



**Convention against Torture
and Other Cruel, Inhuman
or Degrading Treatment
or Punishment**

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Committee against Torture

**Information received from Finland on follow-up to
the concluding observations on its eighth periodic
report***

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* The present document is being issued without formal editing.



I. Introduction

1. The Government of Finland welcomes the opportunity to provide information on the follow-up to the concluding observations adopted by the Committee against Torture in May 2024. The Government submits information, as requested by the Committee, on the recommendations concerning fundamental legal safeguards (paragraph 15), the detention of remand prisoners in police detention facilities (paragraph 17), asylum and non-refoulement (paragraph 19 (a)) and hate crimes (paragraph 39 (a)).
2. The Government also provides information on measures taken to implement some of the remaining recommendations.

II. Follow-up information on the concluding observations (CAT/C/FIN/CO/8)

Fundamental legal safeguards

Information relating to paragraph 15

3. The treatment of detained persons is governed by the Act on the Treatment of Persons in Police Custody (841/2006) and, for foreign nationals, by the Act on the Treatment of Detained Aliens and on Detention Units (116/2002). A family member or another chosen person must be notified of the detention without undue delay.
4. Detainees have the right to necessary healthcare and may obtain additional care at their own expense. They receive written notice of this right.
5. The Police provides regular training to its employees. The legality of guarding and detention activities is supervised both by the police and by the Chancellor of Justice. Violation of an official duty is a crime.
6. Under section 61 of the Border Guard Act (578/2005), the provisions of the Act on the Treatment of Persons in Police Custody apply to the treatment of persons deprived of their liberty. Provisions on the general conditions for imposing precautionary measures on aliens are laid down in section 117a of the Aliens Act (302/2004). Under section 123 of the Aliens Act (301/2004), a decision to detain an alien can be made by an officer of the Border Guard invested with the power of arrest or by a border guard of at least the rank of lieutenant. Separate provisions on the treatment of detained aliens are laid down in the Act on the Treatment of Detained Aliens.
7. Regarding aliens detained by decision of the Border Guard, the realisation of their linguistic rights will be ensured in all operations. The work of the Border Guard is governed by section 203 of the Aliens Act, under which an authority must provide interpretation and translation services, and a party concerned has the right to be informed of a decision concerning them in their mother tongue or in a language they can reasonably be expected to understand. A decision shall be notified through interpretation or translation. As a minimum, the Border Guard will normally book a telephone interpretation when dealing with detainees for such purposes as serving a decision, ascertaining the views of a party or, more generally, when interviewing them. If, on the basis of an overall assessment carried out by a public authority, there is reason to consider that a detained person possesses sufficient language skills to act on their own behalf in English, for example, they may be contacted in English on a case-by-case basis. However, the service of official decisions that concern a detained person and any formal ascertaining of their views shall always take place in the client's native language, using interpretation.
8. Under the Aliens Act, Border Guard officials may not restrict a detainee's contacts.
9. The Finnish Immigration Service manages detention units, including supervision and planning. The Police or Border Guard handles transport and supervision during healthcare visits. If no security threat exists, detainees may visit healthcare providers

unsupervised to protect confidentiality. This is to ensure that no patient information will be passed on to third parties.

Detention of remand prisoners in police detention facilities

Information relating to paragraph 17

10. The Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of the Interior have jointly examined whether it would be feasible to transfer, immediately after the remand hearing, remand prisoners to a remand prison operating under the Prison and Probation Service of Finland. A working group that had examined this matter prepared the necessary legislative amendments in autumn 2023, and they were discussed in the relevant project monitoring group in early 2024. Enactment of the amendments was, however, postponed because of prison overcrowding, and a new schedule has not been determined.

11. Holding remand prisoners in police detention facilities is still possible, but the maximum time allowed time to do so has been limited to one week. Both remand prisoners and other detained persons have a right to daily outdoor exercise, media access and reading, as prescribed by the law. Access to different recreational activities in police detention facilities is limited because police detention facilities differ from prisons.

