

UPDATE #3



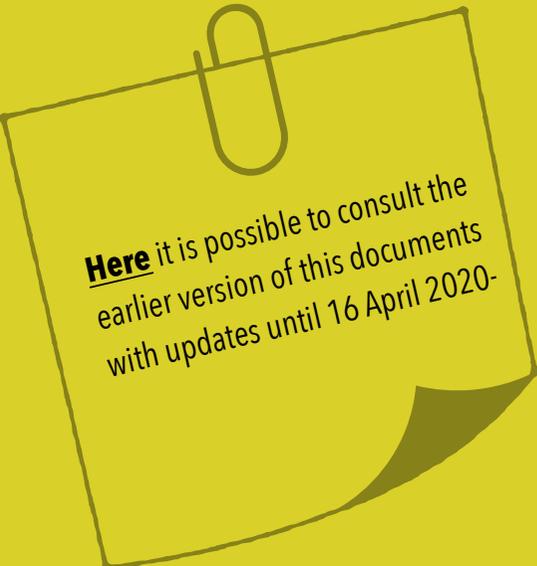
 ANTIGONE

NEXT
NEW MEDIA 

Prisons in Italy at the time of Coronavirus

Antigone's work

Updated to June 5th 2020



Here it is possible to consult the earlier version of this documents with updates until 16 April 2020-

18 April 2020. Antigone publishes the fifth weekly video update on Prison and Covid-19. The number of detainees has decreased (6,000 people less), infected inmates increased (over 100 people are positive, 15 of which are hospitalized) while there are 3 dead people. Among prison staff, 209 are infected. Antigone keeps monitoring of the episodes of violence in Milano-Opera and S.M. Capua Vetere. **Video** by Michele Miravalle

20 April 2020. Antigone publishes on its facebook page the numbers of requests for help received by the Ombudsman since the beginning of the Coronavirus emergency. Given the many requests of this period, Antigone has created a task force that, in addition to the Ombudsman's volunteers (a group active since 2008 that on average every year provides support to about 500 people), includes lawyers and students active in the legal information desks operating in Roman prisons. The task force, which started to operate at the end of March, has so far taken charge of 124 cases, most of them related to health problems, information about the spread of the pandemic and the request for house arrest or alternative forms of detention. It also received requests for help regarding cases of alleged violence against prisoners.

21 April 2020. Antigone and CILD organize a **Facebook** and **Youtube** live during which Mauro Palma and Patrizio Gonnella discuss about prison and Covid-19.

22 April 2020. With an **article on Medium**, Antigone talks about prison through the letters and the phone calls it received from detainees and their families.

24 April 2020. With an **article in Il Fatto Quotidiano** Susanna Marietti reacts to the first signs of public unrest about the release of Mafia bosses. Antigone's national coordinator clarifies that the boss Bonura has been released from prison thanks to pre-existing laws unrelated to the Coronavirus.

25 April 2020. Antigone organizes a **Facebook** and **Youtube** live during which the president of Antigone, Patrizio Gonnella, former judge Oscar Magi and rapper Chicoria read and comment on some excerpts from the book "Bisogna aver visto. Il carcere nella riflessione degli antifascisti", re-publication by Patrizio Gonnella and Dario Ippolito for the Edizioni Dell'asino of an extraordinary issue of the magazine 'Il Ponte' by Piero Calamandrei of 1949.

29 April 2020. With a [news report, Tg3](#) tells the story of the prison in Turin, the institute where at the end of April the highest number of coronavirus positive prisoners was registered, through the words of a recently released prisoner, the local guarantor of detainees' rights and Giovanni Torrente, University professor, member of Antigone Piemonte and the Antigone board.

30 April 2020. Antigone [translates into Italian](#) an article summarizing a study conducted by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) in collaboration with epidemiologists, mathematicians and statisticians. The results of the study suggest that reducing the number of prisoners helps to reduce the number of infections, both in prisons and in free society.

1 May 2020. A third inmate dies in Milan for Coronavirus. The man, aged 54, was in pre-trial detention in the Milan-San Vittore prison, where he contracted the virus. On April 12, when the symptoms appeared, he was formally released and hospitalized at the San Paolo hospital where he died. The cases of coronavirus positive prisoners on this date are (according to data published by the National Guarantor) 159 among the detained population and 215 among the staff. A figure that, as far as the inmates are concerned, is on the rise.

