



Prisons in Italy at the time of the Coronavirus - The second wave

Antigone's work

Updated to 16 November 2020

Here it is possible to consult the dossier related to the "first phase" with updates until June 2020.

26 June - The National Guarantor for the rights of persons deprived of personal liberty presents its Annual Report to the Parliament on the occasion of the international day in support of victims of torture. The Report faithfully retraces a year of events related to places of deprivation of personal liberty.

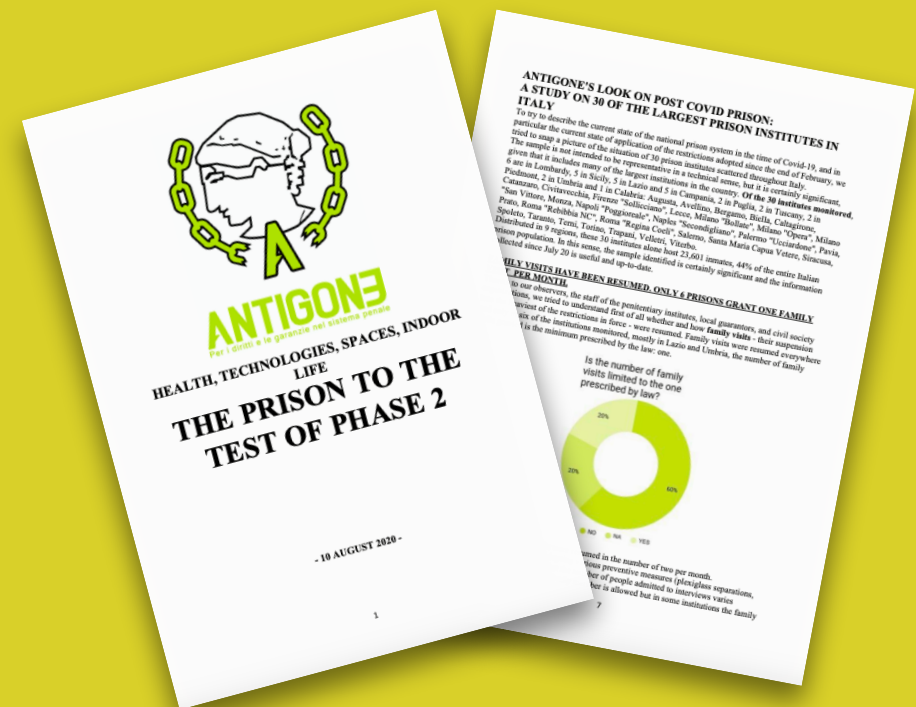
30 June - With a video-message Susanna Marietti wishes that there will be no turning back on the openings that occurred during the Covid-19 emergency (the provision of tablets, cell phones, the use of video calls for interviews) without any impact on the organization or safety of prisons.

6 August - Through a video-message Patrizio Gonnella asks the Department of the Penitentiary Administration (DAP), the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Justice to work for the resumption of school and university courses interrupted in many cases in March.

10 August - Antigone presents the mid-year report "Prison to the test of Phase 2". The report, in addition to analyzing the numbers and trends of the detained population and addressing the main issues of

detention, presents also a section dedicated to "Phase 2" developed thanks to a survey conducted in Italy's 30 largest prisons. The topics covered are the resumption of interviews and activities, the use of video calls to stay in touch with families and the exit from prison establishments of detained people on leave.

The report is presented by several national media including the TG3.



12 August - Antigone's observers resume prison visits. In addition to the observation of detention conditions this year there is also the monitoring of all the measures adopted to curb the spread of the Coronavirus. Between August and November the visits undertaken by the Observatory are more than 30 and some of them are in the prisons where the March riots took place.

6 October - The Ministry of Justice publishes the data on the detained population as of 30 September. The positive effects of the measures launched last March seem to be over.

In one month, prisoners increased by 356 units (+0.7%) reaching 54,227 people. The official prison population rate on 30 September is 107.3%, considering that the official available places are 50,570. However, we know that about 3,000 places are not actually available. This brings the prison population rate to about 115%.

The growth is as always uneven across the country.

In some regions the growth is much more significant (Friuli-Venezia Giulia +3.3%, Valle d'Aosta +5.6%) but, on the contrary, in other regions the detained population is decreasing, as in Basilicata (-3.9%) or in Marche (-4.7%). The most overcrowded regions are Molise (139.2%), Friuli-Venezia Giulia (136.2%) and Puglia (130.3%). The most overcrowded prisons are those of Latina (197.4%), Taranto

(188.2%) and Brescia (178%).

The number and percentage of foreign prisoners remains substantially stable: in fact, they are 32.4% of the total prison population. Despite an increase in the number of foreigners present in Italy, their detention rate is decreasing, a sign that there is no direct relationship between immigration and crime.

Historically stable the number of women, which are 2,279, 4.2% of the total number of detainees. Of these, 36 are in prison with their 39 children under the age of 3.

