UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

68th Session of the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention
13 to 22 November 2013

INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION OF JURISTS: KEY ELEMENTS FOR BASIC PRINCIPLES AND GUIDELINES ON REMEDIES FOR ARBITRARY OR UNLAWFUL DETENTION, AND THE RIGHT TO CHALLENGE THE LAWFULNESS OF DEPRIVATION OF LIBERTY BEFORE A COURT

Submitted 11 November 2013

Composed of 60 eminent judges and lawyers from all regions of the world, the International Commission of Jurists promotes and protects human rights through the Rule of Law, by using its unique legal expertise to develop and strengthen national and international justice systems. Established in 1952, in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council since 1957, and active on the five continents, the ICJ aims to ensure the progressive development and effective implementation of international human rights and international humanitarian law; secure the realization of civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights; safeguard the separation of powers; and guarantee the independence of the judiciary and legal profession.
Key Elements for the Basic Principles and Guidelines

The International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) provides this submission in response to the Questionnaire circulated by the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention as part of its preparation of "draft basic principles and guidelines on remedies and procedures on the right of anyone deprived of his or her liberty by arrest or detention to bring proceedings before court, in order that the court may decide without delay on the lawfulness of his or her detention and order his or her release if the detention is not lawful", pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 20/16 of 17 July 2012.

The ICJ hereby provides information in relation to Question 5, “What should be the key points of these basic principles and guidelines”. At this relatively early stage in the process, the ICJ is providing key elements in summary form. The ICJ would be pleased to provide more detailed submissions on these and other relevant issues later in the process.

The ICJ recommends that the basic principles and guidelines should include the following points:

1. Victims of unlawful or arbitrary detention are entitled to an effective remedy and reparation before an independent judicial authority.
   a. A remedy and reparation must be available both for the detention itself and for any other human rights violations occasioned thereby.
   b. Judicial procedures must be available both to bring the violation to an immediate end (cessation) and to obtain reparation. The elements of effective reparation include: restitution, compensation, rehabilitation, satisfaction and guarantees of non-repetition.
   c. The right to an effective remedy is essential for the protection of all other rights and may not be impaired even in times of emergency.
   d. For a remedy to be effective, it must be prompt and accessible.
   e. As regards unlawful or arbitrary detention, the primary (but not exclusive) form of restitution is restoration of liberty.

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2 The right of victims of unlawful arrest or detention to prompt and adequate compensation is explicitly affirmed by, among other sources, article 9(5) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights ("ICCPR"). African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights, Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Fair Trial and Legal Assistance in Africa ("African Principles"), 2001, DOC/OS(XXX)247, Principle M(1)(h). As to the components of such compensation, see also UN Basic Principles on Remedy and Reparation, para 20.

3 See Human Rights Committee, General Comment No 29, States of Emergency (article 4), UN Doc CCPR/C/21/Add.11, paras 14 and 16.


5 See UN Basic Principles on Remedy and Reparation, para 19.
f. Cessation of the unlawful or arbitrary detention, through restoration of liberty, may be effectuated, among other means, by the exercise of the right to challenge the lawfulness of detention through habeas corpus or similar procedures as described below.

2. Anyone who is deprived of liberty by arrest or detention must be guaranteed, in law and practice, an effective opportunity to take proceedings before a court, in order that the court may decide without delay on the lawfulness of his or her detention and order his or her release if the detention is not lawful.6

   a. "Unlawfulness" in this context is not limited to detention that violates domestic law. The court responsible for such proceedings must be capable of ordering release where the detention in question is prohibited as arbitrary by international law, or is otherwise incompatible with internationally recognized human rights, regardless whether the detention is otherwise compatible with national law.7

      i. If a person subject to internationally unlawful but domestically legal detention is not ordered released because the court does not have the power to do so, the detainee’s procedural right to challenge the lawfulness of one’s detention will be violated (in addition to their underlying substantive right to liberty).8

   b. International law does not in this regard equate "arbitrariness" with "against the law". Arbitrariness must instead be interpreted more broadly to include elements of inappropriateness, injustice, lack of predictability, and due process of law, as well as basic principles of reasonableness, proportionality and necessity.9 The Court must therefore have the ability to examine and act on all of these elements in reviewing the lawfulness of the detention and, if necessary, as grounds for ordering release.

   c. The right to challenge the lawfulness of a deprivation of liberty applies to anyone deprived of liberty on any grounds and in any context.10

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6 Human Rights Council, Resolution 24/7 (2013), paragraph 6(d); ICCPR, Article 9(4); American Convention on Human Rights, Article 7(6); Arab Charter on Human Rights, Article 14(6). See also the UN Body of Principles for the Protection of All Persons under Any Form of Detention ("Body of Principles"), adopted by the General Assembly in resolution 43/173 of 9 December 1988, Principle 32; Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, Principles and Best Practices on the Protection of Persons Deprived of Liberty in the Americas ("Inter-American Principles"), OAS Doc OAS/Ser.L/V/II.131 doc 26 (2008), Principle V; African Principles, Principles M(4) and (5).

