Feedback from ICPO clients and their families:

'I would like to thank everybody at ICPO for all their support, it was a great comfort to know that there were people outside who care at what I can only describe as the lowest point of my life … If there is any way I can help others in the same position as I was in I would like to.'

'Words almost fail me to thank you for your visit yesterday. It was without a doubt the highlight of my year to date and chatting with you was, to say the least, invigorating. Thank You.'

'Many thanks for all your help and assistance; you have been great help to me during this difficult time. The welcome and support for me on the family day was overpowering, I don't feel alone anymore here in Ireland.'

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icpo

Irish Council for Prisoners Overseas

Responding to the needs of Irish prisoners overseas and their families

The Irish Council for Prisoners Overseas (ICPO) is a charitable organisation established by the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference in 1985, which works on behalf of Irish people in prison overseas to provide information and support to these prisoners and their families.

Irish people in prison overseas face significant difficulties, including discrimination, language barriers and dealing with an unfamiliar legal system. Some prisoners experience extreme hardship, with limited access to basic necessities such as food and water.

The ICPO works with all Irish people in prison overseas wherever they are. We do not make any distinction in terms of religious faith or any other ground, nor on the nature of the conviction or of a prisoner's status.

Vision

The vision of ICPO is of a world where the human rights of Irish people in prison overseas are respected and their dignity is honoured.

Mission

To bring hope to Irish people in prison overseas and their families by helping them to cope with the challenges of imprisonment and to increase their chances of rebuilding their lives after release.

Values

- Inclusivity
- Respect
- Confidentiality
- Person-centred approach

Our services include:

- Providing information and support to prisoners in relation to a wide range of issues, including repatriation, deportation, health and legal matters, discrimination and ill-treatment;
- Keeping in contact with prisoners through letter writing, newsletters and cards for Christmas and St Patrick's Day;
- A pen friend scheme, which involves volunteers in Ireland corresponding on a regular basis with ICPO clients;
- Representing prisoners' interests to relevant parties (Irish embassies and consulates, welfare agencies, probation and legal officers);
- Monitoring repatriation applications with the Department of Justice;
- Providing a range of supports and services for people in preparation for their release and upon their return to Ireland including advice and information, regular telephone contact, signposting to services and making referrals to specific/specialist services;
- Visiting prisoners and assisting families with travel and accommodation for prison visits;
- Providing support and advice to the families of Irish prisoners overseas who face many challenges as they deal with an extremely distressing situation. We hold Family Information Days twice a year to provide families with information and support and to give them the opportunity to meet other people who have a relative in prison overseas. We also host a monthly online Family Coffee Morning for families with loved ones in prison overseas.