged violations of fundamental rights, and in that context, may visit a place of deprivation of liberty to investigate a specific violation.
- b) Legal redress and advocacy, i.e., by visiting places of deprivation of liberty where victims are alleged to be subjected to torture or other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment, the HRCSL aims to assist victims to seek justice by issuing recommendations, including on compensation or prosecution.
- c) Policy influence, i.e., where patterns of violations are observed, the HRCSL may issue general guidelines and recommendations to relevant state authorities with a view to strengthen human rights protections.

4.4 The HRCSL’s preventive and protective mandates complement each other. The following table explains the synergies between these two approaches:

	Prevention (NPM)	Protection
Approach	Proactive and preventive	Reactive and protective
Focus	Preventing future violations	Responding to and remedying past or ongoing violations
Method	Systemic visits with a view to identifying risks	Complaint handling, conducting investigations, and providing legal advice
Tone	Cooperative and constructive dialogue	Critical and even adversarial engagement if required
Scope	Places of deprivation of liberty	Broad - all human rights across all sectors

5. TEAM COMPOSITION AND RESPONSIBILITIES

5.1 To ensure the effective functioning of the NPM in preventing torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, the composition of the NPM team should be multidisciplinary. Each member plays a crucial role in identifying, analysing, and responding

to issues observed during visits to places of deprivation of liberty.

- 5.2 Members of the NPM should collectively have the expertise and experience necessary for its effective functioning and staff members should, between them, have the diversity of background, capabilities and professional knowledge necessary to enable the NPM to properly fulfil its mandate.
- 5.3 Where necessary and feasible, and where the Board of Commissioners of the HRCSL has authorised so, the NPM may add relevant professionals on a contract basis to join the visiting teams for visits to specific facilities or for multiple visits where specific expertise is required (e.g. psychologists including child psychologists, medical professionals, or anthropologists).
- 5.4 The Focal Commissioner is responsible to the Board of Commissioners of the HRCSL and shall have the following responsibilities:
 - a) Providing strategic oversight and leadership for the entire NPM structure;
 - b) Ensuring that NPM functions are aligned with the Paris Principles and international standards on the prevention of torture or other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment;
 - c) Representing the NPM at national and international platforms, and in engagements with state and non-state actors;
 - d) Making high-level decisions on the policy and direction of the NPM; and
 - e) Guiding the Focal Director and monitoring progress of implementation.
- 5.5 The Focal Director of NPM has the following responsibilities:
 - a) Functioning as the primary operational head of the NPM;
 - b) Reporting to the Focal Commissioner and taking responsibility for the execution of the NPM mandate;
 - c) Coordinating the design and implementation of:
 - National Visit Plan;
 - Monitoring tools and guidelines;
 - Reporting formats; and
 - Training programmes;
 - d) Providing direct supervision to the Head Office staff dedicated to the NPM;
 - e) Overseeing and guiding Regional Coordinators in conducting NPM activities in the field;

- f) Coordinating with stakeholders (i.e., government institutions, civil society, UN agencies) for effective implementation.
- 5.6 Dedicated staff of the NPM at Head Office shall operate under the direct supervision of the Focal Director, and shall serve as a technical and knowledge hub for the NPM's methodology and practices. Such staff shall work collaboratively with regional teams, and shall have the following responsibilities:
- a) Conducting NPM visits to places of deprivation of liberty;
 - b) Preparing reports on observations and findings;
 - c) Performing analysis and compiling national situation reports;
 - d) Monitoring media and relevant judgements;
 - e) Organising national consultations, thematic discussions, an awareness programmes; and
 - f) Supporting the planning and evaluation of the NPM annual workplan.
- 5.7 Regional Coordinators shall act as the link between the national NPM structure and regional operations and shall have the following responsibilities:
- a) Supervising and guiding regional HRCSL staff to conduct monitoring visits, collecting data and information from the field, and addressing local human rights issues related to deprivation of liberty;
 - b) Coordinating with the Focal Director on operational plans and emerging regional concerns; and
 - c) Providing feedback and updates from the regions to the Head Office.
- 5.8 Staff of Regional Offices shall have the following responsibilities:
- a) Operating under the supervision of Regional Coordinators.
 - b) Providing support for NPM visits and interventions at regional level.
 - c) Assisting with:
 - Translation, logistics, and documentation during visits;
 - Follow-up on regional NPM recommendations; and
 - Community-level engagement and awareness; and
 - d) Facilitating communication between persons deprived of liberty and the HRCSL

5.9 Researchers shall have the following responsibilities:

- a) Leading fact-finding and information-gathering activities;
- b) Conducting interviews with detainees, staff, and other stakeholders;
- c) Observing conditions of detention and identifying possible human rights violations;
- d) Collecting and documenting physical and testimonial evidence; and
- e) Drafting initial field visit reports with findings and observations.

5.10 Legal Experts ensure visits and findings are in line with national and international legal standards and have the following responsibilities:

- a) Analysing legal frameworks relevant to detention and treatment of individuals;
- b) Assessing compliance with international human rights law, including UNCAT and OPCAT;
- c) Providing legal input in the formulation of recommendations; and
- d) Supporting advocacy for legal and policy reforms.

5.11 Psychologists assess the psychological condition of detainees and provide insights into the mental impact of detention conditions, and have the following responsibilities:

- a) Conducting psychological assessments of detainees and identifying signs of trauma or abuse;
- b) Evaluating the mental health support systems within places of deprivation of liberty;
- c) Offering psychosocial perspectives on improving detainee well-being; and
- d) Advising on the psychological implications of solitary confinement, overcrowding, and abuse.

5.12 Medical professionals provide medical evaluation and expertise to identify signs of physical abuse and assess healthcare conditions in facilities, and have the following responsibilities:

- a) Conducting physical examinations of detainees (with their consent);
- b) Documenting injuries and assessing consistency with alleged abuse;

- c) Evaluating the adequacy and availability of healthcare services in the facility; and
 - d) Assisting in verifying medical records and detention health protocols.
- 5.13 Support and administrative staff facilitate logistics, documentation, and communication, and have the following responsibilities:
- a) Organising visits and coordinating with authorities;
 - b) Maintaining records and assisting with report preparation; and
 - c) Handling translation, data entry, and scheduling.

6. TYPES AND NUMBER OF VISITS

- 6.1 In visiting places of deprivation of liberty, the NPM may engage in four types of visits:
- a) Regular visits: Pre-planned visits conducted periodically to monitor general conditions of detention.
 - b) Ad-hoc visits: Unannounced visits based on patterns of complaints or emerging issues.
 - c) Semi-scheduled visits: Visits with short notice to the place of deprivation of liberty to balance spontaneity and logistical planning.
 - d) Thematic visits across clusters of institutions (e.g. investigating the use of solitary confinement across multiple facilities; procedures in high-security prisons and immigration detention facilities; treatment of women detainees).
- 6.2 When scheduling visits, the Focal Director in charge of the NPM should ensure that a mix of the above types of visits are included in the schedule of visits during each quarter. In determining which type of visit to conduct in relation to a place of deprivation of liberty, the following factors may be considered:
- a) Objectives of the visit;
 - b) Nature of the facility in terms of size, number of detainees, type of facility (i.e., whether high security, open prison etc.);
 - c) Nature of previous interaction or rapport with the staff of the facility, particularly whether they have been supportive and cooperative;
 - d) Previous complaints about the place of deprivation of liberty, and how such information relates to the type of visit to be conducted;
 - e) Risk of detainees being removed, hidden, or transferred in response to notification of a

visit.

