



Lithuanian
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service

Transformation of the Correctional System: Seeking Solutions to End Torture in Prisons





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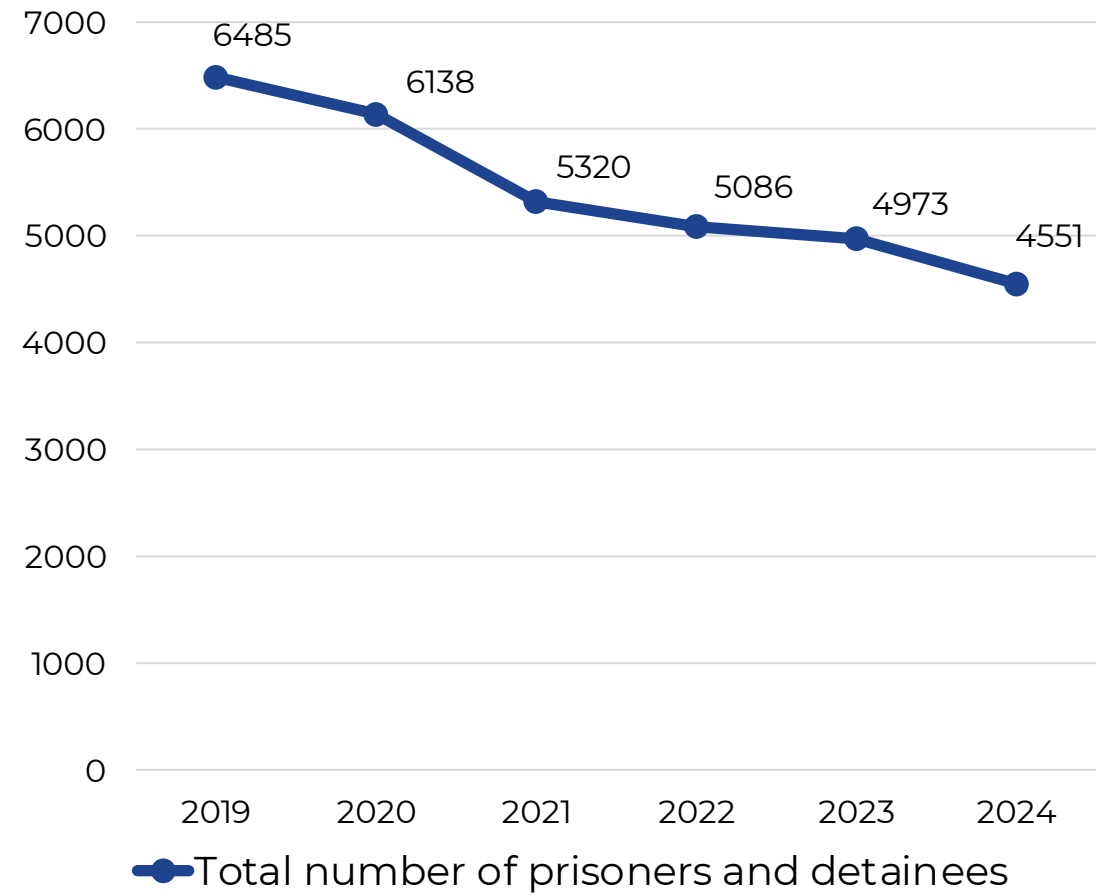
