Polity & Governance · GS - II

“The protection of human rights does not cease upon imprisonment.” Discuss the significance of international human rights standards in safeguarding prisoners' dignity, health and access to justice.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
DAILY PRACTICE 16/11/2026	GS - II	Polity & Governance

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

Answer Hint

Prisoners' rights, Nelson Mandela Rules, ICCPR, solitary confinement, right to healthcare, access to legal counsel, human dignity, judicial oversight, prison reforms.

Model Answer

Introduction

Imprisonment restricts personal liberty but does not extinguish fundamental human dignity. Protecting prisoners' rights is essential to constitutional governance and the rule of law.

International Human Rights Framework

- The Nelson Mandela Rules establish minimum standards for humane treatment of prisoners.
- Rule 43 prohibits prolonged and indefinite solitary confinement.
- Rule 44 defines prolonged solitary confinement as isolation exceeding 15 consecutive days.
- Article 10 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) requires humane treatment of prisoners.

Key Concerns

- Prolonged isolation can seriously affect physical and mental well-being.
- Denial of medical care and legal access undermines due process.
- Inadequate prison oversight can increase the risk of abuse and arbitrary treatment.

Way Forward

Ensure independent prison inspections, timely medical examinations, confidential legal consultations and effective judicial remedies. Strengthen prison accountability and align domestic practices with international standards.

Conclusion

A humane criminal justice system must balance legitimate security requirements with prisoners' dignity, healthcare and legal rights. Prison reform is therefore an essential component of the rule of law.

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