6.3 NPM visits may be conducted either through the Head Office, through the regional offices or sub-offices, or jointly through the Head Office and relevant regional office or sub-office.

6.4 Head Office visits

- a) A minimum of four (4) visits per month must be conducted by the NPM team at the Head Office.
- b) These may include:
 - Regular visits;
 - Semi-scheduled visits; and
 - Thematic visits.

6.5 Additional ad hoc visits may be carried out in response to emergency issues as needed.

6.6 Regional and sub-office visits

- a) Each regional office or sub-office is required to conduct at least one (1) visit per month.
- b) These visits may be:
 - Regular visits;
 - Semi-scheduled visits; and
 - Thematic visits.

7. SCHEDULING VISITS

7.1 The following factors shall be taken into consideration when setting priorities for preparing a schedule for visits:

- a) The size of the place of deprivation of liberty.
- b) Nature of facility (high security etc.).
- c) Number of detainees held in detention.
- d) Number and nature of vulnerable detainees held in detention.
- e) Past reports or complaints about detention conditions.
- f) Duration since previous visit.

7.2 Regular visits under the direct supervision of the Focal Director of the NPM

- a) The Focal Director of the NPM holds the authority to initiate visits to any place of deprivation of liberty across Sri Lanka.
- b) Such visits may be carried out either exclusively through the NPM staff members at the Head Office or with the participation of relevant officers of a regional office or sub-office.

7.3 Regular NPM visits by regional offices and sub-offices

- a) The Focal Director of the NPM should in consultation with Regional Coordinators prepare and circulate a monthly schedule for NPM visits to all regional offices and sub-offices.
- b) All Regional Coordinators are responsible for conducting the assigned visits and should function as the Team Leaders (i.e., the officer-in-charge of the NPM visit) on each NPM visit.
- c) When conducting an NPM visit, the relevant Regional Coordinator should take note of and clearly communicate to their staff members and the staff members of the place of deprivation of liberty the fact that the visit is an NPM visit and not a regular visit undertaken under the HRCSL's protection mandate. Therefore, the Regional Coordinator should not mix the two types of visits and should ensure that all aspects of this SOP are duly followed in a methodical manner during an NPM visit.

7.4 Joint visits with regional or sub-offices

- a) Based on necessity, the Focal Director of the NPM may schedule joint visits to places of deprivation of liberty with the participation of NPM staff from the HRCSL Head Office, and staff from a regional office or sub-office.
- b) The Focal Director of the NPM should, in consultation with the relevant Regional Coordinators, schedule joint visits.
- c) Regional Coordinators should support and cooperate with these joint visits by providing the required staff.

7.5 Joint Visits with external stakeholders

- a) Based on necessity, and where the Board of Commissioners of the HRCSL authorise so, the Focal Director of the NPM may arrange joint visits to places of deprivation of liberty with external stakeholders. These visits may involve the participation of NPM staff from the HRCSL Head Office along with representatives from external stakeholders, such as the National Child Protection Authority, the Elders' Secretariat, or any other relevant institutions.
- b) Such joint visits should be conducted as semi-scheduled visits.

8. PLANNING VISITS

- 8.1 The NPM team should set out the objectives of each visit, i.e., the purpose of the visit should be determined in terms of whether it is a general monitoring visit or a visit with a specific thematic focus (e.g., healthcare, juveniles, legal aid access), while bearing in mind the overall strategy of the NPM.
- 8.2 Background information including past visit reports, complaints made with respect to the place of deprivation of liberty, media reports, and relevant laws and international standards (e.g., OPCAT, the Mandela Rules) should be reviewed prior to the visit.
- 8.3 The visiting team should be multidisciplinary, i.e., legal experts, psychologists (if available), medical professionals (if available), and specialists on gender, child rights, or disabilities as required. In selecting the visiting team, the rapport or relationship of specific NPM staff with officers of the relevant places of deprivation of liberty should be considered. For example, consider whether a staff member of a regional office has developed an adversarial or confrontational relationship with the officers of the place of deprivation of liberty.
- 8.4 Places of deprivation of liberty where the risk of torture or other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment is high should be identified based on recent data and past findings. When visiting such a high-risk place of deprivation of liberty, special attention should be paid to risks of reprisals with respect to detainees.
- 8.5 A visit plan (**Standard Form 2**) should be formulated prior to the visit and such plan should include visit objectives, timelines, logistical needs, and focus areas.
- 8.6 A team briefing should be convened by the Focal Director of the NPM or the Regional Coordinator, as the case may be, prior to a visit. Specific legal contexts, institutional information, and roles and responsibilities should be discussed at this team briefing.

9. CONDUCTING VISITS

- 9.1 The duration of an NPM visit to a particular place of deprivation of liberty is usually expected to be approximately four hours, but may vary depending on the nature of the facility.
- 9.2 Entry and introduction
 - a) The visiting team should arrive together.
 - b) Upon arrival at the place of deprivation of liberty, the senior-most officer in the NPM

visiting team (i.e., the Team Leader of the NPM visit) should present their official identity card, which must clearly indicate the authority delegated under section 24 of the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka Act to conduct visits to places of deprivation of liberty. The Team Leader should introduce the team as representatives of the NPM, state the purpose of the visit, and request to speak with the officer-in-charge of the facility.

- c) When meeting the officer-in-charge, the Team leader should explain the NPM's mandate. This will include special emphasis on its preventive mandate, the objectives of the visit and its anticipated duration, the working methods used, in particular the absolute need to talk in private with the persons deprived of their liberty and, if possible, the members of staff looking after them. They should also explain how information collected will be used, request any information required, such as whether there are any detainees with vulnerabilities or whether there have been any notable incidents since the last visit, and should ask their opinion on the conditions of detention and any proposals for improvement. The Team Leader should assert access rights respectfully, where required, and should schedule a meeting with the officer-in-charge at the end of the visit.
- d) In the event the NPM visiting team is being denied access to the place of deprivation of liberty, the Team Leader should calmly explain the mandate of the NPM and its powers to inspect places of deprivation of liberty under sections 11(d) of the HRCSL Act and the OPCAT to the officer-in-charge of the place of deprivation of liberty. They should ask to speak to a more senior officer immediately. The Team Leader should point out, politely and calmly, that refusal to grant access is a very serious matter which will be taken up with the appropriate senior officer at the relevant institution, and thereafter the subject minister. If access is still denied, the Team Leader should immediately inform the Focal Director of the NPM who will then promptly inform the commissioner in charge of the NPM for further action. Then, the Focal Director may explain to the officer-in-charge of the place of deprivation of liberty the necessity of NPM interventions, the NPM's mandate, and the consequences of non-cooperation. This serves as the final attempt at resolving the issue. Following this discussion, the Focal Director will inform the NPM team of the decision, either to proceed with the visit or to return to the office.