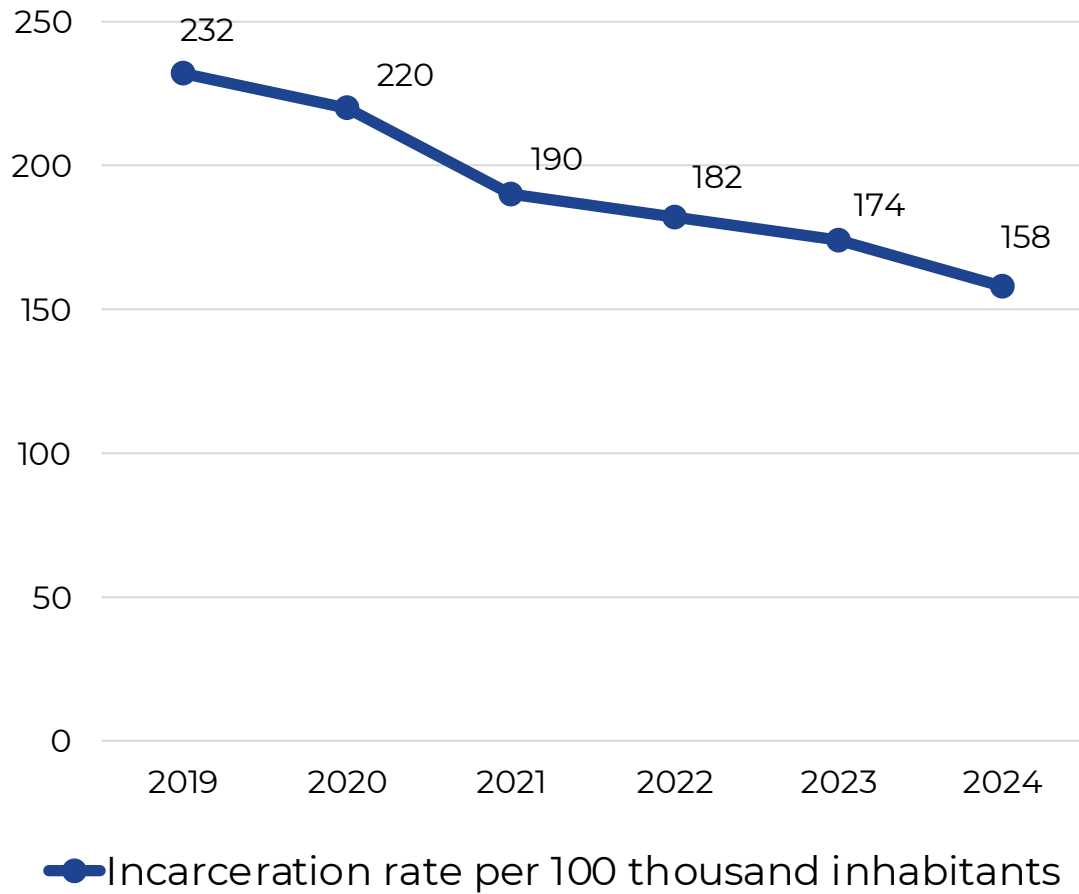
Lithuanian Prison Service is the institution within the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Lithuania responsible for organizing the enforcement of pre-trial detention (arrest) and court-imposed criminal sentences.