12. The Border Guard does not keep remand prisoners in its premises, with the exception of short hearings or similar occasions.

Asylum and non-refoulement

Information relating to paragraph 19 (a)

13. Persons who have applied for international protection will be referred to an asylum process, in which the Finnish Immigration Service assesses their need for protection. Under the Act on Temporary Measures to Combat Instrumentalised Migration (482/2024), enacted as an exceptive act, Finland may temporarily restrict the submission of applications for international protection along a limited part of the national border, provided that certain very strict conditions are met. So far, the Act has not been applied. The application of the Act would require a separate decision, and it would be the last resort to control the situation.

14. The Border Guard has trained its personnel on applying the Act, including identifying vulnerable persons, such as minors, persons with disabilities and victims of human trafficking. All relevant officials must complete general online training. Around 200 border guards are trained to conduct assessments under section 5, with emphasis on assessment procedures, applicant-specific evaluations, and case-by-case consideration as required by the Act.

Hate crimes

Information relating to paragraph 39 (a)

15. The Police University College compiles extensive data on suspected hate crimes under pretrial investigation and publishes annual reports on them. With the help of the information system available by prosecutors, the data on suspected hate crimes cannot be collected and thus monitored comprehensively, as the system does not have the possibility to select the motives for the offence as the search criterion. The new AIPA system, operated by the National Courts Administration and launching in autumn 2025, will enhance statistical compilation and coordination across authorities.

16. The police have long cooperated with ethnic, religious, and sexual minorities. Finland's Strategy on Preventive Police Work 2019–2023 (extended to 2024) reinforced this cooperation. Increasing interaction and developing minority-specific expertise are key priorities, implemented nationwide via structured preventive units and coordinated by the National Police Board. Locally the police are actively involved and represented in various

bodies dealing with minority issues and cooperate with associations representing minorities as well as with religious communities to gain trust and ensure the rights of persons belonging to these minorities and to encourage them to report on hate crimes.

17. The police have developed their online crime reporting system (over 50% of all crimes are reported online) so that the victim/plaintiff is specifically asked whether he/she thinks that the crime was committed due to him/her being a representative of one of the protected characteristics. The police also have an Internet tip system where people can anonymously report online hate crime.

18. The police have lately introduced online gaming sessions for youngsters where hate crimes and minority issues are discussed alongside the game with the possibility to switch over to a safe space where these issues can be discussed with both the police, youth workers as well as with social and health care professionals. The police are also active across social media, providing low-threshold contact options for victims.

III. Information on other follow-up measures

Legal status of the Convention

Information relating to paragraph 9

19. Under the National Prosecution Authority's 2025–2026 in-service training plan, prosecutors receive training on offences in public office, including the torture offence under Chapter 11, section 9a of the Criminal Code and the UN Convention against Torture. Additionally, training on the position of vulnerable persons in criminal proceedings is provided in cooperation with the National Courts Administration, focusing on the impact of trauma on testimony and the effects of coercive control.

Statute of limitations

Information relating to paragraph 13

20. Exclusion from limitation of the right to bring charges in a torture offence will be reviewed as part of an assessment of the limitation of the right to bring charges, to be undertaken by the Ministry of Justice in summer 2025.

Asylum and non-refoulement

Information relating to paragraph 19 (b)

21. Under section 104a of the Aliens Act, the border procedure may be applied to unaccompanied minors only in limited inadmissibility or accelerated cases, and only if support under section 96a is available. It must end if conditions cease. Decisions must prioritise the best interests of the child (section 6), with access to essential services and education. The non-refoulement principle, enshrined in the Constitution of Finland and the Aliens Act, prohibits return to countries where serious harm is likely.

