



British
High Commission
Nicosia

Information Pack for British Prisoners in the Republic of Cyprus

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Introduction

Who can help?

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO):

The FCO is represented overseas by its Embassies and Consulates (High Commission in Commonwealth Countries). Both employ consular officers, and one of their duties is to provide help and advice to any British National who gets into difficulty in a foreign country.

About the British High Commission

We are impartial; we are not here to judge you. We aim to make sure that you are treated properly and fairly in accordance with local regulations, and that you are treated no less favourably than other prisoners.

We can answer questions about your welfare and about prison regulations but you must ask your lawyer or the court about legal matters. The attached list of lawyers is provided by the British High Commission for your convenience, but neither Her Majesty's Government, nor any official of the Consulate, take any responsibility for the competence or probity of any firm/advocate on the list or for the consequence of any legal action initiated or advice given.

We cannot get you out of prison, pay fines or stand bail or interfere with local judicial procedures to get you out of prison nor secure you an earlier trial date; we cannot investigate a crime.

We have tried to make sure that the information in this booklet is accurate and up to date, but the British High Commission cannot accept legal responsibility for any errors or omissions in the information. If in doubt contact a lawyer.

Who are the Consular Representatives?

Christina Smith
Vice Consul

James McCamley
Consular Officer

Nikki Bevan
Consular Officer

Louise Knight
Consular Officer

Nancy Antoniou
Consular Officer

Contact Information

Consular Section, British High Commission, Alexander Pallis St, PO Box 21978
1587 Nicosia

Tel: +357 22861100 (follow the consular option & emergency option out of hours)

Fax: +357 22861200 (Consular)

E-mail: Nicosia.Consular@fco.gov.uk

Website: www.gov.uk/government/world/cyprus

First Steps

Who will know I have been detained?

When a British citizen is arrested they will be asked at the police station if they want the police to inform the British High Commission of their arrest & detention; if you do not consent to us being informed of your arrest & detention you will be asked to confirm this in writing by signing a police form (in Greek). If you do consent to us being informed this is done in writing and normally takes no longer than two days. However, family/friends may inform us more quickly (but see section below 'What will my family be told'). The Cyprus authorities will inform us if you receive a custodial prison sentence, but not if you are remanded- especially if you previously asked the BHC not to be informed of your arrest.

What will my family be told?

For reasons of confidentiality we are not permitted to tell anyone that you have been detained or the nature of the charges levelled against you without your permission. The Consular Section must have your permission before we will discuss your case, or confirm your detention, with anyone else.

Please Note: How can I contact my family and friends?

In Cyprus there is no automatic right to make a telephone call when you are arrested and the Police may withhold visits while they are questioning you. However, you can ask a Consular Officer to inform next-of-kin or pass on messages via your lawyer. We normally ask you to nominate one main point of contact (family/friends) for consular staff to liaise with – we ask they disseminate information to other family members.

What will the Consulate do?

As soon as we have been notified of your arrest (whether it is via family, friends or officially) we contact you as soon as possible within two working days. You can decline consular assistance at any time.

We will provide a list of English speaking lawyers, and details about the legal system in the Republic of Cyprus. We will ask if you would like us to inform anyone of your arrest.

If a custodial sentence is imposed we can provide details about the prison to your next of kin and inform them about how they can transfer money via the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in London (a fee is charged), or direct to the prison using money transfer services such as Western Union (www.westernunion.co.uk/) or MoneyGram (www.moneygram.com)

Would I have a criminal record in the UK?

You should be aware that if you are arrested for certain serious offences, such as sexual assault or drugs crimes, our staff must inform other relevant UK authorities. The information about the criminal offence will be sent to the ACRO Criminal Records office in the UK. It is therefore possible that information about this offence may appear if a Criminal Records Bureau check were carried out by a prospective employer.

Visits

How do my family and friends arrange a visit?

Visits are officially allowed every two weeks after the first fortnight of the sentence has been completed. No more than three people should attend during each visit. Visitors will need to take some form of identity such as a passport or ID card along with the prison visiting order.

To arrange a visit you must call 24 hours in advance: +357 22406259 quoting the unique prisoner's number. Visiting hours are between 0800 – 1230 hrs Tuesday to Sunday (last admission 1200 hrs). Please note, NO visits are allowed on Mondays and Fridays. Visits are not allowed to exceed an hour.

How many visits am I allowed?

Every detainee is allowed visits from family, friends and relatives up to 10 times per month and you can have 20 nominated visitors on your visitor's list. The prison authorities are, however, usually flexible with foreign prisoners whose relatives visit from overseas (visitors will normally have to show a return flight ticket to the prison authorities). For example, permission to visit more frequently while they are in Cyprus can often be arranged under such circumstances – family can call the prison visits office on +357 22406259 quoting the unique prisoner's number to request this.

Please note: such 'extra visits' are at the discretion of the prison authorities (prison director), and the BHC cannot interfere if permission is refused. Prisoners should also obtain visiting cards and request permission for relatives to visit, via their block senior warden.

