

If possible, several lawyers should be canvassed in order to determine who is most competent to handle the case. Some factors worth considering include the following:

1. the experience of the individual in a particular area of law (e.g., narcotics offences);
2. the experience of the individual in defending Canadians or other foreigners (track record, success rate);
3. reputation;
4. contacts;
5. ability to converse in your mother tongue;
6. the range of fees in relation to your ability to pay;
7. willingness to accept payment on a fee for service basis.

Depending upon circumstances, Canadian consular officials in Ottawa or abroad may be in a position to assist in facilitating communication between prisoners or their families and the lawyer selected. They cannot however, become materially involved in any way.

## **Prisoner Services**

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The following sections set out briefly the kinds of assistance that the department will and will not provide. Those it **will not** provide apply to all countries; those it **will** provide, and their frequency and extent, will depend on the conditions in the country concerned and the particular needs of the prisoner and his or her family. It is in any case unlikely that any one prisoner would received all of the services listed below.

- a) the department and missions abroad
  - WILL notify you of the arrest or detention of a relative **if requested** by the person detained;