9.3 Observations

- a) The NPM visiting team should assess the environment of the place of deprivation of liberty including its layout, atmosphere, cleanliness, lighting, ventilation, sanitary facilities, capacity, size and safety. See **Standard Form 3** for a complete checklist of issues to assess during a visit. The NPM team should ensure to visit the place where detainees are received and processed, isolation and disciplinary areas, sanitary facilities, and living quarters. The visiting team may also ask the detainees what they consider to be the worst place within the facility and inspect it.
- b) The NPM visiting team should also pay attention to:
 - Material conditions such as food, provision of water, personal hygiene, clothing,

- and bedding;
 - The regime and activities including time allowed outside a cell and the provision of activities such as work, training, or education and access to the outside world including contact with family or religious representatives;
 - Health services, including the availability of medical services, any prevalent medical conditions, and access to medication;
 - Protection measures such as access to complaint mechanisms, disciplinary procedures, legal assistance, separation of prisoners;
 - Treatment such as allegations of torture and ill-treatment, use of force, use of restraints, overcrowding, use of isolation or segregation;
 - Personnel, including any induction/ orientation training they receive, how they behave, and how they treat detainees; and
 - The access to fundamental safeguards such as access to a lawyer.
- c) During the visit, the NPM team should note any behaviour among detainees that signal fear or trauma.

9.4 Interviews with detainees

- a) The NPM visiting team should conduct private, confidential interviews with detainees in a language understood by the detainees. See **Standard Form 4** for a list of questions that may be asked from a detainee.
- b) When selecting detainees for interviews, the NPM team should consider gender, age, ethnicity, disability status and health profiles, and the detainees' willingness to participate.
- c) When HRCSL officers engage in personal conversations with inmates, they should ensure appropriate security measures are in place.

9.5 Documentation review

- a) The NPM team should thoroughly examine arrest and detention logs, health files, disciplinary records, and complaints registers, and registers of material supplies. The team should also examine any registers of events or incidents relating to the use of force. The team should also examine any internal rules, staff lists, or schedules.
- b) The documentation should be checked for accuracy, completeness, and compliance with relevant legal standards.

9.6 Engaging staff

- a) The NPM visiting team should hold a discussion with the officer-in-charge of the place of deprivation of liberty at which the team should inquire about training, current procedures, staffing, and complaints mechanisms.

- b) The team should also assess staff attitudes toward detainees and overall working conditions as specified in the visit checklist.
- c) Following the discussion, if any immediate remedial measures are required, the NPM team should convey its initial findings and recommendations verbally with an assurance that a more comprehensive visit report with observations and recommendations would be transmitted to the officer-in-charge on a subsequent date.

9.7 Recording evidence

- a) Any decision to take photographs, videos, or audio recordings during an NPM visit shall be made by the Team Leader who is in charge of the NPM visit.
- b) Prior to photographing or recording any person within a place of deprivation of liberty, the Team Leader should obtain informed consent from the person who is being photographed or recorded.
- c) Only officially designated cameras or voice recorders issued by the HRCSL should be used for capturing photographs, videos, or voice recordings during NPM visits.
- d) All recorded materials (photographs, videos, or voice recordings) must be securely stored on a designated computer or hard drive, which is under the custody of the Focal Director of the NPM or the relevant Regional Coordinator.

9.8 Final meeting

The visit should formally end with a meeting with the officer-in-charge of the place of deprivation of liberty. At this meeting, a brief summary of the visit and issues identified may be given. Timelines for the visit report may also be agreed upon.

10. RESPONSIBILITIES OF SUPPORT STAFF

- 10.1 Support staff, including drivers, should not accompany NPM visiting teams inside any place of deprivation of liberty or engage the staff or detainees of any such place.
- 10.2 Staff members who are not NPM team members should not be included on NPM visits to places of deprivation of liberty in order to maintain the independence, confidentiality, and integrity of the visiting process.
- 10.3 No staff member who is not part of the NPM visiting team should initiate or engage in any prior communication with any staff of a place of deprivation of liberty regarding a planned visit.

11. POST-VISIT MEASURES

- 11.1 Following a visit to a place of deprivation of liberty, an internal debriefing should be held among the NPM staff including the NPM visiting team to discuss findings and observations. Meetings should be held no later than five (5) working days after a visit and may be held through remote audio-visual means when necessary. Where the visiting team comprised officers from regional offices or sub-offices of the HRCSL, the relevant officers should be included in the internal debriefing. Where the visit was conducted exclusively by officers from regional offices or sub-offices, an NPM staff member based at the HRCSL Head Office should also be invited to the debriefing to ensure key learning is captured within the NPM.
- 11.2 In the event of the need for urgent intervention at a place of deprivation of liberty, the relevant Team Leader in charge of a NPM visit must submit an interim visit report via fax or email within five (5) working days of the visit.
- 11.3 A visit report should be prepared by a designated NPM staff member at the HRCSL Head Office, or the regional office or sub-office, as the case may be, after each visit and subsequent to the internal debriefing, and submitted to the Focal Director of the NPM within two (2) weeks of the visit. A copy of the report should be forwarded to the Board of Commissioners of the HRCSL. The structure of the report (see **Standard Form 5**) should include the following components:
- a) Background and objectives, including information about the visiting team, the date of the visit, and any specific focus of the visit;
 - b) Key information on the place of deprivation of liberty, such as name, type, location, size, and occupancy rate;
 - c) Key findings on conditions of detention, treatment of detainees, and procedural compliance;
 - d) Good practices identified during the visit;
 - e) Legal analysis and references;
 - f) Recommendations for improvement, including in training; and
 - g) Photographs may be used to substantiate written findings where confidentiality will not be breached.
- 11.4 Testimonies of detainees should be kept confidential and not included in any visit reports to ensure that the personal data of detainees is safeguarded, and detainees are protected from reprisals. Notes from visits should anonymise sensitive data and all data should be stored in a manner that ensures confidentiality and personal data protection.
- 11.5 Following the submission of a visit report, the Focal Director of the NPM should review the report. Where there are gaps in information or analysis in a visit report, the Focal Director should recommend appropriate revisions to the report.

- 11.6 A summary of a finalised visit report should be forwarded to the relevant officer-in-charge of the place of deprivation with a cover letter (see **Standard Form 6**) requiring the said officer to implement the recommendations included in the said report.
- 11.7 The recommendations in the final visit report should also be forwarded to the Head of the Institution of the place of deprivation of liberty, (where applicable) the Commissioner General of Prisons, and the subject minister (see **Standard Form 7**).
- 11.8 Once the Recommendations are forwarded to the Head of the Institution of a place of deprivation of liberty, the Focal Director of the NPM or the relevant Regional Coordinator, as the case may be, should ensure that follow-up measures are appropriately undertaken. Such measures may include the following:
- a) Monitoring implementation of recommendations through follow up visits and periodic reviews; and
 - b) Maintaining frequent communication with the relevant officer-in-charge of the place of deprivation of liberty.