Consular visits

A member of the British High Commission will aim to visit you within two working days of receiving police notification of your custodial sentence in Nicosia Central Prison. We normally monitor court cases by telephone on the day of the trial. We undertake to visit you **once during your remand if we are notified of your remand and once when you are sentenced**. Following this, unless there are special circumstances, we will normally **visit you annually**.

We will offer to contact your family or next-of-kin to inform them of the situation. We can give them advice on prison procedure and regulations and on your physical condition and morale. We can pass on any messages for you.

What can visitors bring?

Visitors are not allowed to bring food or personal hygiene items (these items are purchased from the 'canteen' from the prisoner's own account), or medication (unless by prior arrangement with the prison authorities).

Certain items such as fans, TV's, etc are allowed at the discretion of the prison director and may depend on the length of sentence, time served, whether on remand or convicted.

Clothing - Due to limited storage space available in the prison, during your first two weeks of entry to the prison, prisoners have the opportunity to request additional clothing from their family/friends. The prison will then identify what additional items are needed and give written authorisation for these items to be delivered. The prison authorities advise under no circumstances will the prison authorities accept items of clothing without previous authorisation from them.

Family & friends should contact the Prison office directly (quoting your unique prisoner number) for guidance. Tel +357 22406259.

Prison conditions/services

Arrival at police station

Please refer to our comprehensive police station detainee pack (if you asked us to be notified) you should have received when held at the police station on remand. Arrests are normally supported by an arrest warrant issued by a judge. However, if a police officer has reasonable grounds to suspect that a person has committed a serious crime, that person may be arrested without a warrant.

A person taken into custody without a warrant must, within twenty-four hours, be charged with the offence; be released upon certain terms pending the investigation; or be brought before a judge for a warrant of arrest. The latter is the most common procedure. If the warrant is issued, it will state that the person shall be remanded in custody or be released on bail immediately after his or her arrest. If remanded, the remand order will be for a maximum of eight days, but if the police so request, a judge may extend the period of the remand after each 'remand period' if they are satisfied that the police reasonably require more time to complete their investigations. The length of each remand should not exceed eight days for each 'remand period', but it can also be shorter.

A detained person is entitled to legal advice. If a detainee cannot afford a lawyer, the court has the power to assign a lawyer to defend an accused person if, in the opinion of the court, it is desirable that the accused should be defended by a lawyer. When such an appointment is made, the lawyer is paid from the public funds (Section 64 of the Criminal Procedure Law CAP 155). However, detained British nationals should be aware that it is uncommon for a Cyprus court to assign a publicly funded lawyer and **this is only after you have entered a plea at court.**

The court may appoint an interpreter for the defendant – it depends upon the circumstances of the case, though most courts have an interpreter present; be aware the English language level may vary from interpreter to interpreter; the interpretation may not be a word-for-word translation.

If found guilty, the court has the following options: a fine, a custodial sentence, suspended sentence or a combination of all three.

Arrival at prison

All custodial sentences are served in Nicosia central prison. As soon as you arrive, you will be allocated a living block and given your unique prisoner identification number. With this number you are able to receive letters and visitors, and money can be deposited into your 'Prison Comforts' account. Many guards speak basic English. Your block warden will be your first point of contact for most requests e.g. a request to see a representative from the British High Commission or to see a doctor.

Once we receive notification that you have been sent to the central prison, a member of the Consular Section of the British High Commission will visit you as soon as possible after your arrival at the central prison.

Before sentencing at court, the prison welfare department will prepare a report for the court on your circumstances (similar to a pre-sentence report in the UK). It is in your interest to divulge any particular circumstances that may have a bearing on your sentencing – it is very difficult to do so post sentencing, unless there is a change in circumstances. These issues should also be discussed with your advocate.

General prison conditions

Nicosia central prison is the only prison in the Republic of Cyprus, built in 1894 during the UK's Colonial period in Cyprus. It currently houses approximately double the number of prisoners than it was originally designed for – around 700 inmates at one time. However, it is undergoing a “rolling programme” of refurbishment & upgrade of facilities for inmates. For example the open prison recently doubled the capacity with the addition of a new floor; some Blocks now have new cells and shower/WC facilities. The facilities in some of the older blocks are a lower standard than those blocks that have been refurbished.

The cells are a mixture of shared (2 inmates), single cells, and larger shared rooms ('TV room' and the 'theatre block').

Within the prison there are several blocks and each has a unique number e.g. Block 1 A, 1B etc. Prisoners on remand are kept separate from convicted prisoners; young people under 21 yrs and female prisoners also have separate blocks. In addition there is an “open” prison and a 'probation hostel'. There is also a 'special observation block' (block 10,) staffed by nurses & prison guards, for prisoners deemed to be at risk of self harm, or 'other vulnerability'. Prisoners deemed to have contravened prison regulations can be sentenced by the 'prison disciplinary board' and placed in the segregation/punishment cells – during the period of 'punishment' normal visiting rules/privileges may be suspended.