12 October - The DAP authorizes the diffusion inside the Italian penitentiaries of a brochure produced by Antigone and CILD in collaboration with Doctors Without Borders and the National Coordination of Health Care Professionals: "Covid-19: What to do. How to protect yourself and others from Covid in prison" available in [Italian](#), [Arabic](#), [Albanian](#), [English](#), [French](#), [Romanian](#) and [Spanish](#).



28 October - In an [interview with "Fanpage"](#) Alessio Scandurra talks about the problem of the Covid cluster in the prison of Terni, reaffirming the need for measures to reduce the number of detainees through the use of alternative measures.

28 October - With an [article in "Il Fatto Quotidiano"](#), Susanna Marietti explains how the increase of the detained population and the spread of the virus among inmates and prison workers makes it necessary to act urgently by granting alternative measures to detention for those who have short sentences to serve and for those who have important previous diseases for whom Covid-19 could be fatal.

28 October - Under the new title of "[The Point](#)" the National Guarantor for the rights of detainees and persons deprived of personal liberty resumes the periodic publication of information on the epidemiological situation in places of deprivation of liberty.

29 October - The so-called "Decreto Ristori" enters into force. Dario di Cecca [analyses in a document](#) the contents related to prisons, in particular: the granting of extraordinary prison leaves

to people under the semi-freedom regime; the extraordinary duration of prison leaves granted to convicted inmates to whom the leaves have already been granted in the past and who have already been assigned to external work or admitted to external education or professional training; and the possibility to execute the sentence not exceeding eighteen months - even as a residual sentence - in home detention.

See the document for the foreclosure of access to these measures.

29 October - In a [video-message](#) Susanna Marietti, because of the increase of the prison population in the last two months, asks that those who have a low residual sentence have access to alternative measures to detention and to house arrest. This is necessary in order to prevent a large number of cases of Covid-19 that threaten to overwhelm a health system that risks entering into extreme suffering within a few days.

31 October - In an [interview with Linkiesta](#) Susanna Marietti explains how prisons are high-risk places because they are closed and overcrowded environments that risk becoming Covid-19 clusters. This fortunately did not happen during the first wave, but the danger has not yet been averted.

6 November - The Prime Minister's Decree of 3 November with new measures to fight Covid-19 enters into force, providing for differentiated measures for the 20 Italian regions according to risk scenarios. The FAQ on the website of the Presidency of the Council indicates that in the red zone travel to visit detained persons is prohibited because it would not be justified by necessity or health reasons. In the orange zone, the ban on travel between municipalities also applies on visits to detainees.

9 November - The first of a series of live videos is organized by Antigone to inform about the situation in prisons. Susanna Marietti, Alessio Scandurra and Dario di Cecca explain the situation of contagions in Italian prisons. This is the first of a series of live videos that will be made on a weekly basis.

9 November - Antigone publishes a new map of what is happening in prisons during the second wave. The mapping aims to collect news related to Coronavirus from various prisons in Italy.

10 November - The DAP issues an internal regulation in which it addresses some matters of health management in prison and establishes two risk thresholds. The first threshold, which is reached when the total of positive detainees and staff are 2% of the total, imposes substantial restrictions on recreational, sports, cultural, educational and training activities. The second threshold has been set at 5% with further restrictions on sociality and the recommendation to wear the protective mask even in cells.



11 November - With an article in “Il Riformista”, Alessio Scandurra tries to find the reasons for the increase of infections in Italian prisons despite the application of prevention protocols and the suspension of treatment activities. The suspicion is that this time it was not prisons that were unprepared, but the rest of society, starting from politics. The prison population has grown in recent months as if this second wave was not expected, reducing the space available for the isolation of new detainees and people who tested positive to the virus.

13 November - According to the National Guarantor, people positive to Coronavirus are more than 600 among detainees (of

whom 32 are hospitalized) and more than 800 among prison workers. 75 out of 190 prisons would be involved in the contagion.

14 November - With an article in “L'Espresso” Patrizio Gonnella calls for urgent measures to release 7-8 thousand detainees to allow a real social distancing in prison and stop the contagion. To make life more bearable for detainees in this period more livable, toll-free numbers should be provided in every prison to give information to family members about the health conditions of their loved ones and more investments should be made in distance learning and provide personal protective equipment, hand sanitizes and gloves.

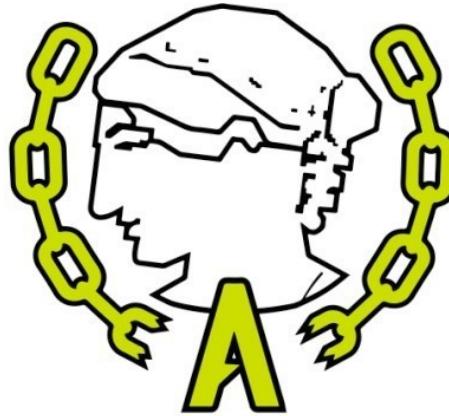
Front-desk activity of Antigone's legal desks in prisons is inevitably reduced. However, the legal information work remotely continues at full speed in collaboration with Antigone's Ombudsman.

Antigone's Ombudsman of Antigone responds to help requests from detainees and their families who can write to the email address:

difensore@antigone.it

If you have other information on Italian prisons you can write to:

osservatorio@antigone.it



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