Information relating to Paragraph 19 (c)

22. Section 96a of the Aliens Act ensures support for vulnerable asylum seekers to exercise their rights and obligations. Section 97b allows consent-based medical examinations to assess signs of past persecution or harm. Under section 98, residence permit eligibility must be assessed individually, and the Finnish Immigration Service must ex officio examine eligibility under sections 52 (humanitarian grounds) and 52a (victims of trafficking). Following the H.U. v. Finland case (CAT No. 1052/2021), the Immigration Service updated its guidelines and training to improve the identification and treatment of vulnerable persons.

Information relating to paragraph 19 (d)

23. The Legal Aid Act (257/2002) and the Aliens Act allow asylum seekers to receive legal aid without proving financial need. This applies equally to those in border and regular procedures, with fees covered by the state.

Information relating to paragraph 19 (e)

24. Border procedure applications follow an accelerated timeline but otherwise mirror the regular process in substance. If a decision cannot be made within the set time limit, the case is removed from the border procedure.

Information relating to paragraph 19 (f)

25. Section 202(1) of the Aliens Act prohibits enforcing return decisions if there is a risk of death penalty, torture, persecution, or treatment violating human dignity (as defined in section 147). Finland does not return individuals in violation of the non-refoulement principle.

Information relating to paragraph 19 (g)

26. Section 102 of the Aliens Act governs subsequent asylum applications, requiring new, significant elements not previously presented due to no fault of the applicant. There is no limit to the number of applications, and each is assessed preliminarily by the Finnish Immigration Service, which must respect the non-refoulement obligation.

Diplomatic assurances**Information relating to paragraph 21**

27. Each asylum case is assessed individually, considering refugee law and up-to-date country information, including any changes in the applicant's country of origin. Returns are prohibited if there is a risk of the death penalty, torture, persecution, or other inhuman treatment. Finland does not seek or accept diplomatic assurances, nor engage in related monitoring. Voluntary returns are supported by IOM and Frontex, which may conduct post-return monitoring, distinct from diplomatic assurance practices.

Conditions of detention**Information relating to Paragraphs 23 (a) and (b)**

28. To reduce overcrowding, the Prison and Probation Service has expanded the use of open prisons, supervised probationary liberty, and external rehabilitation for fine default prisoners. Resources are directed toward key needs such as substance abuse and crisis support, with increased group and digital programmes. Staff have been reallocated to essential prison duties, and weekly mental health and addiction support is provided. Access to education, rehabilitation, and leisure has improved via remote tools, and a government working group is preparing to enhance prison education by 2025.

Information relating to Paragraphs 23 (c) and (d)

29. In 2024, new guidelines were issued to improve services for detainees with mental health or substance abuse issues, and suicide prevention materials were developed with health authorities. All detainees are entitled to healthcare from wellbeing services counties, which are responsible for organising health, social and emergency services in Finland. Police detention facilities lack in-house medical staff except in Helsinki, where emergency care is used. Measures to address specific needs include protocols on prisoner violence, guidance for detainees with intellectual disabilities, and an upcoming guide for work with transsexual clients. Multilingual self-care materials and interpretation services have been expanded, with outreach targeting women prisoners and continuous staff training, including on radicalisation.

Information relating to paragraph 23 (e)

30. Detainees receive healthcare from wellbeing services counties, though police detention units generally lack medical staff, except in Helsinki. In 2024, updated guidelines addressed mental health and substance abuse, and suicide prevention materials were issued. Measures also include protocols on prisoner violence, intellectual disability accommodation, and a 2025 guide for transsexual clients. Multilingual tools, interpretation services, and outreach for women have been strengthened. Staff must undergo ongoing training, including on identifying radicalisation.

Deaths in custody**Information relating to paragraph 25**

31. All deaths in custody are investigated by an independent police unit under the Ministry of the Interior and the Parliamentary Ombudsman. Police–healthcare cooperation aims to prevent deaths and assess risks. Definitions are being harmonised under section 7(3) of the Act on the Investigation of the Cause of Death (459/1973). While data protection laws limit access to cause and ethnicity data, the National Police Board compiles statistics for training. The Government supports improved demographic data, reviews, and first aid training. Under the Aliens Act, long-term detention in Border Guard facilities is not permitted; no deaths have occurred there in the past four years.