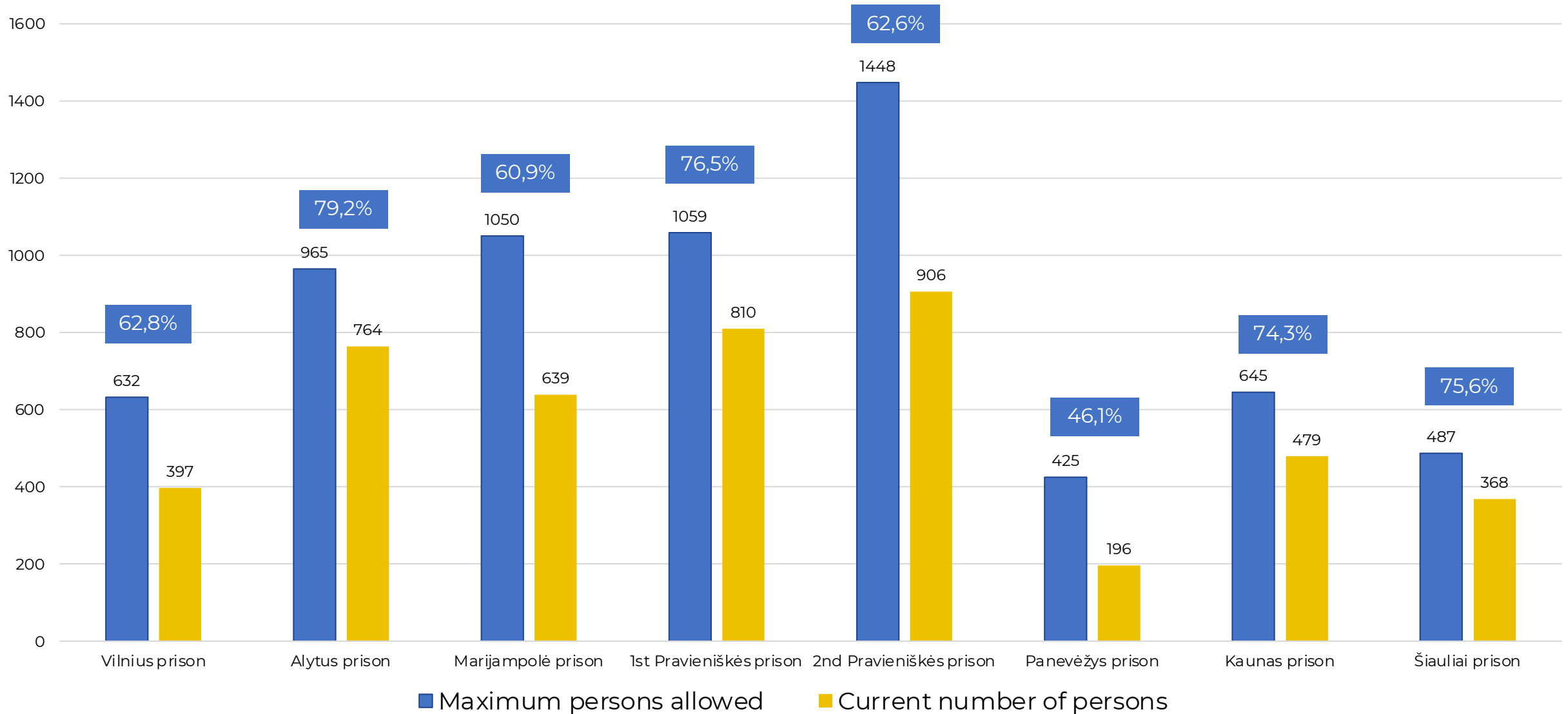


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Prison population rate (1 January 2024)



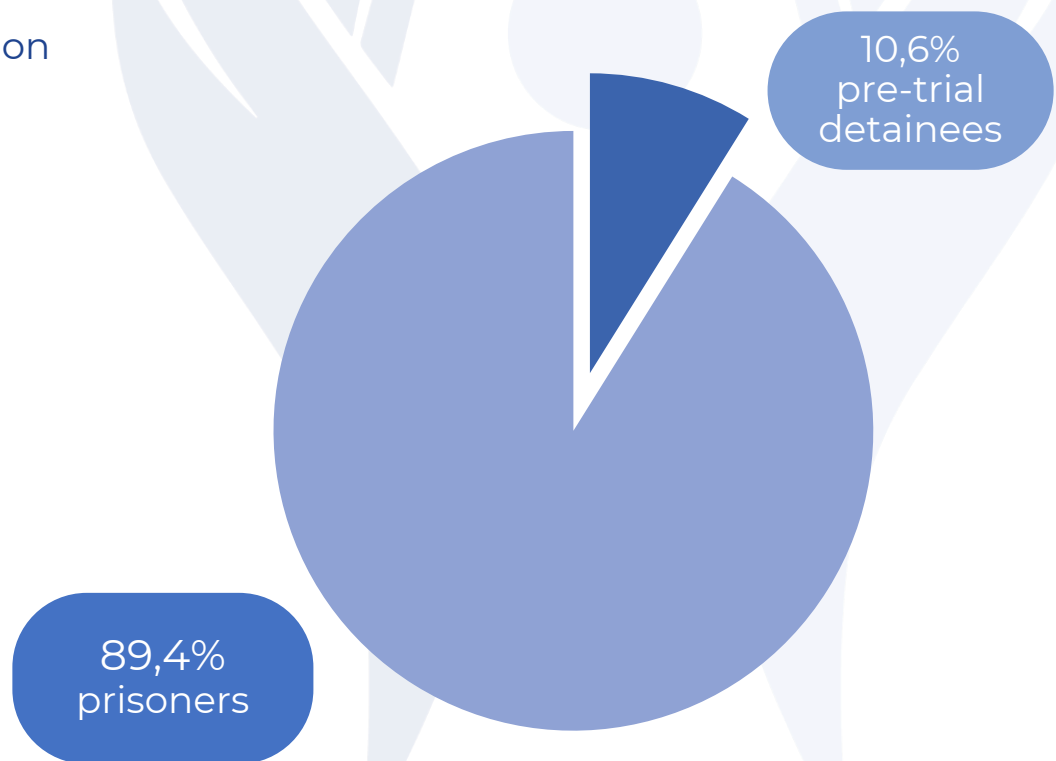
Prison population and capacity



Prison population

As of 18 July 2024, the total number of prison population was 4516, of them:

