

# Do you have a relative or friend in prison abroad?

**A guide to how Prisoners Abroad can help you**

## Some facts about Prisoners Abroad:

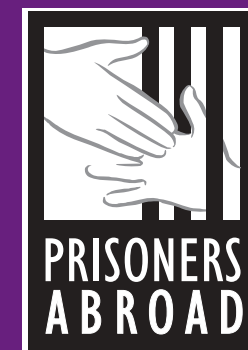
- All our services are free and confidential;
- We make no moral judgement about the people we work with; we help convicted and unconvicted, guilty or innocent, solely on the basis of need;
- We work for equality of opportunity;
- We are in the process of implementing a nationally recognised quality assurance system. If you have any complaints about any of our services, please ask your caseworker for a copy of our complaints procedure.

**Prisoners Abroad provides a vital service to British nationals in prison abroad, to their families and to prisoners returning to the UK**

## Please contact us if you would like any further information or assistance:

- By phone: 020 7561 6820
- By Fax: 020 7561 6821
- By e-mail: [info@prisonersabroad.org.uk](mailto:info@prisonersabroad.org.uk)
- Our website: [www.prisonersabroad.org.uk](http://www.prisonersabroad.org.uk)
- Our address: 89-93 Fonthill Road, London N4 3JH
- How to get to us:  
Buses: 4, 19, 29, 106, 210, 236, 253, 259, 279, W3, W7  
Underground and British Rail: Finsbury Park  
(Victoria and Piccadilly Underground Lines)

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**Prisoners Abroad is the only charity providing practical support, and campaigning for the welfare of Britons imprisoned abroad**

**Having a relative or friend arrested and held in prison abroad can be a bewildering, terrifying and lonely experience**

**You may understand little of the language and knows little or nothing of the local criminal justice system**

This leaflet explains the many ways in which we can help you.

### **Advice and information**

When you or your relative/friend contacts Prisoners Abroad, you will be allocated a caseworker who will be your point of contact for advice, information and support. All our caseworkers speak at least one foreign language and can liaise with the prison, your relative's lawyer or the British Embassy on your behalf. Your caseworker will provide a personal, friendly and confidential service and will try to respond to your needs. For example, we can give advice on how to send money abroad, how to organise a visit and, where it is available, information on local prison and criminal justice systems.

As we are non-judgmental, many families feel able to talk to us about their situation without feeling stigmatised. We offer a listening ear and emotional support. We can also put families in touch with each other if they want.

We have produced a series of leaflets that offer guidance and information on some of the main problems that families face when their relative is in prison abroad. These leaflets cover issues such as:

- how to cope during the imprisonment of a family member
- how to help children cope
- what financial assistance is available
- preparing for the return of a family member from prison abroad.

These leaflets are free and can be requested from your caseworker.

### **Financial Assistance**

We provide an annual grant towards travel costs to family members who are on benefits. In addition, if your relative/friend has no other source of income, we provide the following financial assistance:

- In developing countries, we make regular payments to help prisoners buy essentials such as food, vitamins and bedding;
- In some circumstances, we can help prisoners with the cost of essential medical treatment if the prison does not provide;
- In developed countries, we may be able to send a one-off grant for essentials such as toiletries and stationery.

### **Representations and liaison**

Prisoners Abroad monitors complaints about prison conditions and treatment and will liaise, wherever possible, with agencies who can help. Some countries are obviously more amenable to representations than others but we do whatever is possible. If you wish, we will keep in touch with the consul about your relative's situation and we can refer you to other UK organisations for advice and support.

### **Social contact and support**

We will send you and your relative/friend in prison abroad regular copies of our newsletter. This gives information on issues which might affect you and includes articles and poems by prisoners around the world and details of activities taking place at Prisoners Abroad. We can also provide you with details of other Prisoner Family Support groups in the UK.

### **Other assistance for your relative/friend**

Your relative/friend in prison can also ask us for:

- a pen-pal;
- magazines and newspapers in english;
- donated paperback books in english;
- International Freepost envelopes so that they can keep in touch with you for free;
- education materials such as language text books and courses or art materials.

Please note that there can be a long waiting list for magazines, newspapers and educational/art materials but we try to allocate these as soon as they become available.

### **After release**

When your relative/friend is released, we can offer a range of services to help them resettle in the UK. We provide a drop-in centre and telephone support to returning prisoners and their families. We can, for example, advise on claiming welfare benefits, help arrange appointments with doctors and dentists and make referrals to specialist agencies e.g. for counselling, seeking employment or further training.