The general routine of the prison is reported as 'quite relaxed' and prisoners spend most of the day out of their cells either working, or on other activities, such as cleaning the communal areas. Prisoners & cells are subject to unannounced searches for illegal contraband (drugs/phones/sim cards, etc) – any prisoner in possession of such items can expect disciplinary action and measures i.e. sentence extended, loss of privileges etc. Occasionally the media report “protests” by prisoners”, often regarding prison conditions: these are usually related to prison overcrowding, the facilities and “poor standard of food”.

During any 'mass protest', the prison may deploy specially trained officers to deal with the situation. 'Mass protests' contravene prison regulations and prisoners involved may suffer sanctions for participation in them.

How can I receive money?

The United Kingdom government does not provide financial support to British Nationals in prison abroad.

Any money you bring into the prison will be put into your unique prisoner account. You can use it to buy goods from the 'weekly canteen' - an order can be placed every two weeks.

Please note a maximum of €300.00 is allowed in a prisoner's account at one time; exceptions to this are granted by the prison authorities i.e. money to pay legal fees – contact the prison finance office directly for guidance before paying any monies if unsure.

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office operates a service which allows you to pay funds to us in the UK which we will pay out in **local currency** to the above overseas (there is a fee for this service – see below). The High Commission will pay it into your account once processed, at the earliest opportunity.

The various ways you can send monies via the FCO are detailed below. Under the Consular Fees Order of 2013/2014, we are obliged to charge for this service. The fee is dependent on the amount that you wish to transfer as follows:

Amount being sent	Fee
One monthly payment up to £100	Free
Each additional payment or amount of £0.01 - £99.99	£10
Each additional payment or amount of £100 - £499.99	£25
Each additional payment or amount of £500 and above	£50

When forwarding funds, you should add the above fee to the amount that you wish to transfer. For example, if you want the recipient to receive £150, you will need to send us £160 (£150 to forward plus £10 fee). If other friends and family also plan to transfer funds in the same month, you should consider coordinating payments so you know what FCO fees to expect. We retain the right to further deduct any local overseas charges we may incur in passing the fees to the recipient.

Should we be unable to pay the funds locally to the recipient, our policy is to refund amounts above £5 to the depositor by bank transfer. In this case, we would contact you for your bank details. Refunds may take several weeks as our internal processes can only start once all relevant costs have been cleared with local authorities.

Please note that our office in Milton Keynes is only responsible for payments. All correspondence concerning the above named prisoner should continue to be addressed to Consular staff in Cyprus.

OPTIONS TO TRANSFER FUNDS TO BRITISH NATIONALS OVERSEAS VIA THE FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

Please note that we can only advance funds to the person overseas once your payment has cleared in our account.

1. **Electronic Bank transfers**

Payment by electronic/internet bank transfer can be made either using online or telephone banking, or at your local bank or building society.

For all bank transfers, you will need to include the following details:

Bank:	National Westminster Bank
Account Name:	FCO Multi Vote
Sort Code:	60-70-80
Account Number:	10012362
Reference:	FCO case reference number (which we can supply on request), surname and first name of the person you are sending the funds for, plus country name if possible, e.g. 11-THB-123456 SMITH JOE - THAILAND or CON-1234 SMITH JOE – THAILAND
IBAN	GB56NWBK60708010012362
SWIFT/BIC	NWBKGB2L

You may also need our bank address which is:

London Corporate Service Centre, CPB Services, 2nd Floor, 280 Bishopsgate, London, EC2M 4RB.

2. By Post

Payments by **Postal Order, Bankers Draft, Building Society Cheque or personal cheque** should be crossed and made payable to "The Foreign and Commonwealth Office". Using this payment method **we are unable to receive payment by credit or debit card, or by cash**. They should be sent to:

Accounts Receivable
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
Corporate Service Centre
PO Box 6108
Milton Keynes
MK10 1PX

We recommend that you use Special Delivery. Please ensure that you include a note briefly explaining who the money is for, why you are sending these funds and quoting the FCO case reference number. You may wish to use the suggested payment slip wording below:

To: Foreign and Commonwealth Office

FCO case reference number:

Date:

Please find enclosed funds for:

Full Name:

Country/place the above is in:

Amount enclosed:

Fee to be deducted:

Payment method:

My name is:

My address is:

If you would like a receipt, please include a stamped addressed envelope. Please note that it can take approximately 15 days for personal cheques to clear and for payment to be received. Please write the cheque guarantee number and expiry date, and the FCO case reference number, on the back of the cheque.

As of 20/02/2018 the prison advise it is no longer possible to send monies to prisoners via electronic money transfer services such as Western Union or Moneygram. The prison accounts office have confirmed that Western Union have made the decision to stop accepting transfers for prisoners due to security issues re the intended recipient not actually collecting the money themselves. The prison are looking at an alternative and will inform us when one is in place.

For those that may have sent monies, the local agent at Western Union HQ informs us that senders should contact the original agent who made the transfer and request it be returned. It appears you will lose the initial fee for sending the money but will get the full amount back apart from the original fee.

If you have any questions please call the prison finance office (+357 22 406180) quoting the prisoner's name, number, and block.

Can I work or study in prison?

