

CPR GRADISCA D'ISONZO (15/03/2020 – 27/04/2020)

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1. How many people are currently detained in the center and what is the centre's maximum capacity?

According to the most recent official numbers (21 April), there were 45 migrants detained in the centre, which has a maximum capacity of 66. However, following the outbreak of COVID-19 cases in the center on 24 April, a detainee was then transferred to local health facilities.

2. Are people still entering this detention centre? If so, what are the measures taken to prevent contagion and safeguard their right to health?

Between 15 March and 17 April, 6 new people entered the center, one of whom resulted to be COVID-19 positive. He transferred from a prison of Cremona on 19 March. In Gradisca, he tested positive and was put in isolation in the CPR. On 26 March, due to the worsening of his conditions, he was taken to the nearby hospital of Cattinara. That same day the Minister of the Interior issued a [circular note](#) indicating the precautionary measures to take in the event of new arrivals, *i.e.* preliminary medical examination and, where possible, a 14-day isolation period. The National Guarantor has recently confirmed that most CPRs have set up arrival quarantine wards, as well as medical isolation rooms.

3. Have detainees been released from this centre due to COVID-19? If yes, which groups?

Detainees, primarily asylum seekers, have been released from the center. Although the exact total number is not known, the first release occurred on 30 March. The detention order of an asylum seeker was not validated on the grounds that his deprivation of liberty would have hindered the measures that had been foreseen to protect his health. The CPR manager has adopted a release procedure that includes medical screening and swab tests.

4. What information has been provided to detainees in this centre, in which language(s) and through what means?

It appears that, when the first coronavirus case emerged, the detainees had received no information about the overall situation nor about the presence of the virus in the facility. The lack of clarity combined with the absence of personal protection equipment led to several protests in the center (*e.g.* hunger strike and fires). In accordance with the National Guarantor's [bulletin](#) of 21 April, however, it appears that the manager has proceeded with providing information, in several languages, about the status of the health emergency and appropriate precautionary behaviour.

5. What healthcare measures have been taken in response to the virus? Has the number of health workers working inside the center increased?

Around the beginning of April, both the detainees and the mayor of Gradisca, Linda Tomasinsig, reported a lack of sufficient and adequate medical assistance in center. From [Bulletin N. 26](#) of the National Guarantor, it appears that the situation has improved. Currently, "detainees' health conditions [are] being checked on a regular basis regardless of the specific symptomatology", and that the CPR has established a thorough screening procedure and set up medical isolation rooms. During the recent coronavirus outbreak in the center (5 migrants were found positive on 24 April), the positive detainees were immediately put in quarantine and swab tests were conducted on all staff members. No information has been provided regarding the health workers working inside the center.

6. What hygiene measures have been taken in response to the virus?

On 27 March, detainees reported they had been given no personal hygiene kits, masks or gloves. On 21 April, the National Guarantor [reported](#) that “almost all the CPRs’ managers declared that they had regularly carried out disinfections to ensure the premises’ hygienic conditions. They all reported having increased the number of personal hygiene kits for all persons detained and making protective masks available to them at release. In addition, they have informed in multiple languages all detainees about the health emergency and instructed hosts on how to behave to prevent the spread of the virus”. On 27 April, however, Alda Re of the [LasciateCIEntare campaign](#) contradicted these statements. She [claimed](#) that: “personal protective equipment have never been provided, even though we are aware that the State has granted specific fundings for these centres to make up for equipment deficiencies, we are also sure that the areas have never been sanitised”.

7. What measures have been taken to comply with necessary social distancing requirements?

Social distancing remains a main concern - required social spacing measures are impossible to apply.

8. What measures have been taken to ensure that detainees continue to maintain contact with their family and friends in such a difficult time?

Contacts with family and friends has been a rather delicate matter in all the CPRs. Contrary to what occurred in prisons and despite visiting restrictions, the use of mobile phones in immigration removal centres was dramatically limited. As of 21 April, however, the National Guarantor indicated that the use of video calls has been facilitated and expanded in three centres, one of which is the CPR Gradisca d’Isonzo. This system has been used to maintain contact with family and friends, as well as legal advisors and local Guarantors.

9. Are NGOs, monitors and/or volunteers continuing to enter in detention and meet detainees? If yes, what measures have been put in place to ensure their health protection? If no, what measures have been put in place to ensure that detainees continue to receive the kind of support they used to receive from these groups?

According to available data, no social assistants, NGOs or volunteers are being allowed in the centre. The county Guarantor for detained persons, Giovanna Corbatta, has, instead, been able to continue her monitoring activities in the center – she has visited and met detainees with the appropriate personal protection equipment.

10. What measures have been taken to protect vulnerable groups (e.g., victims of gender violence and torture; people facing mental health challenges)?

Psychopharmacological drugs are made available upon request.

11. What measures have been taken to protect staff working with detainees? Has there been an increase or decrease in the number of staff since the COVID-19 crisis started?

Personal protection equipment (*i.e.* masks and gloves) has been provided and precautionary distances have been set to protect staff working with detainees. Following the very recent outbreak of COVID-19 cases, on 27 April Mayor Tomasinsig called upon the Government and the Region to put into place additional measures to decrease operators’ risk of contagion. She affirms that swab tests should be ensured for all those who work and gravitate around the center. There is no information, however, regarding the number of staff members present in the centre.

12. What kind of legal measures are individuals and/or organisations pursuing in response to COVID?

Since early March, there has been a wide mobilisation of the civil society all over the country. Both jointly and individually organisations have pursued several actions - these include:

- [Letter to the Minister of the Interior, to Prefectures, to Police Headquarters;](#)
- [Proposals of Tavolo Asilo to Government and Parliament on the health emergency and on measures affecting foreign nationals;](#)

- [Letter to the Justices of the Peace;](#)
- [Letter to the Councils of the Bar Associations;](#)
- [Appeal of the National Bar Association to the Government.](#)

In this framework, legal measures have been based on the of illegitimacy and unreasonableness of immigration detention in the current national and international contexts. Requests to stop entries in CPRs emerged right at the start of the health emergency. Appeals have been submitted to Courts' specialised departments and Justices of the Peace asking them not confirm nor extend detention orders, as well as to local bar associations urging them to monitor detention hearings and provide public defenders with all the information. Core arguments have been: the impossibility to comply with the measures foreseen to guarantee individuals' health; the lack of real possibilities of effective repatriation; the suspension of hearings; and the availability of accommodation outside detention. On top of that, calls have been launched to ensure adequate reception protocols, and guarantee detainees' relations with the outside world.