12. PROGRESS REVIEW

- 12.1 The Focal Director of the NPM should convene quarterly coordination meetings with Regional Coordinators to assess the progress with respect to visits, report submissions, and monitoring of recommendations. All Regional Coordinators and NPM staff members are required to attend these quarterly coordination meetings.
- 12.2 The Focal Director of the NPM should prepare and submit a monthly progress report on NPM activities to the Board of Commissioners of the HRCSL.
- 12.3 The NPM annual reports, final visit reports, statistics, recommendations, and interventions should be regularly published on the NPM section of the HRCSL website.
- 12.4 A meeting between the Focal Director and Regional Coordinators should be conducted every three months.

13. COMMUNICATION TO OTHER DIVISIONS

- 13.1 Communications with respect to incidents of torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.
- a) Where the NPM visiting team observes a possible incident of torture or such incident is reported to them during a visit, the Team Leader of the NPM visiting team should promptly report the matter to the Focal Director of the NPM. The notification should be initially verbal (i.e., a telephone call) and, thereafter, included in a written communication within 24 hours of the visit.

- b) The Focal Director of the NPM should, in consultation with the Team Leader who made the observations, prepare a report summarising the basic facts and observations related to the incident. This report should include:
 - The date of the visit;
 - The location of the incident;
 - The identity (if known) of the alleged victim;
 - The name, address, age, gender and other identity characteristics of the alleged victim;
 - A brief description of the nature of the alleged incident of torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; and
 - Other relevant observations or available evidence.
- c) This report should then be formally transmitted to the Director of the Inquiries & Investigations Division for appropriate action.
- d) Upon receiving the report, the Director of the Inquiries & Investigations Division should initiate a formal investigation into the incident.
- e) Following the completion of the investigation and any subsequent inquiry, the Director of the Inquiries & Investigations Division should, in addition to following the usual procedure set out under the HRCSL's Standard Operating Procedure on Complaints, communicate the findings and recommendations (if any) to the Focal Director of the NPM.
- f) Where a violation of article 11 of the Sri Lankan Constitution is found and a recommendation issued, the Focal Director of the NPM may determine whether further recommendations should be forwarded to the officer-in-charge of the relevant place of deprivation of liberty to ensure the prevention of similar incidents in the future.

13.2 Communications with respect to training needs

- a) During NPM visits, the visiting team may observe specific gaps in knowledge, attitudes, or practices related to human rights standards among officials or detainees at places of deprivation of liberty. In such instances, the NPM team should identify the need for targeted awareness-raising or educational programmes to address these gaps.
- b) Where such training needs are identified, the Team Leader in charge of the relevant visit should ensure that the visit report specifically recommends that appropriate training should be conducted for the officers or detainees of the place of deprivation of liberty. The relevant details in the report should include:
 - A brief description of the observed issues or knowledge gaps;
 - The specific area or topic for which awareness or education is needed (e.g., standards for detention, the legal prohibition of torture, rights of persons deprived of liberty); and
 - The target group (e.g., prison staff, detainees, administrative officers).

- c) Upon reviewing any recommendation on training, the Focal Director of the NPM should relay the recommendation in writing to the Director of the Education & Special Programmes Division of the HRCSL for further action. Such recommendation in writing should include the background and context of the need, the specific objectives of the proposed programme, and any suggested focus areas or approaches, if applicable.
- d) All such recommendations for training forwarded by the Focal Director of the NPM should be clearly reflected in the quarterly progress reports submitted to the Board of Commissioners of the HRCSL.
- e) The Director of the Education & Special Programmes Division of the HRCSL should evaluate any recommendation for training and include appropriate training programmes for the relevant places of deprivation of liberty in the Division's training schedule. Specific attention should be paid to the context and objectives of the training, ensuring the participation of relevant stakeholders.
- f) After the conclusion of the training programme, the Director of the Education & Special Programmes Division should provide a summary report of the programme to the Board of Commissioners and Focal Director of the NPM highlighting key outcomes, challenges, and any recommendations for follow-up.
- g) The Focal Director of the NPM is responsible for ensuring any learning and follow up measures arising from training programmes are integrated into the approaches adopted by the NPM with respect to monitoring places of deprivation of liberty.

13.3 Communication with the International Affairs Division of the HRCSL

- a) The NPM team should collaborate closely with the International Affairs Division (IAD) to ensure effective engagement with international human rights mechanisms, partners, and networks.
- b) Such collaboration aims to facilitate the strengthening of the NPM's mandate and enhances its operational capacity through international cooperation, knowledge exchange, and resource mobilisation.
- c) Collaboration between the NPM team and the IAD may include:
 - Quarterly coordination meetings to review international engagements and upcoming opportunities;
 - Joint preparation of documentation and reports to be shared with international counterparts; and
 - The establishment of a shared repository of international communications and resources relevant to the NPM mandate.

13.4 International Communications on NPM Reports (other than SPT)

- a) While the Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture (SPT) is the primary international body engaged with NPM activities, the NPM may also communicate with other international and regional entities concerning issues relevant to the prevention of torture and ill-treatment.
- b) Such other entities may include:
 - The United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR);
 - The United Nations Committee Against Torture (CAT);
 - The Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions (APF);
 - The Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI); and
 - Other international or regional mechanisms, organisations, and donors engaged in preventive detention monitoring and human rights protection.
- c) Such communications should be channeled through the International Affairs Division, ensuring consistency with the HRCSL's official communications policy, alignment with Sri Lanka's international reporting obligations, and the protection of sensitive or confidential data related to visits and findings.

13.5 Seeking International Support for NPM Work

- a) The IAD may facilitate coordination with international development partners and donor agencies to obtain technical and financial support for strengthening the NPM's work.
- b) This support may include:
 - Assistance in developing monitoring tools, data systems, and analytical frameworks;
 - Support for thematic studies, research, and policy development on issues related to detention and torture prevention; and
 - Collaboration in awareness-raising and advocacy initiatives to promote national compliance with international human rights standards.
- c) All proposals and communications seeking such support shall be routed through the IAD to ensure institutional coherence and compliance with HRCSL's administrative and financial procedures.

13.6 International Training and Capacity Building

- a) The IAD, in coordination with the NPM team, plays a vital role in identifying and facilitating international training and capacity-building opportunities for NPM staff and associated professionals.
- b) These initiatives may include:
 - Participation in workshops, seminars, and study visits organised by the SPT, OHCHR, APF, GANHRI, or other relevant bodies;
 - Engagement in international exchange programs for sharing best practices on

- preventive monitoring, reporting methodologies, and standards of treatment of persons deprived of liberty; and
- Coordination of expert visits, technical missions, or virtual learning programs aimed at strengthening the professional competence of NPM members.
- c) Participation in such programmes contributes to institutional learning, fosters cross-border collaboration, and ensures that the NPM operates in line with international best practices and standards.

13.7 Communication with the Finance & Administration Division

- a) The NPM team should maintain regular and coordinated communication with the Finance & Administration Division to ensure the smooth and effective implementation of its activities.
- b) The key areas of communication and collaboration include the following:
- **Logistical Arrangements and Support**
 - Coordinating logistical arrangements for NPM visits, including transport, accommodation, and other travel-related requirements;
 - Ensuring timely arrangements for lodging facilities during multi-day visits to places of deprivation of liberty; and
 - Providing necessary administrative support to facilitate visit schedules and official correspondence.
 - **Financial Management and Support**
 - Allocating and disbursing funds for NPM activities, including visits, consultations, workshops, and other related events;
 - Processing and reimbursing expenses incurred during NPM field visits and meetings; and
 - Assisting in the preparation of budget estimates and maintaining proper financial records for NPM operations.
 - **Human Resource Support**
 - Facilitating the provision of human resources required for NPM activities, including the recruitment or placement of interns, trainees, and other temporary staff; and
 - Supporting administrative processes related to human resource management for NPM work.
 - **Provision of Supportive Services and Equipment**
 - Supplying required office materials such as stationery, digital devices (e.g., tablets, cameras, recorders), and other logistical tools essential for documentation and reporting during NPM activities; and
 - Ensuring maintenance and availability of necessary equipment to support the day-to-day functioning of the NPM unit.