Unless excused by the medical officer, or you are over retirement age, all prisoners are expected to work during the day. Certain educational courses are also available such as learning a new language. The prison authorities must approve correspondence courses. Speak to your "block warden" about educational options.

Can I receive medical and dental treatment?

All new prisoners are seen by the prison doctor (Pathology doctor – similar to a GP in the UK). They will examine you, take a medical history and assess **(and approve)** any medicines you have brought in with you, or medicines prescribed by another doctor, but you do not have with you. **You will only be allowed to take medicines that have been approved by the prison medical authorities.** Prisoners can ask to see the doctor at any time, making an 'application' in writing on a form (which will be given to you by the block warden) and submitted via your block warden. You can also be referred to the prison psychiatrist, psychologist or prison welfare (social worker) department. A prisoner requiring specialised or hospital treatment will have this arranged by the prison medical services under the Cyprus state health care system: access will be based on medical need and prisoners' are not afforded a higher priority over local nationals. If you have the funds to pay for treatment privately, you should discuss this with the prison medical services.

Dental: This is arranged via a 'written application' to see the prison doctor who will discuss the options with you and refer you on – you may be charged for dental treatment, please discuss this with the prison medical authorities.

Food and Diet

Prisoners receive 3 meals a day and those prisoners who require a special diet either for medical (diabetes etc) or religious reasons can make their requirements known to the prison authorities: special medical diets are prescribed by the prison medical authorities and they can prescribe additional foodstuffs such as brown bread and extra milk.

Prisoners are not allowed: to prepare their own foodstuffs either in their place of work or accommodation; to have food items delivered by visitors; to possess food stuffs other than those allowed by the prison authorities, nor to possess any alcohol beverages.

Mail/Parcels

Mail: Prisoners can send letters to family, associates & friends twice a week after they have been submitted for checking and receive letters (there is no restriction on the number they can receive). A prison guard, with powers of censorship, reads all letters to and from prisoners and this often causes a delay.

Parcels: Prisoners may receive parcels at the discretion of the prison authorities. What you can receive is dependent on your status as a prisoner (remand/sentenced), the length of sentence and your behaviour. The BHC cannot advise what you can/cannot receive in parcels. Family & friends should contact the Prison office directly for guidance (quoting your unique prisoner number). Tel: +357 22406259. It is highly recommended all correspondence is sent to a prisoner using registered/signed for post.

The contact address of the Central Prison is: [Prisoner's name], prisoner number & block, Nicosia Central Prison, PO Box 24175, Nicosia, Cyprus.

Can I make telephone calls?

There is a phone card phone system in the prison. Phone cards can be purchased at the canteen, and permission to make phone calls must be sought from your block warder. Prisoners can now make phone calls every day if you have phone credit: Mon-Friday between 0800-1800 hrs and weekends between 0900-1500 hrs – as usual apply via your block warder. You can now nominate 20 people for your phone call list. Phone calls are monitored; they may end abruptly, so we advise dealing with any important matters at the beginning of the call.

Prisoners **cannot** receive phone calls from relatives, but should a member of your family wish to speak to the prison authorities for any reason, the prison telephone number from UK is 00 357 22 406 000 followed by 0 for the main switchboard.

Please note – external communications by prisoners:

Any written or oral statements by detainees to the media are forbidden without the prior approval of the Prison Director. Letters to any 'official authority' of the Republic of Cyprus, to political persons, or to any other official, must be sent through the Prison Director.

Any communications that do not fall within the jurisdiction of the addressee; are 'improper'; contain insulting/derogatory language; malicious/unfounded allegations; or attempt to distort the facts/information about prison security/functioning of the prison, may be denied by the Prison Director and the prisoner is informed of this decision. However, prisoners may address letters to the Prison Board & The Ombudswoman's Office without their contents being checked by the prison authorities.

In the framework of the prison's policy to help inmates maintain links to family, especially in cases where inmates are not receiving visits from family and/or friends for valid reasons, the **Family Online Contacts (using Skype)** service has been introduced. This is totally under the jurisdiction & control of the prison administration.

Leisure and entertainment

There is a prison library; however there may be a limited number of materials in English. Prisoners may be allowed to have electronic items such as TV or music player – permission is granted on a case-by-case basis (discuss with your block warder). There are limited recreational facilities such as 'gym', 'football' and other exercise options.

Drugs

If you are caught with any kind of illegal drugs (marijuana, cocaine, etc) you will be punished accordingly; as a result you may suffer loss of privileges, have your sentence extended and be placed in confinement for a period determined by the prison disciplinary board. Tobacco cigarettes are allowed – but not their 'trading' with other prisoners.

How can I make a complaint about mistreatment?

Any allegations of mistreatment should be discussed with your consular representative and you will be advised accordingly on the complaint process – we will ask you to put your complaint to us in writing at the time of your consular visit. However, in general complaints regarding:

Police: if you have a complaint regarding the police, please refer to the leaflet attached for the: Independent Authority for the Investigation of Allegations & Complaints Against the Police (IAIACAP).