478	pre-trial detainees awaiting court decision
4038	Sentenced prisoners, of them: <ul style="list-style-type: none">– 99 life sentenced;– 229 sentenced to arrest;– 530 prisoners in open regime;– 166 prisoners in halfway houses
204 (4,5%)	women
15 (0,3%)	juveniles
134 (3%)	foreign nationals





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**Seeking Solutions: 18 July 2024 Report
to the Lithuanian Government
on the visit to Lithuania carried out by the
European Committee for the Prevention of
Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment
or Punishment (CPT)**



Converting the dormitory-type accommodation into cell-type accommodation

Year	Number of places	Prison
2020	55	Marijampolė prison
	67	Vilnius prison
Total:	122	
2021	76	Marijampolė prison
	47	Panevėžys prison
	160	Alytus prison
Total:	283	
2022-2023	44	Marijampolė prison
	204	Pravieniškės prison
	8	Kaunas prison
Total:	256	
Total since 2020:	661 places	



Informal prison hierarchy



- The situation of the prisoners belonging to the lowest caste, which in some cases could amount to modern slavery, could be considered to constitute a violation of Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights, which prohibits, *inter alia* all forms of degrading treatment and obliges state authorities to take appropriate measures to prevent such treatment, including that carried out by private individuals, including fellow prisoners.
- It is notable that the rules dictated by the informal prisoner hierarchy are changing and potentially even slowly weakening, mainly due to general societal and generational changes.



Measures to prevent domination by the informal prison hierarchy

Rotation between prisons or accommodation

As far as possible, kept separate from others who are easily influenced

Isolated on separate floors and in separate, locked cells



Periodic searches and preventative checks are organised and carried out

Regular preventive interviews

Monitoring and risk assessment

Enhancing staff competences

Addressing inter-prisoner violence

In more straightforward cases of inter-prisoner violence, for example, when staff have intervened to stop the attack, but the victim does not wish to file a criminal complaint, the perpetrator is disciplinarily punished according to Article 50(2)(8), of the Code on Enforcement of Sentences, which prohibits prisoners from demanding any service from other prisoners or from using physical or psychological violence.

In December 2022, the Director General of the prison service approved the *“Procedure for Prevention of Violent Behaviour and Investigation of Physical Injuries of Pre-trial Detainees and Prisoners, the Preparation, Processing, and Accounting of these Documents in Places of Enforcement of Sentences (Enforcement of Detention)”* (hereafter – the **Procedure**).

Recording and investigating cases of violence in line with the Procedure

Any staff member who observes an injured prisoner or pre-trial detainee shall report the injury to the Chief Security Officer of the Security Management Unit of the prison on the duty shift

Injuries to a pre-trial detainee or prisoner shall be recorded by a video recorder or a device with a photography function

An injured pre-trial detainee or prisoner shall be examined by a healthcare professional. A certificate of medical examination of the injured person shall be drawn up, the injuries shall be marked on the Personal Body Contour Form

An official report on observed injuries shall be drawn up and, together with other relevant documents, recorded in the Document Management System and forwarded to the competent authority for further execution

The Chief Security Management Officer of the Prison Security Management Unit shall immediately inform the Prison Governor or his/her deputy of an injured person

Recording and investigating cases of violence in line with the Procedure 2

In case of suspicion of the use of violence against a pre-trial detainee or prisoner, the Chief Investigator (in charge of the area of activity in the Prison) or their deputies shall be immediately informed of the case

Documents on the suspected use of violence against a pre-trial detainee or prisoner shall be forwarded to the Pre-trial Investigation Unit via the Document Management System