Immigration and Detention, including of children**Information relating to paragraph 29 (a)**

32. Under section 121 of the Aliens Act, detention is a last resort after an individual assessment, and less restrictive measures, such as reporting, travel document surrender, financial guarantees, or residence obligations, must be considered first. Detention must be necessary and proportionate and cannot be indefinite, in line with the EU Return Directive. Courts must review detention ex officio every three months, and cases must be submitted without delay to a district court. Detention must end immediately when grounds no longer exist and may only continue if removal remains reasonably possible.

Information relating to paragraph 29 (b)

33. No one is detained in Finland solely due to their status as an asylum seeker. As a rule, children present in Finland with their families are not detained but placed in open reception centres near detention units; detention is permitted only if necessary to preserve family unity and if legal conditions are met. The law requires that a social worker be heard in decisions concerning child detention. In recent years, detention of children has been rare and of short duration. Between 2019 and 2024, the number of unaccompanied children detained was: 2019: 4; 2020: 1; 2021: 1; 2022: 0; 2023: 2; 2024: 0. Children detained with families: 2019: 32; 2020: 14; 2021: 4; 2022: 6; 2023: 3; 2024: 6. Average detention periods for unaccompanied children (in days): 2019: 0.8; 2020: 1; 2021: 2; 2022: 0; 2023: 0.5; 2024: 0. For children with a guardian at the Helsinki Detention Unit: 2019: 1.3; 2020: 0; 2021: 2; 2022: 1.5; 2023: 0; 2024: 4.7. At the Joutseno Detention Unit: 2019: 12.8; 2020: 1.1; 2021: 18; 2022: 0; 2023: 18; 2024: 0.

Information relating to paragraph 29 (c)

34. Finland's two detention units, in Helsinki and Joutseno, are staffed with healthcare and social welfare professionals, and all detained aliens receive a health check within 24 hours. Under section 13 of the Act on the Treatment of Detained Aliens, they are entitled to essential healthcare and must be transferred if adequate care cannot be provided on-site. Minors receive special attention under section 11, with equal healthcare rights as Finnish citizens. Children may not be held in Border Guard facilities and must be placed in proper detention units. While legal guidelines exist, regional authorities define detailed procedures due to the lack of national rules.

Hate crimes

Information relating to paragraph 39 (b)

35. The Police University College incorporates human rights, hate crime prevention, and non-discrimination into all levels of police training, including a mandatory online course on equality. Specialist courses and the OSCE/ODIHR TAHCLE programme have been used to train police trainers nationwide. The National Police Board has issued practical guidelines for identifying and investigating hate crimes. The Finnish Prosecution Authority's 2025–2026 plan includes hate crime training for prosecutors, covering legal definitions, organised racism, cooperation with police, aggravating factors, ECHR case law, and freedom of expression issues.

Information relating to paragraph 39 (c)

36. In 2023–2024, the Ministry of Justice led the EU-funded “Peer Action against Hate” project, which established an online resource on equality.fi, surveyed victims' needs, trained professionals, and built a national information-sharing network. Under the Government's equality plan, this work continues via a multi-actor network until 2027. The police support these efforts through internal training, equality programmes, values discussions, and participation in multi-professional campaigns.