Prison: Depending on the nature of your complaint, first speak with your block warden to try to resolve the issue - you can also ask to speak with a senior prison officer (Superintendent for example). You can also submit a sealed written complaint addressed to the Prison Board, via the Director of the prison (this is not opened by the director); around the prison, you will also see sealed mail boxes marked 'Ombudsman's Office' – you can put your complaint in this box, which is regularly emptied by the Ombudsman's office.

The Republic of Cyprus (RoC) Judicial System

Is the system the same as the UK?

The system in Cyprus is different from the UK. There are two types of offences; major offences and minor offences. Minor offences are dealt with in a local district court and the major cases are heard in the Assizes court in the main towns. This is often based on the potential length of sentence that could be imposed for that offence(s).

The local district court, where minor cases are heard, is controlled by a single judge. The Assizes court has three judges presiding over each case. The jury system is not employed. The system in Cyprus involves the judges being responsible for carrying out wide-ranging enquiries in order to produce a file of evidence on each case. The judge uses this file of evidence as a basis for deciding his verdict. The trial is regarded as the final act in each investigation and the judge is very much in control of proceedings and will ask most of the questions.

What should happen when I am arrested?

Arrests are normally supported by an arrest warrant issued by a judge. However, if a police officer has reasonable grounds to suspect that a person has committed a serious crime, that person may be arrested without a warrant.

When a British citizen is arrested they will be asked at the police station if they want the police to inform the British High Commission of their arrest & detention; if you do not consent to us being informed of your arrest & detention you will be asked to confirm this in writing by signing a police form (in Greek).

A person taken into custody without a warrant must, within twenty-four hours, either be charged with the offence; be released upon certain terms pending completion of the investigation, or be brought before a judge for a warrant of arrest, showing good reason for their continued detention - the latter is the most common procedure i.e. the police may request to the judge, 'if they are not held in detention they may interfere with evidence/witnesses or are deemed a 'flight risk'. If the warrant is issued, it will state that the person shall be remanded in custody (where – police station or central prison) or be released on bail immediately (outlining bail conditions) after his or her arrest.

A detained person is entitled to legal advice. If a detainee cannot afford a lawyer, the court has the power to assign a lawyer to defend an accused person if, in the opinion of the court, it is desirable that the accused should be defended by a lawyer. When such an appointment is made, the lawyer is paid from the public funds (Section 64 of the Criminal Procedure Law CAP 155). However, detained British nationals should be aware that it is uncommon for a Cyprus court to assign a publicly funded lawyer.

Please note: **Legal Aid: You can only apply for legal aid when you have been to court and the charges against you read out and you have entered a plea. Before this period i.e. before you are charged formally in court, you CANNOT apply for legal aid.**

The court may appoint an interpreter for the defendant – it depends upon the circumstances of the case. If found guilty, a fine or a custodial sentence will be imposed by the court.

For how long can I be remanded in custody?

If remanded for 'minor offences', the remand order will be for a maximum of eight days at a time, but if the police so request, a judge may extend the period of the remand if they are satisfied that the police reasonably require more time to complete their investigations. The length of each remand should not exceed eight days and it can be shorter.

You can be remanded in custody for more than six months if:

- i) You are suspected of having committed a serious crime
- ii) Extensive investigations are required
- iii) You are awaiting court trial

If any of these conditions apply, your case must be placed before the Assizes Court. If the Assizes Court orders further detention, it must be satisfied that: -

- i) There is a strong suspicion that an offence has been committed and that if released, you would flee.
- ii) Your conduct suggests that if you were released you might tamper with the evidence or influences witnesses or prejudice the proceedings in some other way.
- iii) Having been charged with sexual offence or offences against the person, there is reason to believe that you will continue to commit these offences if you are not remanded in custody.

What happens when I am charged?

You should be notified of the charges against you when you are 'formally charged'. A decision will be made whether to release you on bail, or to request your continued detention. Although you may be accused of committing 'one offence', there may be supplementary charges for example, when more than one person is involved in a crime, there may be additional charges of 'conspiracy to commit...X offences'. Similarly drugs offences may involve more than one charge i.e. conspiracy, importation, distribution & manufacture.

The District Attorney Office i.e., the Public Prosecutor's Office will investigate the alleged offence. When it is deemed that there is sufficient evidence to prosecute, (and where there is a 'victim') the Judge will proceed if he or she feels there is a case, even if the charges are dropped by the 'victim'; the investigation stage is formally closed and the trial stage is opened.

The District Attorney's Office must produce an indictment that sets out details of the accused, the crime of which he or she is accused, when and where the crime took place, the legal definition of the crime and the criminal laws applicable to the case. When the judge receives the indictment the date for the trial is set – this may be several months later.

What provision is there for bail?

Once formally charged, you can be released on bail if the police & prosecutions authorities agree. Bail conditions may mean that you have to surrender your passport to the authorities, post a sum of money as guarantee (amount varies with the offence & personal circumstances), report to a local police station to 'sign on' (daily/weekly), or a combination of all of these.

Please note: if your passport is held as part of your bail conditions and you ask us to try to recover it from the authorities so you can travel, this may result in your bail being revoked by those authorities and you being remanded into custody.