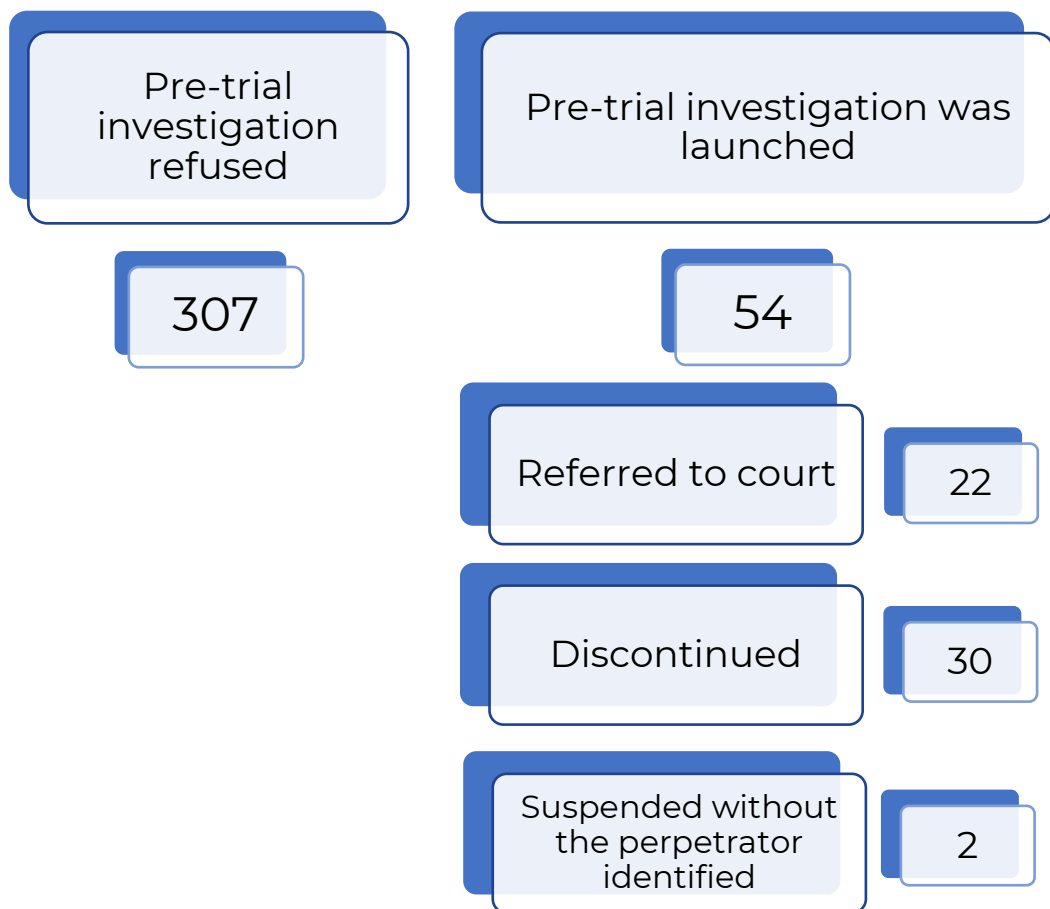
Pre-trial Investigation Unit registers the documents in the Integrated Criminal Procedure System, a clarification of circumstances or a pre-trial investigation is launched

Following a decision to refuse to open a pre-trial investigation, an officer of the Pre-Trial Investigation Unit shall draw up a Resolution, which shall be sent to the Public Prosecutor for confirmation of its legality and validity

