

Inspection visits to the detention cells at the Ida-Harju and Lääne-Harju Constable Stations of the North Prefecture of the Police and Border Guard Board

On 23 April 2015, advisers to the Chancellor of Justice undertook unannounced inspection visits to the detention cells at the Ida-Harju and Lääne-Harju Constable Stations of the North Prefecture of the Police and Border Guard Board. The detention cells in both police buildings inspected are for the administration of short-term detention (lasting no more than 48 hours).

As a result of the inspection visit, the Chancellor of Justice stressed that, in terms of the fundamental rights of detained persons, the police should continue (especially at the Ida-Harju police building) the detention of persons in the short term only and, where possible, prefer detention cells with more modern detention conditions at the police buildings. In addition, the Chancellor of Justice once more drew the attention of the police to the recommendations made previously in relation to the death of a detainee at the Ida-Harju Constable Station. Specifically, the Chancellor of Justice established that in the case of the detainee who died in the Ida-Harju detention cell on 23 January 2013, the level of supervision of the persons in the detention cell had been insufficient. The Chancellor of Justice noted at the time that effective supervision of detainees is not secured merely by including in the job description of an officer the duty to perform supervision (whether by means of images from security cameras or by inspecting cells physically in person), but rather by the ability of the officer to actually perform supervision alongside any other duties, and by the officer's awareness of the importance of performing this duty.