If you wish to vary your bail conditions (including asking for the return of your UK passport) you will have to approach the court for a variance of the bail conditions and consular staff cannot become involved in this, or ask for 'favourable bail conditions' simply because you are a British National. The UK Government is also unable to guarantee your bail, or pay bail monies. While on bail, you will have to support yourself financially. Again there is no UK Government financial assistance for this.

What kind of legal assistance is available?

You can appoint a lawyer for yourself at anytime following your arrest; a list of English-speaking lawyers is provided with this information sheet. Normally, if you appoint a lawyer, they will ask for an advance of their fee (which may be high) before accepting your case. If you do not have a lawyer when you come to trial, the court may appoint a lawyer free of charge, if the judge is satisfied that you do not have sufficient funds. Alternatively, Legal Aid may be available where the court decides that you are unable to afford the cost of the proceedings without affecting your basic needs and obligations and those of your family.

Legal Aid: You can only apply for legal aid when you have been to court and the charges against your read out and you have entered a plea. Before this period i.e. before you are charged formally in court, you CANNOT apply for legal aid.

Legal Aid applications can be made at the court, where you or your lawyer completes the forms. For further information you can contact the Chief Registrar of the Supreme Court by telephoning 22865716 (for callers in Cyprus) and +357 22865716 (for callers outside Cyprus) or in the Legal Affairs Unit of the Ministry of Justice and public Order by telephoning 22805922 or 22808946 (for callers in Cyprus) and +357 22805922 or +357 22805946 (for callers outside Cyprus).

The court may also appoint a lawyer at your request, if the charge is a serious or complicated one, whereby you will need legal assistance in order to properly defend yourself. The same applies if it is obvious that you are not capable of handling your own defence.

The British High Commission cannot pay legal fees or make financial guarantees to lawyers.

What happens at the trial?

All proceedings take place in **Greek** with a court translator present – the translation may not be ‘word-for-word’ and the generally only provide translations while you are in the witness box ‘under questioning’. When you first appear at court, the charges will be read out and a decision will be made if there is a case to answer – **this is an opportunity to raise the issue of legal aid, or of any mistreatment allegations (for example the judge can order your medical examination, or that you are taken to hospital for treatment/assessment)**; the next stage is for you to enter a plea against the charges, and once this is done a trial date will be set.

In Cyprus, even when the trial is underway, you may attend court for several hearings and there may be ‘several false starts’, before a conclusion is reached. At the conclusion of the trial, if you are found guilty, a date for sentencing will be set; before sentencing, a report (similar to the UK pre-sentence reports) will be prepared by the Welfare Dept (Social services) for the judge to consider before passing sentence.

Sentences

Custodial sentences – all custodial sentences are served in Nicosia Central Prison.

How can appeals be made?

From the date of sentencing, you have 10 calendar days to submit your appeal. This can be done via your legal representative, or you complete a form which you can obtain from the prison – initial request via your block warden. Appeals are likely to be complicated and have several legal aspects, so we recommend that your appeal is prepared & submitted by a legally trained person.

What provision is there for reduction of sentence (remission) e.g. for good behaviour?

Prisoners sentenced to more than a month but less than two years, may earn six days per month remission providing they are well behaved. Prisoners serving a sentence between two and five years may earn eight days remission per month on the same terms. On arrival at the prison and you have been ‘processed; you will be given a card with your prisoner number, release date and later on, your ‘earliest release’ remission date will be added.

What provision is there for early release e.g. on parole?

The Republic of Cyprus has only recently instituted a parole board. Your block warden can advise on the workings & eligibility for a case to be heard by them.

What provision is there for clemency or pardon?

Parole/early release may be granted to prisoners who have behaved during their sentence. This decision may be granted if the prison is overcrowded; prisoners have less than two months to serve before major religious holidays (Christmas & Orthodox Easter); other important events such as election of a new President, or anniversary of Cyprus’ independence. Parole does not occur frequently and a prisoner must not expect to automatically benefit. Any requests for information concerning parole must be addressed to the prison authorities and NOT the BHC.

What about any financial penalties?

Fines

If sentenced to a fine, a prisoner will either have to produce the funds immediately, or they may be transferred to Nicosia Central Prison until it is paid. (You may have to remain in custody until the fine is paid). If insufficient funds are available in Cyprus, the British High Commission can help by contacting next-of-kin or friends in the UK to tell them how to transfer funds. However, the British High Commission cannot pay fines for prisoners from public funds – even on a ‘loan basis’.

Nicosia Central Prison has recently confirmed to us that they are able to accept payments for fines via Western Union. The procedure is:

Contact Nicosia Prison and confirm the preferred Western Union Branch in Nicosia, the exact amount (in Euros) of the fine and obtain the prisoner’s number. Detainee’s relatives or friends to arrange the exact amount to be transferred via Western Union.

When the money has been transferred, the Prison finance office* needs to be informed of the Address of the WU office and the reference number.

A Prison Officer will be dispatched to collect the money, and then arrangements will be made for the detainee to be released. * Prison finance office +357 22406165.