- Coordination and Communication
 - Maintaining a continuous line of communication between the NPM and the Finance & Administration Division to ensure timely resolution of administrative or financial issues; and
 - Facilitating internal reporting, accountability, and compliance with HRCSL's policies.

14. MAINTAINING DATA AND RECORDS

- 14.1 The NPM team under the guidance of the Focal Director of the NPM should collate all checklists recorded during visits and establish a system for maintaining data and records of each visit to each place of deprivation of liberty.
- 14.2 A file for each place of deprivation of liberty should be maintained in which relevant checklists, visit reports, and training recommendations and reports are kept.

15. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

15.1 Places of deprivation of liberty

- b) A system of grading each place of deprivation of liberty based on the items in the checklist should be developed to quantify the status of such a place and monitor improvements over time. This should serve as an internal assessment by the NPM team to evaluate the conditions and overall situation of a specific place of deprivation of liberty.
- c) An overall analysis of checklist grades should be included in the NPM's Annual Report.
- d) The Focal Director of the NPM should assign NPM staff the role of qualitatively monitoring the implementation of past recommendations and quantitatively monitoring the improvement in the checklist grades.

15.2 Indicators and Feedback

- a) The Board of Commissioners of the HRCSL in consultation with the Focal Director of the NPM should establish clear and measurable indicators to assess the effectiveness of the NPM mechanism. Such indicators should be based on the United Nations Subcommittee on the Prevention of Torture Analytical Assessment Tool for National Preventive Mechanisms (**Standard Form 7**).
- b) A systematic process should be developed to gather regular feedback from key stakeholders, including monitored places of deprivation of liberty, state institutions, civil society organisations, and persons deprived of liberty. Such feedback should be used for the following purposes:
 - Evaluating the relevance and impact of NPM activities;

- Identifying challenges and areas for improvement; and
- Adjusting strategies and methods accordingly.

16. ANNUAL REPORTS

- 16.1 The Focal Director of the NPM should ensure that an Annual Report is prepared and submitted to the Board of Commissioners of the HRCSL each annum.
- 16.2 The Annual Report should contain the following elements:
- a) A summary of general findings from NPM visits;
 - b) Statistics on NPM visits undertaken during the year;
 - c) Examples of good practices and persistent challenges;
 - d) An analysis of checklist grades across places of deprivation of liberty;
 - e) Details of training programmes conducted for staff of places of deprivation of liberty and detainees; and
 - f) A list of general recommendations aimed at systemic reform.
- 16.3 The Board of Commissioners of the HRCSL should ensure that the Annual Report of the NPM should be submitted to the Sub-Committee of Prevention of Torture (SPT) and published on the official website of the HRCSL.

17. COMMUNICATION WITH THE SPT

The NPM should maintain regular and cooperative communication with the SPT under OPCAT. Such communication strengthens the NPM's operational and institutional capacity in fulfilling its mandate to prevent torture and ill-treatment in all places of deprivation of liberty.

18. INTERVENTIONS

- 18.1 Urgent interventions during visits: Immediate action should be taken during visits to places of deprivation of liberty to address urgent human rights concerns.
- 18.2 Official correspondence following visits: Letters should be sent to the Head of Institutions regarding conditions of detention and specific human rights issues identified during visits.
- 18.3 Consultation meetings: Heads of institutions and relevant line ministries should be engaged to discuss issues identified and to find solutions.

- 18.4 Inter-agency coordination: Meetings with relevant authorities should be called to address systemic problems and ensure collective action.
- 18.5 Recommendations: Formal recommendations should be sent to relevant authorities to improve the treatment and conditions of persons deprived of liberty.
- 18.6 Reporting to the SPT: Findings and reports should be submitted to the SPT as part of the HRCSL's international obligations and cooperation.
- 18.7 Evaluation meetings: Internal meetings should be held to review visit outcomes, assess the effectiveness of interventions, and plan follow-ups.
- 18.8 National consultations: Consultations with stakeholders should be held at the national level to discuss findings, challenges, and policy improvements.
- 18.9 Publication of reports and statistics: Situation reports and statistical data should be regularly published on the HRCSL website to ensure transparency and public awareness.



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இலங்கை மனித உரிமைகள் ஆணைக்குழு
Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka

Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka (HRCSL)

National Preventive Mechanism (NPM)

Consent Declaration Form

About the National Preventive Mechanism (NPM):

The Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka (HRCSL) is designated as Sri Lanka's National Preventive Mechanism (NPM) under the Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture (OPCAT). The NPM's mandate is to conduct regular, independent visits to all places of deprivation of liberty to prevent torture and other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment.

Informed Consent Form for Detainees

Purpose of the Visit:

The Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka (HRCSL), designated as the National Preventive Mechanism (NPM), conducts regular visits to places of detention to prevent torture, ill-treatment, and human rights violations. During this visit, NPM officers may interview detainees and observe conditions of detention.

1. Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this interview is entirely voluntary. You have the right to refuse to speak with the visiting officers or to stop the interview at any time without giving a reason. Your decision will not affect your treatment, privileges, or legal situation in any way.

2. Purpose of the Interview

The purpose of this interview is to understand your experiences and the general situation in this facility in order to help improve conditions and protect the rights of detainees.

3. Confidentiality

All information you provide will be kept strictly confidential. Your name or personal details will not be shared with authorities or included in reports without your consent. The NPM may use the information in general findings or reports, but your identity will be protected.

4. Recording, Notes, and Photographs

You may choose whether or not to allow photographs, audio, or video recordings. You may also decline to be recorded or photographed without affecting your participation in the interview. Please indicate your preference below.

5. Contact Information

If you wish to contact the Human Rights Commission later regarding this visit, you may do so through:

Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka

No. 14, R. A. De Mel Mawatha, Colombo 04

Tel: 0112 505595 | Email: npm@hrsl.lk | Website: www.hrsl.lk

Consent Declaration

I, _____ (full name),
currently held at _____ (name of facility),
have been informed of the purpose of the NPM visit and the voluntary nature of my participation.
I have understood that I may refuse to participate or stop at any time. I consent as follows:

Item	Yes	No
I agree to participate in an interview with NPM officers.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I agree to share information voluntarily.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I agree to be photographed.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I agree to be audio recorded.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I agree to be video recorded.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Signature or Thumbprint of Detainee: _____

Date: _____ Time: _____

Name and Signature of NPM Officer Obtaining Consent: _____

Designation: _____ Date: _____

Interpreter (if applicable):

Name: _____ Signature: _____

Note: If the detainee is unable to sign or provide a thumbprint due to disability, illiteracy, or other valid reason, this should be noted by the NPM officer, and consent should be verbally confirmed and witnessed.