8 May 2020. Thanks to the data published by the Ministry of Justice Antigone carries out a short numerical analysis of the detained population. According to the data as of April 30, the numbers of the detained population continue to decline, but the differences between regions remain significant. At the end of April there were 53,904 prisoners, 7,326 fewer than at the end of February, a decrease of 12% in two months. Higher drops were registered in Emilia-Romagna (21%), in Lombardy (15.9%), Veneto (10.7%), and Piedmont (8%). Also, there was a significant drop in the number of people in pre-trial detention, 2,494 less than at the end of February, with a decrease of 13.2%, in proportion to the total number of prisoners. The average prison population rate in the country also fell to 107%, but situations such as those in Latina (179.2%), Taranto (187.6%) or Larino (194.7%) remain critical. It should be specified that the reduction in the number of people detained is due both to releases from prison and to lower number of people entering prisons.

11 May 2020. With an [article in Il Manifesto](#), Patrizio Gonnella explains how the campaign on the release of mafia-related detainees is full of inaccuracies, generalisations and is deeply risky. It risks to undermine the entire prison community. In particular, the risk is to damage the great mass of prisoners who have nothing to do with the Mafia and who could now suffer a wave of new restrictions.

12 May 2020. After Francesco Basentini's resignation on May 2, Bernardo Petralia is appointed the **new head of the Department of the Penitentiary Administration**. During the **presentation of Antigone's annual report** he explains that his commitment will be both for the security inside the prisons and for the guarantee of the rights of prisoners.

13 May 2020. Thanks to the funds received from some international donors, the Italian Coalition of Civil Liberties and Rights purchases personal protective equipment to be used by vulnerable people with few possibilities to cover this need by itself. With the mediation of Antigone, 5,500 ppe are delivered to the prison of Milan-San Vittore and 2,000 to the prison of Trieste, for prisoners and staff. In addition to these two prisons, another 500 masks were donated to Borgo Amigò, a community run by VIC-Caritas and the Casa di Leda that hosts offenders, young adults and young mothers with their small children.

15 May 2020. The National Guarantor **reports** that as of 15 May there are 52,679 detainees in prisons; the number of people who were granted home detention since 18 March is 3,282, in 919 cases with the application of electronic monitoring. The number of Covid-19 positive people in prison has decreased, also due to the release of positive people: 119 detainees, of which 2 in hospital and 162 among the staff.

19 May 2020. Viene pubblicato in Gazzetta Ufficiale il Decreto Rilancio con il quale vengono destinati 31,7 milioni agli uffici giudiziari e agli uffici centrali del Ministero della Giustizia per consentire la sanificazione degli ambienti, l'acquisto di materiale igienico-sanitario e altri dispositivi di protezione individuale e di apparecchiature informatiche. Inoltre, i Tribunali e le Corti d'Appello vengono autorizzati ad assumere personale per smaltire il carico di lavoro che si è accumulato in questo periodo e per favorire l'informatizzazione delle pratiche. Per quanto riguarda il sistema penitenziario di adulti e minori, sono stati stanziati 7 milioni per il lavoro straordinario degli operatori, 1,2 milioni per le spese di sanificazione e 4,6 milioni per l'acquisto di materiale informatico. Antigone si augura che i fondi stanziati per le nuove tecnologie non siano una concessione temporanea, ma un segnale di apertura permanente. Qualsiasi prospettiva di reinserimento sociale non può che passare anche attraverso l'utilizzo della rete web. L'obiettivo a lungo termine deve essere quello di utilizzare le nuove tecnologie non solo per le comunicazioni 'private' tra detenuti e famigliari ma anche per accedere al mondo della didattica a distanza, che per quanto non può sostituire la didattica dal vivo la può senz'altro potenziare, nonché per garantire ai detenuti un pieno diritto all'informazione, come tra l'altro esplicitamente sancito dall'ordinamento penitenziario riformato nell'ottobre 2018.

21 May 2020. Antigone's national coordinator, Susanna Marietti, participates in a **meeting organized by Inclo**, a worldwide network of organizations dealing with human rights and civil liberties. The topic at the centre of the discussion is the impact that the Coronavirus has had on some penitentiary systems and the responses that civil society has offered to deal with this emergency. Susanna Marietti explains what happened in Italy and what Antigone did during the past weeks.