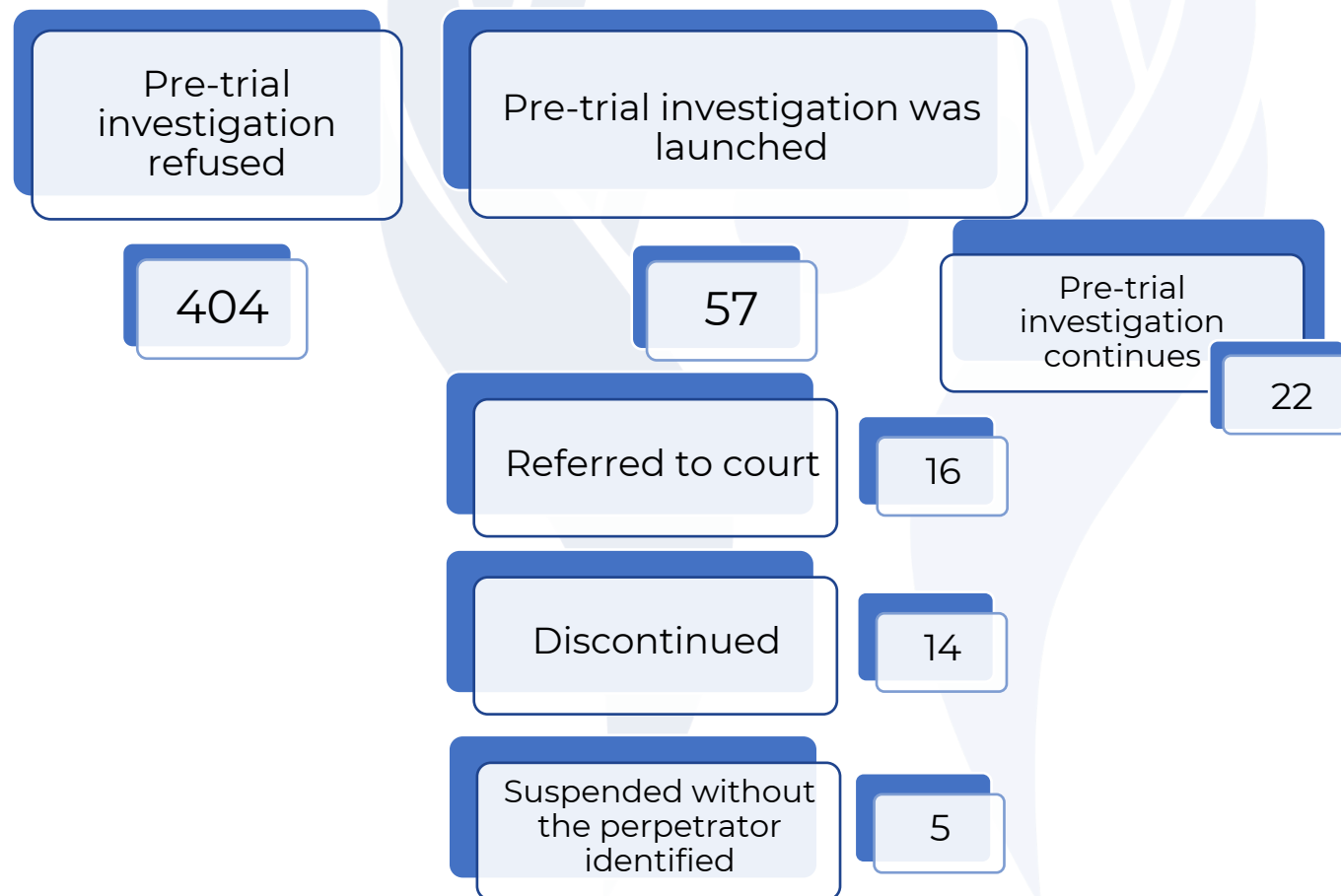
In the absence of grounds for initiating criminal proceedings, the offender shall be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with Article 50(2)(8) of the Code on Enforcement of Sentences or Article 20(2)(8) of the Law on the Enforcement of Detention

Registered cases of bodily injuries

Number of registered cases in 2022 – **1033**



Number of registered cases in 2023 – **1308**



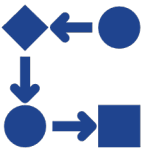
Initiatives taken to tackle widespread violence in Lithuanian prisons



Starting in 2024, a quick reaction team for incidents of violence has been formed. The work of the team is based on rapid exchange of information using „*Signal*“ software, with team member officers, who are working on site in prisons. This allows for a rapid and coordinated response and investigation of violent incidents in prisons without notifications first passing through the chain of command.



In April 2024, LPS held meetings with prosecutors from several District Prosecutor's Offices on initiating pre-trial investigations into inter-prisoner violence incidents. Most of the violent incidents in prisons result in minor health impairments and cannot be prosecuted without a complaint from the victim. LPS has engaged with the prosecutors, requesting them to exercise their prosecutorial power of initiating a pre-trial investigation *vis-à-vis* victims of inter-prisoner violence.



LPS has started a review of its practice and procedures for investigating prisoners' injuries. As the first step, LPS developed a unified prisoners' injuries register for all prisons, which will allow for better statistics collections as well as better monitoring and analysis of how prisoners' injuries are registered and investigated in each of the prisons.