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இலங்கை மனித உரிமைகள் ஆணைக்குழு
Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka

HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION OF SRI LANKA (HRCSL)

NATIONAL PREVENTIVE MECHANISM (NPM) VISIT PLAN – STANDARD FORM 2

1. Basic Information

Facility Name:	
Type of Facility:	(e.g., Prison / Police Station / Detention Centre / Child Home / Elderly Home)
Location:	
Province / District:	
Date(s) of Visit:	
Duration of Visit:	

Visit Category: General Monitoring Visit Thematic Visit (Specify Theme:
_____)

2. Visit Objectives

- To monitor the treatment and living conditions of persons deprived of liberty.
- To assess compliance with international and national human rights standards (e.g., OPCAT, Mandela Rules).
- To identify potential risks of torture or ill-treatment.
- (Add specific thematic objectives if applicable — e.g., healthcare services, access to legal aid, situation of juveniles, gender-based concerns, etc.)

3. Background Information Review

Summarize key preparatory steps and reviewed materials:

- Past visit reports: _____
- Complaints received regarding this facility: _____
- Media reports or public information: _____
- Relevant laws and standards reviewed:
 - Domestic: _____
 - International: (e.g., OPCAT, Mandela Rules, Bangkok Rules, etc.)

4. Composition of the Visiting Team

Name	Designation / Expertise	Institution / Unit	Assigned Role

(Include all members and specify gender balance where possible.)

5. Risk Assessment and Focus Areas

Identified Risks / Concerns	Proposed Mitigation Measures
Risk of torture or ill-treatment	Ensure confidential interviews, avoid identification of informants
Risk of reprisals against detainees	Avoid naming detainees in reports, follow-up monitoring

Focus Areas for this Visit:

- Admission procedures
 Disciplinary measures
 Healthcare
 Food and sanitation
 Contact with the outside world
 Legal safeguards
 Staff conduct
 Vulnerable groups
(children, women, persons with disabilities)

6. Logistics and Coordination

Transportation arrangements	
Required equipment (ID cards, forms, camera, recorders, stationery, etc.)	
Communication with facility management	
Escort / Security clearance (if applicable)	
Accommodation (if overnight visit)	

7. Pre-Visit Team Briefing Summary

Date of Briefing:	
Convened by:	Focal Director – NPM / Regional Coordinator

Key Points Discussed:

- Legal and institutional background of the facility
- Roles and responsibilities of team members

- Special risk factors and precautions
- Ethical considerations (confidentiality, informed consent)

8. Approval

Prepared by:	_____	Date:	_____
Approved by (Focal Director – NPM / Regional Coordinator):	_____	Signature:	_____

Attachments (if applicable):

- Past Visit Reports
 Complaints Summary
 Thematic Guidelines
 Map / Layout of Facility
 Risk Assessment Matrix



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இலங்கை மனித உரிமைகள் ஆணைக்குழு
Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka

Grading Check List for Detention Centres

NPM Detention Centre Monitoring & Compliance Instrument

National Preventive Mechanism (NPM) – Sri Lanka

Compliance Standards: Mandela Rules (UN) | Bangkok Rules | Istanbul Protocol | HRCSL Act No. 21 of 1996

1. Institutional Overview

Facility Name: _____ **Date of Visit:** _____

Superintendent: _____ **Lead Monitor:** _____

Total Inmates: _____ **Visit Type:** [] Unannounced [] Announced

Time of Entry: _____ **Time of Exit:** _____

2. Scoring & Grading Rubric

Assign a score of **0 to 4** for each criteria:

- **4 (Excellent):** Proactive compliance; full adherence to international and local law.
- **3 (Good):** Substantial compliance; minor administrative gaps only.
- **2 (Satisfactory):** Basic legal requirements met; needs improvement in "soft" safeguards.
- **1 (Poor):** Frequent violations of procedure; lack of basic amenities or documentation.
- **0 (Critical):** Evidence of torture, illegal detention, or active obstruction of the NPM.

3. Compliance Matrix

Category A: Environment & Material Conditions (Weight: 25%)

Focus: Mandela Rules on Accommodation, Food, and Hygiene.

| A1 | **Infrastructure:** Layout is safe, clean, and ventilation/lighting is adequate ().

| A2 | **Basic Needs:** 24/7 access to clean toilets, safe drinking water, and quality meals ().

| A3 | **Dignity:** Adequate bedding provided; personal hygiene/clothing is sufficient ().

| A4 | **Capacity:** No evidence of extreme overcrowding; living quarters are humane ().

| S1 | **Subtotal (Sum of Scores / 16) x 100 | _____%**

Category B: Physical Integrity & Health (Weight: 30%)

Focus: Istanbul Protocol (IP) and Medical Safeguards.

| B1 | **Zero Torture:** No evidence of ill-treatment; inmate behavior shows no fear/trauma ().

| B2 | **Medical Care:** Doctors/medication available; exams conducted in private ().

| B3 | **Use of Force:** Force and restraints are documented, lawful, and supervised ().

| B4 | **Segregation:** Proper separation of women/children; isolation used appropriately ().

| B5 | **NPM Access:** Team allowed to speak to inmates in private and confidentiality ().

| S2 | **Subtotal (Sum of Scores / 20) x 100 | _____%**

Category C: Regime, Rights & Safeguards (Weight: 25%)

Focus: Access to the outside world and legal protection.

| C1 | **Legal Access:** Inmates have private access to lawyers and notification of family ().

| C2 | **Daily Regime:** Adequate time outside cells; access to work/training/education ().

| C3 | **Complaints:** Functioning and confidential grievance mechanisms are accessible ().

| C4 | **Due Process:** Fair disciplinary procedures; informed of facility rules and rights ().

| S3 | **Subtotal (Sum of Scores / 16) x 100 | _____%**

Category D: Staff Professionalism & Facilities (Weight: 20%)

Focus: Personnel Conduct and Workplace Environment.

| D1 | **Personnel Conduct:** Staff treat inmates respectfully and follow HR standards ().

| D2 | **Registry Accuracy:** All registers, medical logs, and warrants are up-to-date ().

| D3 | **Staff Welfare:** Adequate office space, rest areas, and sanitary facilities for staff ().

| D4 | **Training:** Staff have received induction/orientation on HRCSL guidelines ().

| S4 | **Subtotal (Sum of Scores / 16) x 100** | _____ %

4. Final Performance Calculation

Total Performance Index (TPI) Formula:

(Sum of % of 1,2,3, &4 / 4 | _____

TPI Range	Compliance Grade	Status	Action Protocol
90% - 100%	A	Model Centre	Routine monitoring.
75% - 89%	B	Satisfactory	Follow-up on minor gaps.
50% - 74%	C	At Risk	Mandatory HR training; 3-mo follow-up.
Below 50%	F	Non-Compliant	Immediate referral to HRCSL.