7 See e.g. Human Rights Committee, Shams et al. v Australia, UN Doc CCPR/C/90/D/1255/2004 et al. (20 July 2007), para 7.3; Yklymova v Turkmenistan, UN Doc CCPR/C/96/D/1460/2006 (20 July 2009), para 7.4; Aboussedra v Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, UN Doc CCPR/C/100/D/1751/2008 (25 October 2010), para 7.6. European Court of Human Rights (Grand Chamber), Chahal v United Kingdom, App No 22414/93 (15 November 1996), para 127; (Grand Chamber), Nikolova v Bulgaria, App No 31195/96 (25 March 1999), para 58; (Grand Chamber), A and others v United Kingdom, App No 3455/05 (19 February 2009), para 202.

8 See sources cited in the previous note.


10 Eg Human Rights Committee, General Comment No 8, Article 9 (Right to liberty and security of persons), UN Doc A/37/40 pp 95-96 (30 June 1982), para 1. Citing the General Comment, the International Court of Justice in Case Concerning Ahmadou Sadio Diallo (Republic of Guinea
d. The person must have access to a proper court of law for these purposes. It is not sufficient that some other type of authority, be it judicial, quasi-judicial, or administrative, can review the detention and compel release. The court must satisfy essential requirements of competence, impartiality, independence and procedural safeguards.¹¹

e. The proceedings must be simple and expeditious and at no cost for detained persons without adequate means.¹² The court must make its decision “without delay”, “speedily”, “promptly”.¹³

f. The proceedings must be capable of being initiated not only personally by the detainee, but also by his or her legal counsel, family members, and other interested parties, whether or not they have proof of the consent of the individual detainee.¹⁴

g. The right to challenge and obtain release must be “in its effects, real and not merely formal.” Among other things, this means that to satisfy the right to challenge, the court must have the power actually to obtain the release of the person through a binding order, and must in practice exercise that power without delay if it finds the detention to be unlawful.¹⁵ The authorities must respect and promptly implement any court order for release.¹⁶

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¹² UN Body of Principles, Principle 32(2).

¹³ Article 9(4) of the ICCPR; Article 5(4) of the European Convention on Human Rights; Article 7(6) of the American Convention on Human Rights; African Principles, Principle M(4). The European Court has remarked that a period of six days “sits ill with the notion of ‘speedy’ contained in article 5(4)” of the European Convention: Çetinkaya and Çağlayan v Turkey, App Nos 3921/02, 35003/02 and 17261/03 (23 January 2007), para 43. The Inter-American Court has held nine days to be incompatible with the term “promptly” in article 7(6) of the American Convention: Chaparro Álvarez and Lapo Íñiguez v Ecuador, Series C No 170 (21 November 2007), para 135; see also Tibi v Ecuador, Series C No. 114 (7 September 2004), para 134 (21 days after filing of the application was “clearly an excessive time”).


3. The procedures for challenging the lawfulness of detention before a court must provide guarantees for the effectiveness and fairness of the proceedings, which must be respected in practice. For instance, the proceedings must respect the right to equality before the courts and the principle of equality of arms, 17 including the requirement that the same procedural rights be provided to all parties, subject only to any distinctions that are based on the law and can be justified on objective reasonable grounds not entailing actual disadvantage or other unfairness to the detained person. 18 For instance, the person deprived of liberty should have the opportunity to contest all the arguments and evidence adduced by the authorities to justify the detention. 19

4. The detained person must have a right to be physically present before the Court during the challenge proceedings. This is important to ensure the effectiveness and fairness of the proceedings (as well as to reinforce the protection of the detainee from other violations such as torture or other ill-treatment). 20

5. For the right to challenge detention to be effective, the right of everyone deprived of liberty to have prompt access to an independent lawyer of his or her choosing, including immediately after arrest or detention, must be provided for by law and respected in practice. 21 This again serves a dual

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121; Bámaca Velásquez v Guatemala, Series C No. 70 (25 November 2000), para 191; Suárez-Rosero v Ecuador, Series C No. 35 (12 November 1997), para 63.


