COMPARISON OF VISITING METHODOLOGIES

ICRC, CPT and national mechanisms

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CONCEPTS OF PRESENCE

ICRC: Comes and stays, can turn back when negotiated

CPT: Comes and leaves after a few days, comes back, can impose, when necessary – if time, persons and money available

NM: Present all the time

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POWERS

ICRC: Can only suggest, no mechanism foreseen for public statements, however can come back soon

CPT: Immediate observations - 3 months time to respond

Recommendations: time for government response (up to 2 years – and more)

Public statement

NM: Observations, can insist on the spot, should be able to use local press – inform CPT etc.

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TRAINING-KNOWLEDGE

ICRC: All delegates have specific training, up to language skills; young age requested

CPT: Some members have specific professional training, others are political – no training – no interest; rather old ages ...

NM: Absolute need for professional training, interest, language skills, knowledge of local situations (medical, political, cultural, financial)

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TIME FRAMES FOR VISITS

ICRC: Local delegation, spends the time necessary to have overall picture, can come back, as it wants

CPT: Is in Strasbourg, visits the longest 2-3 days in one place, might come back after some months, normally after 2 or more years

NM: Permanence: Is all the time in the country, can visit, whenever needed / decided

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ADVANTAGES

ICRC: „Neutral“, can introduce urgent actions (with ICRC means), NGO, visitors not from country

CPT: IGO, only monitoring, has no means for urgent actions, visitors not from the country

NM: NGO or GO, cannot be neutral can organize local (ministerial and - even foreign - NGO) actions, if need is, are locals
even if confidentiality requested, public opinion can be mobilised

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DISADVANTAGES

ICRC: Confidentiality, no power; public statement only once in Iran/Iraq war

CPT: Confidentiality, however the habit of publishing the reports with government responses is nearly universal, PUBLIC STATEMENT as ultimate means

NM: Danger for persecution + threats to members, dependence because of being paid by government, or other reasons

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PLACES TO VISIT

ICRC: Persons under protection of Geneva Conventions 1- 4; only prisons (exception in Israel, where they can visit Palestinians under interrogation)

CPT: All persons deprived of their liberty – definition of the CPT (old peoples homes, „educational + therapeutic homes for handicapped children in Eastern Europe, etc. etc.)

NM: Important to STICK to the CPT choice

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REPORTS ADDRESSED TO WHOM?

ICRC: Orally: to „Government“ (normally represented by liaison people) in final talks, Written: transmission in the country to liaison officers, often transfer questionable

CPT: Orally: Directly to ministers of interior, justice, health etc. in final talks, Written: To „Government“ through minister or other diplomats in Strasbourg

NM: Orally and written to concerned ministers

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WHAT IS USEFUL FOR REGIONS ?

-Independent personalities, known for HR advocacy
-Standards must be redefined: „What is torture“ ?
-Public awareness raising and education is central
-Multiprofessionalism is central: Lawyers,
MDs (clinical, psychiatric, forensic), ex-prisoners,
social workers, former prison directors, ministers,
educators, police persons, anthropologists, etc.
good gender and age mix,
-Attitude: Rather cooperate for change than denounce

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PSYCHOLOGY OF THE VISITOR

-Maturity, do not get high on „torture proofs“
-Know how to protect oneself (team work)
-Do care really for the detained person
-Do care for professionals in detention centres
-Do also care for security of society
-Do care for public awareness of marginality
-Do care for primary prevention
-Do have training for executing visits
-Do stay modest, serve the cause
-Have an educational attitude
-Do want change for better detention conditions, however at an adequate pace

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