5. Monitor's Final Comments & Recommendations:

(Include immediate directives for the Superintendent or HRCSL Secretary)

Lead Monitor Signature: _____ **Date:** _____



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Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka

Grading Checklist for Police Station Monitoring

National Preventive Mechanism (NPM) – Sri Lanka

Compliance Standards: Istanbul Protocol (2022) | APT Manual | HRCSL Act No. 21 of 1996

1. Institutional Overview

Station Name: _____ **Date of Visit:** _____

OIC Name: _____ **Lead Monitor:** _____

Total Detainees: _____ **Visit Type:** [] Unannounced [] Announced

Time of Entry: _____ **Time of Exit:** _____

2. Scoring & Grading Rubric

Assign a score of 0 to 4 for each criteria:

- **4 (Excellent):** Proactive compliance; full adherence to international and local law.
- **3 (Good):** Substantial compliance; minor administrative gaps only.
- **2 (Satisfactory):** Basic legal requirements met; needs improvement in "soft" safeguards.
- **1 (Poor):** Frequent violations of procedure; lack of basic amenities or documentation.
- **0 (Critical):** Evidence of torture, illegal detention, or active obstruction of the NPM.

3. Compliance Matrix

Category A: Access & Legal Safeguards (Weight: 30%)

Focus: APT Guidelines on transparency and prevention of incommunicado detention.

ID	Assessment Criteria	Score (0-4)	Observations / Evidence
A1	Immediate Access: Entry granted within 15 mins; mandate recognized by OIC.		
A2	Headcount Accuracy: Provided briefing matches the actual number of detainees.		
A3	Notification of Rights: Detainees informed of rights in a language they understand.		
A4	External Notice: Proof of notification to legal counsel and family in the IB.		
A5	Statutory Limits: Adherence to 24-hour limit for production before Magistrate.		
S1	Subtotal (Sum of Scores / 20) x 100	_____ %	

Category B: Physical & Psychological Integrity (Weight: 30%)

Focus: Istanbul Protocol (IP) Standards for Documentation of Torture.

ID	Assessment Criteria	Score (0-4)	Observations / Evidence
B1	Medical Privacy: JMO/Medical exams conducted in private (no police present).		
B2	JMO Referral: Systematic referral for all detainees alleging assault or ill-treatment.		

ID	Assessment Criteria	Score (0-4)	Observations / Evidence
B3	Coercion-Free Interrogation: Absence of "stress positions," threats, or intimidation.		
B4	Clinical Consistency: Police medical logs match the physical state of detainees.		
B5	NPM Confidentiality: Team allowed to speak to detainees in private/confidentiality.		
S2	Subtotal (Sum of Scores / 20) x 100	_____ %	

Category C: Detention Conditions & Dignity (Weight: 20%)

Focus: Human Dignity Standards & Mandela Rules.

ID	Assessment Criteria	Score (0-4)	Observations / Evidence
C1	Environment: Adequate natural/artificial light, ventilation, and cell cleanliness.		
C2	Sanitation: 24/7 access to clean toilets and safe drinking water.		
C3	Provisions: Three quality meals provided daily; bedding provided for overnight.		
C4	Protection: Separation of women/children; supervised by female officers.		
S3	Subtotal (Sum of Scores / 16) x 100	_____ %	

Category D: Professionalism & Administration (Weight: 20%)

Focus: Staff Conduct and Record Integrity.

ID	Assessment Criteria	Score (0-4)	Observations / Evidence
D1	Staff Knowledge: Awareness of HRCSL guidelines and NPM mandate.		
D2	Registry Accuracy: Information Book (IB) and Registers are up-to-date and signed.		
D3	Professional Attitude: Staff behavior is professional, not derogatory or abusive.		
D4	Integrity: No signs of bribery or "fees" for phone calls or basic rights.		
S4	Subtotal (Sum of Scores / 16) x 100	_____ %	

4. Final Performance Calculation

Total Performance Index (TPI) Formula:

(Sum of % of 1,2,3, &4 / 4 | _____

TPI Range	Compliance Grade	Status	Action Protocol
90% - 100%	A	Model Station	Routine monitoring.
75% - 89%	B	Satisfactory	Follow-up on minor gaps.

TPI Range	Compliance Grade	Status	Action Protocol
50% - 74%	C	At Risk	Mandatory HR training; 3-mo follow-up.
Below 50%	F	Non-Compliant	Immediate referral to Police HQ/HRCSL.

Monitor's Final Comments & Recommendations:

(Include immediate directives for the OIC or HRCSL Secretary)

Lead Monitor Signature: _____

Date: _____



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Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka

**HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION OF SRI LANKA
(HRCSL) NATIONAL PREVENTIVE
MECHANISM (NPM)**

Standard Detainee Interview Questions

A. General Information

1. Can you please tell us your name, age, and how long you have been here?
2. How were you brought here and under what circumstances?
3. Do you understand the reasons for your detention?

B. Material Conditions

4. How would you describe the quality and quantity of the food provided?
5. Do you have access to clean drinking water every day?
6. Are your clothing and bedding clean and adequate for the weather conditions?
7. Are personal hygiene facilities available and adequate for your needs?

C. Regime and Activities

8. How much time do you spend outside your cell each day?
9. What activities are available to you (work, training, education, recreation)?
10. Are you allowed contact with family members, lawyers, or religious representatives?
How often?

D. Health Services

11. Have you received medical attention when needed?
12. Are medicines available when prescribed?
13. Do you have any health concerns that have not been addressed?

E. Protection Measures

14. Are you aware of any complaint mechanisms available here?
15. Have you ever lodged a complaint? If so, what was the outcome?
16. Do you know the procedures for disciplinary action?
17. Are different categories of detainees kept separate when necessary (e.g., by age, gender, type of offence)?

F. Treatment

18. Have you experienced or witnessed any physical force, restraints, or ill-treatment here?
19. Have you been placed in isolation or segregation? If yes, for what reason and how long?
20. Do you feel safe in this facility? Why or why not?

G. Personnel

21. How do the staff treat you?
22. Have you observed any unfair or discriminatory behaviour by staff?
23. Do staff explain rules and rights to you when you arrive here?

H. Access to Fundamental Safeguards

24. Have you had access to a lawyer or legal aid since your detention?
25. Have you been informed of your legal rights?
26. Do you understand the legal process related to your detention?



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Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka

Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka (HRCSL)

National Preventive Mechanism (NPM)

Visit Report Format

1. Background and Objectives

- **Date of Visit:**
- **Place of Visit:**
- **Type of Visit:** (General / Thematic / Follow-up / Special)
- **Visiting Team Members:**
- **Specific Objectives of the Visit:**
(Include focus such as health services, treatment of detainees, regime conditions, etc.)

2. Key Information on the Place of Detention

- **Name of Facility:**
- **Type of Facility:** (e.g., prison, police station, immigration detention centre)
- **Location:**
- **Capacity:**
- **Occupancy Rate:**
- **Relevant Background Information:** (Brief context/history of the facility)

3. Key Findings

3.1 Conditions of Detention

- Physical environment: layout, cleanliness, lighting, ventilation, safety, overcrowding
- Material conditions: food, water provision, hygiene, clothing, bedding

3.2 Treatment of Detainees

- Respect for human dignity
- Access to family and legal representation
- Protection measures for vulnerable groups
- Complaints mechanisms

3.3 Procedural Compliance

- Adherence to relevant laws, regulations, and standards
- Admission and registration processes
- Access to legal aid
- Disciplinary procedures

4. Good Practices Identified

- *(Examples of positive practices or innovative measures at the facility)*

5. Legal Analysis and References

- Relevant national laws, regulations, and policies
- Relevant international human rights standards (e.g., OPCAT, UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners — Mandela Rules)
- Analysis of compliance or gaps

6. Recommendations

(Clear, actionable recommendations addressed to relevant authorities. Include timelines where possible)

- Example: Improve access to medical care within 3 months.
- Example: Provide training on detainee rights to all custodial staff.