Initiatives taken to tackle widespread violence in Lithuanian prisons 2



LPS has designated a newly repaired unit in Marijampolė Prison as a safe area for victims of inter-prisoner violence. LPS is currently in the selection process of the prisoners and correctional staff for this unit. The unit will accommodate a limited population of prisoners, no more than 20, who have been subjected to or are in high risk of repeat assaults.



The unit will have designated contact and custodial officers for enhanced supervision and security, with the aim to establish a violence, subculture, and drug free area. As well as a designated social worker and activity specialist to offer meaningful activities to these prisoners so as to counter the effects of their relative isolation.



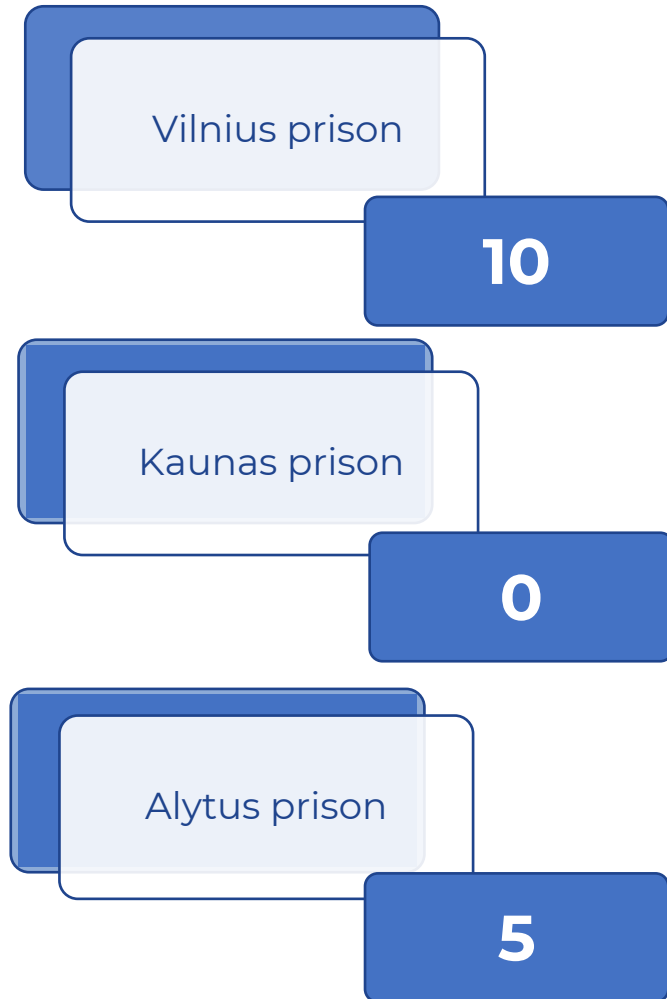
If LPS successfully maintains such a controlled unit, based on the experience and lessons learned, LPS will seek to establish similar safe areas for victims of inter-prisoner violence in other prisons.

Pilot project „Safe letter“

- The aim of the pilot project is to reduce the availability of narcotic and psychotropic substances within prisons.
- Only scanned copies of letters addressed to a prisoner under enhanced supervision shall be provided to them.
- The envelope containing the letter sent to a prisoner shall be opened and scanned in the presence of the pre-trial detainee or prisoner. Following this, a scanned paper copy of the letter will be handed to a pre-trial detainee or prisoner, and the original envelope will be destroyed.



Number of sanctions for refusal to live in assigned living unit in 2023



Measures to prevent refusals of assigned dormitory placement

Discussing

Identifying the causes

Suggesting alternatives (different living place and (or) prison)