Information relating to paragraph 39 (d)

37. The police have over the last 25 years issued an annual report on hate crimes reported to the police classified per hate motive. The annual reports serve as the official police statistics the compilation of which is required by the international treaties Finland has ratified or acceded to. The abstract of the latest Hate Crime Report in Finland (2023) is available in English.¹

Gender-based violence

Information relating to paragraph 41 (a) and (c)

38. The 2025–2026 training plan of the National Prosecution Authority includes education on domestic, intimate partner, and honour-based violence under Chapter 21 of the Criminal Code. It addresses legal definitions, prosecutorial practices, coercive control, trauma in sexual offence cases, and procedures. The National Prosecution Authority's joint training with the National Courts Administration covers trauma-informed methods and vulnerable persons. Police must report suspected domestic violence regardless of consent and cooperate with Seri Support Centres. Serious domestic violence cases, especially involving minors, must be promptly investigated under the Criminal Investigation Act and the Instructions on the Prioritization of Pre-trial Investigations.

Information relating to paragraph 41 (g)

39. From January 2025, attempted forced marriage is criminalised as human trafficking. Prosecutors receive updated training on trafficking for labour and sexual exploitation, including related crimes such as facilitation of illegal entry, pandering, extortionate work discrimination, and victim non-punishment.

Trafficking in persons

Information relating to paragraph 43 (a)

40. The police have prioritised combating human trafficking for years. In 2021, the National Police Board established a nationwide investigation unit and an intelligence team

¹ https://polamk.fi/-/viharikosepailyjen-maara-viime-vuonna-korkeimmillaan?languageId=en_US.

under the National Bureau of Investigation. Several police departments have also centralised trafficking investigations, supported by a national anti-trafficking network.

Information relating to paragraph 43 (b)

41. The National Police Board has issued multiple guidelines on the identification, detection and investigation of trafficking in human beings, and in 2024 published a handbook to support investigations. Human trafficking is embedded in the Police University College's rights-based training and addressed in recurring and specialist courses. A revised online course on trafficking victims is mandatory for all police officers handling immigration-related tasks.

Information relating to paragraph 43 (c)

42. No amendment to the Aliens Act is currently planned, and the matter is absent from the 2023 Government Programme and legislative plan. Nevertheless, the non-punishment principle is applied in police work and stressed in training and official guidance.

Information relating to paragraph 43 (d)

43. Police must refer trafficking victims to the National Assistance System or Victim Support Finland, with a protection assessment during pre-trial investigations. The Joutseno Reception Centre operates the system under the Finnish Immigration Service, offering services like legal aid, healthcare, shelter, and voluntary return based on need and residence status. Support is provided under the Reception Act (746/2011) and coordinated by local authorities. Vulnerabilities must be individually assessed. In January 2025, an EU-funded handbook on victim assistance was published under the National Referral Mechanism.

Counter-terrorism measures

Information relating to paragraph 47

44. Police lack a dedicated torture assessment programme, but their training is regularly reviewed by the National Police Board and external bodies. Immigration and Border Guard staff receive training on human rights, legal accountability, and identifying vulnerable persons. Hate speech, hate crimes, and human trafficking are addressed in multiple training stages. A new online module will support Border Guard investigators in identifying trafficking victims, especially minors, women, and those exploited at work.

Training

Information relating to paragraph 49 (a)

45. Human rights are a central theme in all Police University College training. The prison and probation service degree qualifies graduates as prison officers and includes a 48-hour mandatory module on human rights and professional ethics within the "punishment and ethics" competence area. Courses on the penal system, enforcement law, and official duties are compulsory, with legal compliance emphasised throughout the curriculum.

Information relating to paragraph 49 (b)

46. The National Prosecution Authority's 2025–2026 plan includes in-service training on offences in office, including Chapter 11, section 9a of the Criminal Code (Torture) and the UN Convention against Torture. The prison officer degree includes ethics, supervision, and behavioural intervention, with human rights and legal responsibilities integrated across all areas.

Information relating to paragraph 49 (c)

47. Although no specific torture assessment programme exists, police training is regularly reviewed by oversight bodies. Immigration and Border Guard staff receive

training on human rights and identifying vulnerable persons. These themes are also part of Military Science training. Hate crimes and hate speech are addressed under administrative conduct, and a new online training module on trafficking victim identification is being developed for Border Guard investigators.