7. Annexures

- Annex 1: Checklists used during the visit
- Annex 2: Interview summary (anonymised)
- Annex 3: Photographs (where confidentiality permits)
- Annex 4: Other relevant documents

Prepared by:

Name:

Designation:

Date:

Reviewed by:

Name:

Designation:

Date:

Submitted to:

Focal Director, NPM



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Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka

Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka (HRCSL)

National Preventive Mechanism (NPM)

Standard Format for forwarding Summary of the visit report to relevant heads of institutions

Ref No: [Insert Reference Number]

Date: [Insert Date]

To:

The [Title of Officer]

[Name of the Institution/Place of Deprivation of Liberty]

[Address]

Dear Sir/Madam,

Subject: Submission of Finalised Visit Report – [Name of Institution], [Date of Visit]

The Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka (HRCSL), in its capacity as the National Preventive Mechanism (NPM) under the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture (OPCAT), conducted a visit to the above-mentioned place of deprivation of liberty on [insert date(s)].

Please find enclosed herewith the finalised visit report containing the findings, observations, and recommendations arising from the said visit.

In accordance with Section 11.6 of the NPM Guidelines, you are hereby requested to take necessary steps to implement the recommendations contained in the report and to submit a written update to the HRCSL on the measures taken, within [insert period – e.g., four (4) weeks] from the date of receipt of this letter.

Should you require any clarification or technical assistance regarding the implementation process, please contact the NPM Secretariat at [insert contact details].

Thank you for your cooperation and continued support in strengthening the protection of the rights of persons deprived of liberty.

Yours faithfully,

.....

..... [Name]

[Title]

Focal Director – National Preventive Mechanism (NPM)
Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka

Copy to:

- Chairperson, Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka
- Board of Commissioners, HRCSL
- [Any other relevant officer/division]



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Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka

Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka (HRCSL)

National Preventive Mechanism (NPM)

Ref No: HRCSL/NPM/[Visit No]/[Year]

Date: [Insert Date]

To:

[Name of the Head of Institution]

[Designation]

[Name of the Institution]

[Address]

Subject: Forwarding of Observations and Recommendations – [Name of Institution/Place of Deprivation of Liberty]

Dear [Sir/Madam],

The National Preventive Mechanism (NPM) of the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka conducted a visit to [name of the institution/place of deprivation of liberty] on [date of visit] in accordance with its mandate under the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture (OPCAT) and the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka Act, No. 21 of 1996.

Please find attached herewith the observations and recommendations made by the NPM team following the said visit. You are kindly requested to take necessary action to address the identified issues and to implement the recommendations to ensure the protection and well-being of persons deprived of liberty.

We would appreciate receiving your written response within [insert time period, e.g., 30 days], outlining the actions taken or proposed to be taken in this regard.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Yours sincerely,

.....
[Name of Focal Director]
Director (National Preventive Mechanism)
Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka



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Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka

Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka

National Preventive Mechanism (NPM)

Analytical Self-Assessment Tool

(For Internal Institutional Evaluation)

Section 1: General Information

Item	Details
Name of Institution	
Date of Assessment	
Assessment Conducted by	
Assessment Period Covered	
Assessment Type	<input type="checkbox"/> Annual <input type="checkbox"/> Mid-term <input type="checkbox"/> Thematic <input type="checkbox"/> Ad hoc
Assessed by	<input type="checkbox"/> NPM Staff <input type="checkbox"/> External Expert <input type="checkbox"/> Joint

Section 2: Institutional Framework

Indicator	Key Questions	Rating (1–5)	Evidence / Comments
2.1 Legal Mandate	Is the NPM’s mandate consistent with OPCAT Articles 17–23?		
2.2 Independence	Are there safeguards ensuring institutional, functional, and financial independence?		
2.3 Organizational Structure	Does the NPM have a clear internal structure with defined roles/responsibilities?		
2.4 Cooperation Mechanisms	Are coordination and communication with HRCSL divisions and stakeholders effective?		

Section 3: Resources and Capacity

Indicator	Key Questions	Rating (1–5)	Evidence / Comments
3.1 Staffing	Is staffing adequate and gender-balanced?		
3.2 Expertise	Does the NPM have multidisciplinary expertise (medical, legal, social work, psychology)?		
3.3 Budget	Is there a dedicated and sufficient NPM budget?		
3.4 Training	Are staff regularly trained in monitoring, interviewing, and report writing?		

Section 4: Methodology and Operations

Indicator	Key Questions	Rating (1–5)	Evidence / Comments
4.1 Visit Planning	Are visits systematically planned based on risk and priority?		
4.2 Access	Does the NPM have full access to all places of deprivation of liberty?		
4.3 Interview Practices	Are interviews conducted confidentially and voluntarily?		
4.4 Observation & Documentation	Are observations recorded using standard forms and verified internally?		
4.5 Reporting	Are visit reports timely, evidence-based, and action-oriented?		

Section 5: Follow-up and Impact

Indicator	Key Questions	Rating (1–5)	Evidence / Comments
5.1 Recommendation Implementation	Are recommendations followed up with authorities?		
5.2 Dialogue with Authorities	Does the NPM maintain constructive dialogue with relevant ministries?		
5.3 Measurable Impact	Have NPM interventions led to improvements in detention conditions?		
5.4 Monitoring System	Is there a database or system to track follow-up actions?		

Section 6: Public Engagement and Visibility

Indicator	Key Questions	Rating (1–5)	Evidence / Comments
6.1 Public Reporting	Are NPM annual and thematic reports publicly available?		
6.2 Media & Outreach	Does the NPM engage with media to raise awareness?		
6.3 Civil Society Engagement	Does the NPM consult NGOs and community organizations?		

Section 7: Gender and Vulnerable Groups

Indicator	Key Questions	Rating (1–5)	Evidence / Comments
7.1 Gender Sensitivity	Are gender aspects integrated into all monitoring stages?		
7.2 Persons with Disabilities	Are accessibility and reasonable accommodations ensured?		
7.3 Children and Elderly	Are visits adapted to specific vulnerabilities?		

Section 8: Overall Performance Summary

Area	Average Score (1–5)	Remarks / Key Findings
Institutional Framework		

Resources and Capacity
Methodology and Operations
Follow-up and Impact
Public Engagement
Gender & Vulnerable Groups

Section 9: Action Plan Based on Assessment

Priority Area Recommendation Responsible Person/Unit Timeline Status / Progress

Section 10: Declaration

I hereby confirm that this assessment was conducted objectively and based on available evidence.

Name: _____

Designation: _____

Date: _____

Signature: _____

**Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka
No.14, R. A. de Mel Mawatha, Colombo 04,
Sri Lanka.**

Hotline 1996

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