Removing identified causes

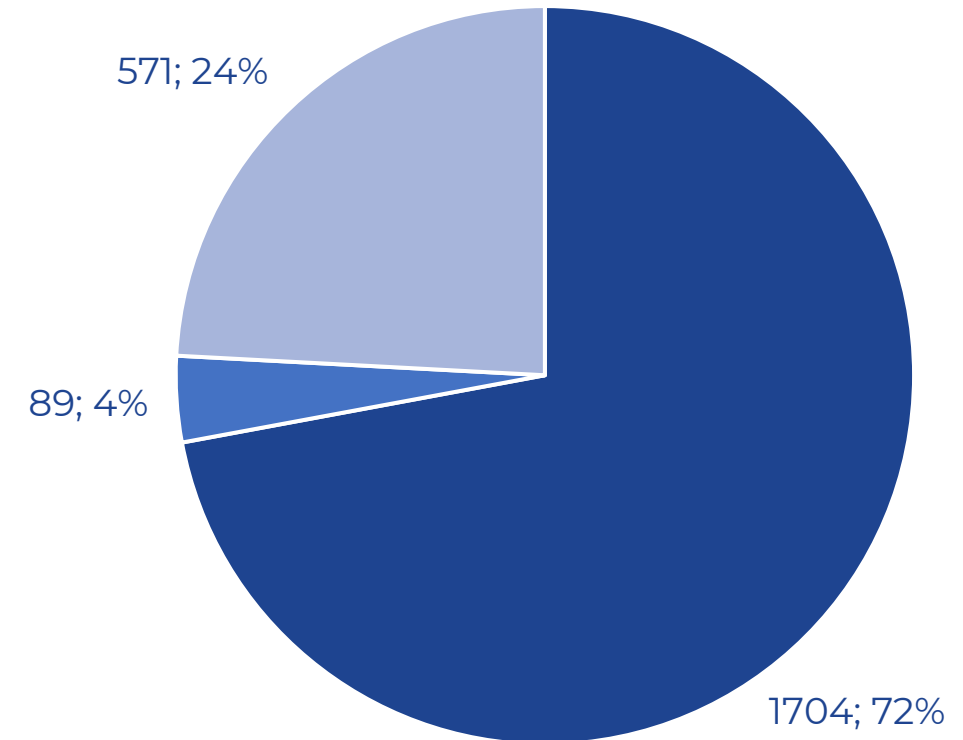
Those who exert a negative influence and cause conflict are isolated

Lithuanian Prison Service staff

Low numbers of correctional staff in prisoner accommodation areas increase the risk of violence and intimidation between prisoners, prevents the development of the necessary positive relationships between staff and prisoners.

As of 21 December 2023, 2400 correctional staff members were employed at Lithuanian Prison Service, of them:

- Uniformed staff
- Civil servants
- Working under an employment contract



Enhancing skills and competences to reduce the risk of excessive use of force by prison officers



In 2023, 118 staff members completed dynamic security training. By the end of May 2024, 35 more have undergone the training. LPS aims to train additional 103 staff members by the end of 2024.



Dynamic security focuses on a constructive and positive dialogue between the prison officer and the prisoner, during which an effort is made to delve deeper into the prisoner's problems.



Stress management, violence prevention, assault defence, emergency response and other training is regularly provided to prison officers.

Use of video recorders and optimising correctional staff operations in prisons



All staff members are equipped with video recorders for use during interaction with prisoners. Video recorders are issued not only to prison officers but also to other staff, such as social workers, etc.



Control over the use of video recorders is maintained, with regular reviews over video footage. All instances involving the use of special measures are subject to video review. In case of excessive use of force, disciplinary action is taken against the responsible prison officers.



In 2023, an Electronic Monitoring Unit (EMU) was established with the recruitment of 24 new staff members. This reallocation of functions and the addition of staff have resulted in an increased number of officers working directly with prisoners.

Cases of excessive use of force by prison officers

2022

Pre-trial investigation was
launched

3

Referred to court

1

Terminated without
confirmation of fact

2

2023

Staff inspections carried out

5

no case of excessive
use of force was
confirmed

1

an official sanction
imposed on prison
officers (warning)

2

the act was
considered minor,
and no disciplinary
sanction was
imposed

1

Reprimand imposed
on a prison officer

1

Decisive actions in response to CPT recommendations to improve Lithuanian prisons

While legal and organisational changes can achieve partial progress, it is evident that significant financial investment is essential to comprehensively and fully address the existing challenges.

Positive actions implemented to eliminate torture and other inhumane practices in Lithuanian prisons include a further reduction in the prison population, the adoption of a new Code on Enforcement of Sentences, a significant decrease in the number of prisoners subjected to disciplinary confinement for refusing to reside in their assigned unit, and enhanced efforts to offer prisoners alternative solutions to their challenges.

A significantly increased presence of correctional staff in detention areas is essential to substantially reduce inter-prisoner violence and to prevent the smuggling, trading, and consumption of illegal drugs within prison.



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Thank you!
Questions?