- If you have been convicted of certain financial crimes, such as non-payment of maintenance, the authorities may not release you until the monies are paid.

Is transfer to another prison within the Republic of Cyprus possible?

No, Nicosia Central prison is the only prison in the Republic of Cyprus.

Is transfer to the UK a possibility?

If a prisoner wishes (see important note below) to be transferred to a UK prison, then they must approach the Prison’s Transfer Officer to make an application (via block warder). Once the transfer request has been approved, reports need to be made by the Prison and Police authorities to the Ministry of Justice and Public order in Cyprus. These reports are then passed to the UK Ministry of Justice & the Transfer Border agency who arrange officers to accompany prisoners from Cyprus to the UK. The process can take up to at least a year, and requests for transfers are not usually accepted for sentences less than 1 year.

Important notes:

- 1. EU member states under the Council Framework Decision 2008/909/JHA, can seek the compulsory transfer of prisoners from their territory to the state of the prisoner’s nationality or permanent residence. In those cases, the British Authorities are obliged to agree to your transfer even if you do not want to go return to the UK.**
- 2. If you make a request to return to the UK to serve part or your entire sentence and you subsequently change your mind, the Cyprus authorities may invoke the above article.**

The BHC is not involved in this process and is unable to update you, or your family, on the progress of your application – such for ‘updates’ requests should be directed to the prison authorities.

What are the procedures for release and deportation?

Near the end of your sentence you will be interviewed by the RoC immigration authorities to determine your status in the RoC. Unless you have permanent residency, the Cypriot Authorities usually deport all non Cypriots back to their home country (you can only be deported to the country of your passport).

If you are to be deported, you will be formally released from the prison and 're-arrested' by the immigration police, then held in immigration custody pending deportation.

If relatives/friends/or yourself can pay for your flight home, it may reduce the time spent in custody pending deportation, rather than waiting for Cyprus public funding for flights. Family friends can send fax the flight details (quoting your unique prisoner number) to the prison confirming the itinerary details – **Fax +357 22303889**. Once this has been confirmed, the prisoner is taken to an immigration holding cell, where they are given their personal belongings and money from the balance of their Prison Comforts account.

Deportees are taken to Larnaca airport by the immigration police in time for their flight. Ex-prisoners may be placed on a 'stop-list' and not be allowed back into Cyprus for some time after their Deportation, up to 10 years. Once back in the UK, you can seek legal advice from a Cyprus lawyer, or the Cyprus High Commission in London regarding your 'stop file' – BHC staff cannot advise on this matter.

Consular staff normally only receive notification of release & deportation **after** the event; nor can we intervene in or prevent your deportation.

Additional Information

N/A

Prisoners Abroad

Since 1978 the charity Prisoners Abroad has offered practical support and advice to British citizens imprisoned overseas. It is the only UK charity providing this service and it is available to all, whether guilty or innocent, convicted or on remand. Prisoners Abroad is concerned with your health and welfare, both during your imprisonment and also on your return to the UK, through their resettlement service (if you have registered whilst in prison). They can also provide support and advice to your family during your imprisonment. In order to access any services, prisoners must first register with Prisoners Abroad by signing and returning their authorisation form.

Once you seek help from Prisoners Abroad, the Prisoner & Family Support Service will be your point of contact for advice and information. The type of assistance they can offer will vary from country to country, but generally they can provide you with information, in English, on:

- your rights as a prisoner and issues that may affect you such as health or transfer to the UK
- obtaining magazines, newspapers, books and the regular Prisoners Abroad newsletter
- writing to a pen pal
- learning the language of your country of imprisonment
- translation of documents
- grants for food if you are in a developing country and don't have funds from other sources
- grants for essential medicines and toiletries if you don't have funds from other sources
- preparing for release
- help for your loved ones, including information, family support groups and assistance with the cost of visiting

Prisoners Abroad
89 – 93 Fonthill Road
London N4 3JH
UK

Telephone: 00 44 (0)20 7561 6820 or, for your relatives in the UK, Freephone 0808 172 0098

(Mondays to Fridays 9.30 am to 4.30 pm, UK time)

