

No. 17013/16/2019-PR
Ministry of Home Affairs
Government of India

**

Women Safety Division, 2nd Floor,
Major Dhyanchand National Stadium
India Gate, New Delhi-110002

August 2, 2019

To

1. The Chief Secretary/Administrator of all States and UTs.
2. The ACS/Principal Secretary/Secretary (**Home**) of all States and UTs.
3. The DG/IG (Police) of all States and UTs.
4. The DG/IG (Prisons) of all States and UTs.

Sub: Consular access to foreign nationals in prisons, custody or detention.

Sir/Madam,

Consular access is granted to Foreign Diplomats/Consular Officers to visit the nationals of their country, who are in prison, custody or detention, as and when any such request is received by the Ministry of External Affairs from the diplomatic Missions concerned in India. Article 36 of the 'Vienna Convention on Consular Access', an international treaty of the United Nations, acceded to by the Government of India, provides that Consular Officers shall have the right to visit a national of their country who is in prison, custody or detention, and to converse and correspond with him and to arrange for his legal representation. If a national of a foreign country is arrested or committed to prison or to custody or is detained in any other manner, the Consular Post of the country is to be informed of the same without delay. Any communication addressed to the Consular Post by the person arrested, or in prison, custody or detention is also to be forwarded to the said Consular Post without delay.

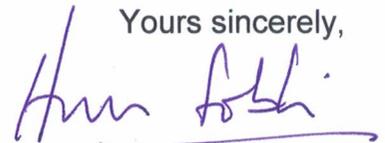
2. The CPV Division of the Ministry of External Affairs is the nodal authority for receiving requests for consular access from foreign Embassies and High Commissions and is authorized to issue the letter of permission to diplomatic Missions to have consular access to the nationals of their country.

3. To streamline the **process of granting consular access** and to make the procedure uniform and robust, it has been decided to lay down the following guidelines:

- i) **Intimation concerning detention or arrest of any foreign national** in any Prison, Custody or Detention Centre be immediately communicated by the State Government/Jail authority concerned to Consular-I Section, CPV Division, Ministry of External Affairs, Patiala House Annexe (Room No. 43), Tilak Marg, New Delhi – 110001 and through email at: socons@mea.gov.in, uscons@mea.gov.in and also to the Women Safety Division of the Ministry of Home Affairs (dealing with Prison matters) at: dspr.atc@mha.gov.in.

- ii) Representative of any foreign Mission or Embassy approaching the State/Jail authority for consular access to any prisoner or detainee to be advised to **contact the CPV Division of the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA)** at the address mentioned above.
 - iii) The request of any foreign national in prison or custody or Detention Centre for consular access to be **forwarded to the CPV Division of the Ministry of External Affairs**, who shall take appropriate action in the matter. Consular access is to be granted **only on receipt of permission letter issued by the CPV Division of the Ministry of External Affairs** who are authorized to issue such permission.
 - iv) Consular access permission issued by the authorized officer of the Consular Section of CPV Division, Ministry of External Affairs is to be honoured by the State authorities, as **MEA is the approved authority** for the same and access is to be allowed to the consular officer **without delay**.
 - v) The Jail/State authorities should refrain from contacting the foreign diplomatic Missions/Embassies directly. They should make correspondence about a foreign national in their custody **only with the CPV Division** of the Ministry of External Affairs, who has to take further appropriate action.
 - vi) In case of emergency, an electronic copy of the permission letter shall be issued by the CPV Division of the Ministry of External Affairs to the Diplomatic Mission with a copy to the Jail authority concerned. In case of any doubt, the State authorities can check the veracity of the document with the CPV Division.
 - vii) **Regular reports of arrest/detention of foreign nationals** (with all relevant details) are to be provided to the CPV Division of the Ministry of External Affairs through email at: socons@meag.gov.in and also to the Women Safety Division of the Ministry of Home Affairs through email at: dspr.atc@mha.gov.in.
 - viii) Special attention may be paid to the fact that there should be no delay in intimation of arrest of a foreign national to MEA and MHA. The States/UTs should **send regular quarterly and six monthly reports** about foreign nationals in Jails/Detention Centres (including the crime and current status of their case etc. to MEA and MHA.
4. All State/UT authorities are requested to comply with the above guidelines. This supersedes any other instructions/guidelines issued on the subject in the past.

Yours sincerely,



(Arun Sobti)

Deputy Secretary (PR & ATC)

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