22 maggio 2020. With a [Facebook](#) and [Youtube](#) live, Antigone presents the XVI Report on prison conditions entitled "[Il carcere al tempo del coronavirus](#)" (Prison at the time of the coronavirus) available [here](#) ([here](#) the press kit in English). The presentation of the Report is attended by the new head of the Department of Prison Administration, Bernardo Petralia, the National Guarantor, Mauro Palma, the Director of Probation and non-custodial penal sanctions, Lucia Castellano, and the Undersecretary of Justice, Andrea Giorgis. The XVI Report, for which a [video](#) with images shot by our observers was also created, analyses three months of the pandemic through a great collective narrative (42 authors contributed). In this way Antigone has tried to bring together quantitative data (starting with the reduction of the prison population by almost 9,000 people, the positive people among the staff and the detainees, the situation in Europe) and qualitative data (a critical analysis of the revolts of 8 and 9 March, what the legislator, the administration, the guarantors of people deprived of their liberty have done). The most difficult and controversial topics were not avoided, such as the "releases" of people convicted or accused of mafia crimes in sections 41bis and High Security.

The report, freely available online, is ideally divided into three parts, before, during and after the pandemic. The common denominator of all contributions is that the rights and guarantees of the penal and penitentiary system cannot be cancelled or suspended until a date to be determined. On the contrary, they must be what drives a complex system even during the health emergency.

The report was also featured in several national news reports, including the [Tg3](#).

5 June 2020. Antigone publishes a brief analysis of the data released on 31 May 2020 on the detained population in Italy. It is now clear that the decrease of the number of detainees has stopped after having slowed down significantly from mid-April onwards: at the end of May there were 53,387 prisoners.

The drop in prison entries since the end of February is at this point 7,843, a figure that is certainly significant, but still insufficient to bring the number of detainees at the level of the prison capacity, which on the same date was 50,472.

The most significant drop in number of detainees is recorded in Emilia-Romagna, where at the end of May there were 23.0% detainees less than at the end of February, 32.5% less among women, while in the country the drop was on average of 12.8%, and of 18.1% among women alone. There was a significant change in the trend. At the end of April, there was a proportionally greater decrease among those in pre-trial detention (-13.2%) than among those with a final sentence (-11.4%), a sign that, in addition to the Surveillance Judges, also the decisions of the judges and prosecutors on the application or revocation of pre-trial detention had an impact on the decline in the detained population.

At the end of May the figure was reversed and the decrease since the end of February is proportionally more significant among the detainees with a final sentence (-13.69%) than among people in pre-trial detention (-10.83%). The cause is clear: in the last month the number of persons in custody remained substantially unchanged (8,118 at the end of April, 8,107 at the end of May), while the number of inmates with a final sentence continued to fall (from 37,098 at the end of April to 36,140 at the end of May). It would seem, therefore, that the media campaign on "easy releases" of mafia bosses has affected Surveillance Judges less than the judges that decide on the application of pre-trial measures.

The average occupancy rate, measured on the prison capacity, has dropped to 105.8%, while if we subtract the unavailable places is around 115%. But as many as 10 institutions continue to have an official occupancy rate of over 150%, including Latina (184.4%), Larino (186.8%) and Taranto (199.4%).

IL CARCERE AL TEMPO DEL CORONAVIRUS



XVI Rapporto di Antigone sulle
condizioni di detenzione

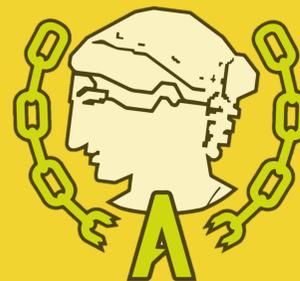
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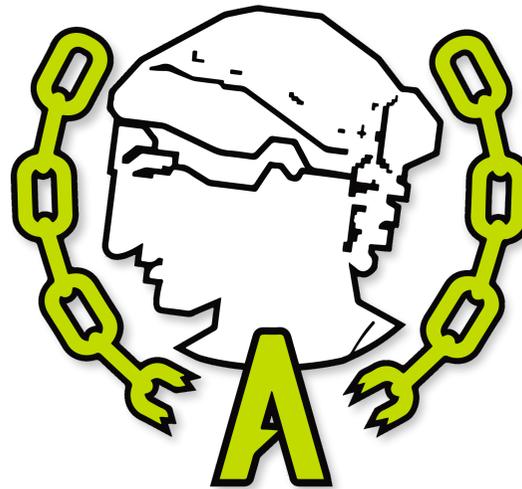
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Here the press kit in English while the full report in Italian is available here.



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