Email: info@prisonersabroad.org.uk

Website: www.prisonersabroad.org.uk

Glossary of Terms: Useful legal terms: Key phrases – English into Greek

ENGLISH	GREEK Pronunciation	ENGLISH	GREEK Pronunciation
1	ena	Good Morning	kali mera
2	dio	Good Afternoon	kalispera
3	tria	Good Night	kali nixta
4	tesera	Monday	Deftera
5	pente	Tuesday	Triti
6	exi	Wednesday	Tetarti
7	epta	Thursday	Pempti
8	okto	Friday	Paraskevi
9	enia	Saturday	Savvato
10	deka	Sunday	Kyriaki
11	enteka	Day	Imera
12	dodeka	Week	Evdomada
13	deka-tria	Month	Minas
14	deka-tesera	Year	Etos
15	deka-pente	Today	Simera
16	deka-exi	Tomorrow	Avrio
17	deka-epta	Tonight	Apopse
18	deka-okto	Spring	Aniksi
19	deka-enia	Summer	Kalokeri
20	ikosi	Autumn	Fthinoporo
30	trianta	Winter	Himonas
40	saranta	Please	Parakalo
50	peninta	Thank you	Euharisto
60	exinta	Climate	klima
70	evdominta	Cold	krio
80	ogdonta	Heat	zesti
90	eneninta	Hot	kafto
100	ekato	Rain	vrohi
1000	hilia	Shade	skia
Food	Fagito	Sun	ilios
Apple	milo	Sunshine	liakada
Banana	Banana	Weather	keros
Beans	fasolia	Wind	aeras
Biscuits	mpiskota	Dry	stegno
Bread	psomi	Wake	ksipnios
Chicken	kotopoulo	Sleep	kimamai (I) / ipnos(the)
Coffee	Café	I	Ego
Eat	troo	You	Esi
Egg	avgo	He	Aftos
Fruit	Fruta	She	Afti
Hungry	pinasmenos	It	Afto
Juice	himos	We	Emis
Meat	kreas	You	Esis
Milk	gala	They	Afti
Omelette	omeleta	Mother	Mitera / Mama
Rice	rizi	Wife	Gineka
Sugar	zahari	Woman	Gineka
Sweet	gliko	Me	Emena
Vegetables	lahanika	My (mine)	Diko mou (of me)
Water	nero	Yours	Diko sou (of you)

ENGLISH	GREEK Pronunciation	ENGLISH	GREEK Pronunciation
Cup	flijani	Her	Diko tis (of her)
Fork	piruni	His	Diko tou (of him)
Knife	maheri	Their	Diko tous (of them)
Plate	piato	Them	Afti
Spoon	kutali	Father	Pateras
Bed	krevati	Girl	Koritsi
Bed Sheet	sentoni	Husband	Sizigos
Blanket	kuverta	Man	Andras
Mattress	stroma	Door	Porta
Pillow	maksilari	Give	Dino
Toothpaste	odontokrema	Here	Edo
Towel	petseta	Inside	Mesa
Wash	pleno	Open	Anixe
Wet	vregmeno	Stop	Stamata
Bucket	kuvas	Want	Thelo
Soap	sapuni	Walk	Perpato
Shower	duz	Body	Soma
Toothbrush	odontovurtsa	Hand	Heri
Shirt	pukamiso	Leg	Podi
Shorts	sorts	Nose	Miti
Socks	kaltses	Ear	Afti
Trousers	panteloni	Mouth	Stoma
"T" Shirt	mpluzaki	Head	Kefali
Shoe	paputsia	Hair	Mallia
Clothes	ruha	Eye	Mati
Pullover	pulover	Eyes	Matia
Lighter	anaptiras	Doctor	Giatros
Pen	stilo	Borrow	Danizome
Pencil	molivi	Close	Klino
Book	vivlio	Closed	Klisto
Cigarettes	tsigara	Come	Ela
Good	Kalo	Outside	Exo
Bad	Kako	Need	Chriazome
Half	miso	Run	Treho
After	meta	Stand	Stekome
Before	prin	Stay	Meno
Later	argotera	Debt	Hreos
Now	tora	To Buy	Na Agoraso
Consulate	Proksenio	Money	Lefta
Embassy	Presvia	Visit	Episkepsi
Governor	Diefthintis	Visiting Permit	Adia Episkepsis
Transfer to another prison	Metagogi / Metafora	Personal Money in Prison	Prosopika Hrimata stin filaki
Guard	Filakas	Head Guard	Archifilakas
Bail	Engiisi	Local Prison Rules	Kanones filakis
Complaint	Parapono	Lawyer	Dikigoros
Blood Test	Eksetasi ematos	Parole	Anastoli
Prison Council	Simvoulia Filakis	Visit	Episkepsi
Police Officer	Astinomikos	Appeal	Efesi
Public Prosecutor	Esageleas	Law	Nomos
File	Fakelos / Archio	Permit	Adia
Guilty	Enohos	Power of Attorney	Eksousiodotisi
Interpreter	Metafrastis	Release	Apofilakisi
Investigating Judge	Anakritis	Social Worker	Kinonikos Litourgos

Annexes

Annex 1: List of English-Speaking Lawyers

Annex 2: List of Private Translators/Interpreters

Annex 3: FCO leaflet: *In prison abroad*

Annex 4: FCO leaflet: *Transfers home for prisoners abroad*

Annex 5: Prisoners Abroad authorisation form

Annex 6: Prisoners Abroad family contact form

Annex 7: Prisoners Abroad CFF form

Annex 8: Fair Trials International questionnaire and leaflets

Annex 9 : Independent Authority for the Investigation of Allegations and Complaints Against the Police

Disclaimer

This booklet was compiled by the Consular Section, British High Commission, Nicosia. It is revised on a regular basis. If any of the information contained in this booklet is incorrect, please draw inaccuracies to our attention so that we can make amendments.

The British High Commission is not accountable for the information provided in this booklet. Local proceedings are subject to change at any time.

Thank you.

07 March 2017