17 Human Rights Committee, General Comment No. 32, paras 7, 8 and 13; Concluding Observations on: Tajikistan, UN Doc CCPR/CO/84/TJK (2005), para 12; Bosnia and Herzegovina, UN Doc CCPR/C/BIH/CO/1 (2006), para 17; United Kingdom, UN Doc CCPR/C/GBR/CO/6 (2008), para 17; India, UN Doc CCPR/C/79/Add.81 (1997), para 24. European Court of Human Rights, Mamedova v Russia, App No 7064/05 (1 July 2006), para 89; García Alva v. Germany, App No 23541/94 (13 February 2001), para 39; (Grand Chamber), A and Others v the United Kingdom, App No 3455/05 (19 February 2009), paras 203-224; (Grand Chamber), Mooren v Germany, App No 11364/03 (9 July 2009), paras 121-125.


19 European Court of Human Rights, Lamy v Belgium, App No 10444/83 (30 March 1989), para 29; (Grand Chamber), Nikolova v Bulgaria, App no 31195/96 (25 March 1999), para 63; (Grand Chamber), Mooren v Germany, App no 11364/03 (9 July 2009), paras 121-125. See also Human Rights Committee, General Comment No 32, para 13, citing Jansen-Gielen v The Netherlands, UN Doc CCPR/C/71/D/846/1999 (3 April 2001), para 8.2 and Äärellä and Nääkkäläjärvi v Finland, UN Doc CCPR/C/73/D/779/1997 (24 October 2001), para 7.4.

20 On the requirement to bring the person before the Court as an aspect of the right to challenge the lawfulness of detention, see among others: UN Body of Principles, Principle 33(2); Inter-American Court of Human Rights, Habeas Corpus in Emergency Situations (Arts. 27(2); 25(1) and 7(6) American Convention on Human Rights) (1987), Advisory Opinion OC-8/87, Series A, No. 8, para 35; Chaparro Álvarez and Lapo Íñiguez v Ecuador Series C No 170 (21 November 2007), paras 129-130. European Court of Human Rights, Singh v the United Kingdom, App No 23389/94 (21 February 1996), para 67; Klamecki v Poland (no 2), App No 31583/96 (3 April 2003), paras 128-131; Lebedev v Russia, App No 4493/04 (25 October 2007) para 113. On its role in protecting against torture, see UN General Assembly, Resolution 67/161 (20 December 2012), para 22; Human Rights Council, Resolution 13/19 (2010), para 5; Committee against Torture, General Comment no 2, UN Doc CAT/C/GC/2 (24 January 2008), paras 13.

21 Human Rights Committee, Paul Kelly v Jamaica, UN Doc CCPR/C/41/D/253/1987 (8 April 1991), para 5.6; Rafael Marques de Morais v Angola, UN Doc CCPR/C/83/D/1128/2002 (29 March 2005), paras 6.3, 6.5; Umarova (re Umarov) v Uzbekistan, UN Doc...
purpose, since it is also an important safeguard against torture and other such human rights violations in detention. Key aspects of this right include:

a. The lawyer must be able to carry out his or her functions free from fear of reprisals or interference.\(^{22}\)

b. The authorities must respect the privacy and confidentiality of lawyer-detainee communications.\(^{23}\)

c. The lawyer must be permitted timely access to materials within the possession of the authorities that are relevant to challenging the lawfulness of the detention.\(^{24}\)

d. If, in extraordinary circumstances, a person is not granted immediate access to counsel of choice, immediate access must be ensured to another independent and competent lawyer.\(^{25}\)

6. The right to challenge detention before a court is non-derogable.\(^{26}\)

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\(^{23}\) UN Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers, Principles 8 and 22; UN Principles and Guidelines on Access to Legal Aid, para 43(d); UN Body of Principles, Principles 18(3) and (4). See also: Human Rights Committee, Concluding Observations on Spain, UN Doc CCPR/C/ESP/CO/5 (2008), para 14; Austria, UN Doc CCPR/C/AUT/CO/4 (2007), para 16. European Court of Human Rights, Castravet v Moldova App No 23393/05 (13 March 2007) paras 47-50; Singh v the United Kingdom (App No 23389/94) ECHR1996-I (21 February 1996), para 68; Soysal v Turkey App No 50091/99 (3 May 2007) paras 77-81.

\(^{24}\) See e.g. UN Basic Principles on the Role of the Lawyers, Principle 21; European Court of Human Rights, Lamy v Belgium, App No 10444/83 (30 March 1989), para 29; (Grand Chamber), Nikolova v Bulgaria, App no 31195/96 (25 March 1999), para 63 and (Grand Chamber), Mooren v Germany, App no 11364/03 (9 July 2009), paras 121-125.

\(^{25}\) See e.g. Human Rights Committee, Komarovski v Turkmenistan, UN Doc CCPR/C/93/D/1450/2006 (24 July 2008), paras 2.7, 3.4, 7.4.