



# ICRC

## **ICRC News Release 001 /2020**

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### **Sri Lanka: Supporting authorities to protect detainees and public health during COVID- 19**

Colombo (ICRC): The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) delegation in Sri Lanka is supporting the national authorities in their efforts to protect the public and the detainee population against the spread of COVID-19. In coordination with the Ministry of Health, the ICRC proposed a response plan that includes recommendations shared with the Ministry of Justice, the Department of Prisons and the Inspector General of Police and other relevant authorities.

“In contribution to the ICRC global response plan and [emergency appeal](#), we have adapted our programs in Sri Lanka to support the efforts of the authorities on COVID -19 given our specific technical expertise on public health, forensics, health in detention, disinfection and waste management”, said Loukas Petridis, head of the ICRC delegation in Sri Lanka.

Monitoring treatment and conditions of detention is an utmost priority for ICRC which has been visiting places of detention in Sri Lanka since 1989. The ICRC began distributions of hygiene material (chlorine, soap), and protective personal equipment on 22 March to twenty-four closed prisons and five main police detention facilities. The distributions include dissemination sessions with various detention authorities to explain the use of the material and all necessary precautions.

“Our teams are working around the clock to procure the supplies needed for the distributions in prisons and selected police stations. We have supported over 20,000 beneficiaries across the country so far, yet we are aware that we can neither relent nor slow down our efforts,” said Mr. Petridis. “In the coming weeks, we will continue to engage with the authorities to better understand their needs and priorities and assess how best we can contribute in the face of this rapidly evolving threat”.

The ICRC continues to coordinate with Movement partners including the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent and also in supporting its national partner, the Sri Lanka Red Cross Society, with material assistance and by distributing its posters and leaflets, produced in local languages, with health awareness messages on COVID-19.

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