

REPUBLIC OF SURINAME



RESPONSE IN RELATION TO THE REQUEST FOR AN ADVISORY OPINION REGARDING “DIFFERENTIATED APPROACHES TO PERSONS DEPRIVED OF LIBERTY”

With reference to the request of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights in relation to an Advisory Opinion regarding ‘Differentiated Approaches to Persons Deprived of Liberty’, the Republic of Suriname wishes to inform as follows:

Article 8 of the Constitution of the Republic of Suriname¹ states that no one should be discriminated against on the basis of birth, sex, race, language, religious belief, education, economic status or any other status. The State is therefore also in favor of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, in taking the position that the rights of imprisoned vulnerable groups of people must be safeguarded. These concern the following groups:

- Women who are pregnant/ have recently given birth and are breastfeeding;
- LGBT-persons
- Indigenous peoples
- Children living in detention with their mother.

A summary will be given of the actions taken by the Government of Suriname to guarantee the rights of every Surinamese citizen, including those of the above-mentioned vulnerable groups.

Women who are pregnant or have recently given birth and are breastfeeding

Pregnant women receive antenatal care and 90% of all deliveries take place in care facilities, where qualified health personnel are present. The emergency obstetric care capacity and registration system, including maternal mortality research, should be strengthened in order to keep the mortality rate as low as possible. To achieve this goal, Suriname completed a Safe Motherhood Needs Assessment in 2010. The Safe Motherhood Action Plan also includes child mortality actions. With regard to breastfeeding and imprisoned mothers, there are possibilities to do so. The government takes this into account. It can also be stated that the State has made provisions to promote breastfeeding in all layers of the population in every situation.

LGBT- persons

The Republic of Suriname is of the opinion that current legislation provides sufficient safeguards against discrimination of a person or group of persons. Protecting the rights of LGBT people is also part of this. Current Surinamese law does not contain any discriminatory rules. The Constitution has been adopted by the Surinamese people by referendum and at the moment there are no cases that require amendment of the legislation. The Government health system is currently adequately equipped to provide special measures for those undergoing sex transplants. There is access to

¹CHAPTER V BASIC RIGHTS PERSONAL RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS

Article 8 1. All who are on the territory of Suriname have an equal right to protection of persons and property. 2. No one should be discriminated against on the basis of birth, sex, race, language, religion, origin, education, political opinion, economic position or social circumstances or any other status.

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medication for this group. They are not excluded from special medical care, if available.

Indigenous Peoples

The Government of Suriname supports the safeguarding of the cultural identity of individuals and groups, regardless of their origin. The management of the Culture Department at the Ministry of Education is at the service of these groups. In Suriname there are several locations where convicts can serve their sentences. These establishments are centrally located, thus not in the vicinity of an Indigenous village or Indigenous community. Housing indigenous prisoners as close to their families as possible, is possible as far as the occupation allows.

With regard to the use of natural medicinal herbs in prison, special policies should be created. This is to prevent people from taking in prohibited items in prison.

Older persons

Between 2010 and 2013, the Government of the Republic of Suriname took some measures to alleviate the needs of older people. One of these measures was the introduction of free health care for persons who have reached the age of 60 years and older. The first phase of the National health System has been introduced. No distinction is made for people in prison.

Children living in detention with their mother

In Suriname there are no known cases of children living in detention with their mother. Pregnant women receive guidance from the Forensic Social Care Department. This guidance runs up to and after the birth of the child. After birth, the child comes under the authority of the Office Family Law².

The 2019-2028 strategic plan of the Ministry of Health assumes that comprehensive, integrated, quality health services should be available. These services must be available to every citizen without any difference in quality, regardless of their economic or social situation.

The intention is to make sufficient financial resources available for the health care system to achieve the above objectives. These resources should be devoted, among other things, to the advancement of the health sector with special attention to vulnerable groups. The COVID-19 pandemic is causing considerable delays in the steps to be taken to achieve set goals. At the same time, it also creates the necessary challenges in improving healthcare, which will also benefit the above-mentioned vulnerable groups.

² Family Law Office