



10 YEARS OF THE

CONVENTION AGAINST TORTURE INITIATIVE





“We want, once and for all, to remove torture from the toolkit of terror and oppression and to put an end to the profound traumas and societal wounds caused by this violent practice.”

Foreword

On behalf of the Core States of the Convention against Torture Initiative - Chile, Denmark, Fiji, Ghana, Indonesia, and Morocco:

When CTI was first established in 2014, the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (UNCAT) was 30 years old, with 154 States Parties. As a diverse group of States, we were united by a shared commitment to rid our global community of the heinous crimes of torture and other ill-treatment. Together, our vision was to establish a diplomatic State-led initiative that would provide a platform for States to address shared challenges in ratifying and implementing the Convention, which is the principal international framework for a torture-free society.

Ten years on, we are pleased that our initiative has been proven to be successful. Our goal of universal ratification by 2024 was always an ambitious one, and while it has not yet been fully achieved, we are immensely proud of the progress that has been made to-date, with 21 new States Parties having newly joined the Convention.

CTI stands as a testament to the power of diplomacy and multilateralism, and to what can be achieved when States come together and constructively support one another.

Building on our successes and lessons learnt over the last ten years, we are delighted to continue CTI's mandate until the end of 2030. We will continue to support States to reach universal ratification and implementation of the Convention and, ultimately, a world free from torture.

A word from

Gayethri Pillay - Head, CTI Secretariat


CTI's Secretariat carries out an annual programme of work to realise the Core States' vision of global ratification and implementation of UNCAT. Based in Geneva, Switzerland, the Secretariat's work is supported by advisers and trusted partner organisations, allowing it to have a global reach.

Over the past decade, CTI has worked with States across the world through its various modalities of support and cooperation. As a unique intergovernmental initiative, we are proud to have had far-reaching impact, some of which is captured by this booklet celebrating ten years of CTI.

If CTI's work has taught us anything, it is the extraordinary power of State-to-State, peer-to-peer, dialogues. We have found that when governments are provided confidential and constructive spaces to convene and to share amongst themselves, when they feel understood rather than judged, there is a clear uptick in their willingness to engage and take significant steps towards UNCAT ratification and implementation.

CTI's approach of direct bilateral diplomacy and closed-door dialogue, along with practical experience-sharing, helps nudge the dial behind the scenes well before outward steps are taken.

We extend our appreciation to our partners and all who have supported CTI's work. Working together, we believe the goal of a world without torture and other ill-treatment is reachable.

An aerial photograph of a city, likely Geneva, Switzerland, showing a dense urban area with a river (the Rhône) winding through it. In the background, there are rolling green hills and mountains under a clear blue sky. The text is overlaid on the image in several white boxes with black text.

The Convention against
Torture underlines a
fundamental principle:
torture is never,
under any circumstances,
justified.

About CTI



Formed in 2014, the **Convention against Torture Initiative** set out with a ten year mandate to work towards making the **UN Convention against Torture** universally ratified and better implemented by 2024.



CTI works to help States overcome obstacles in ratifying and implementing the UN Convention against Torture through every stage of the process: before, during, and after.



A pioneering diplomatic initiative spearheaded by the Governments of Chile, Denmark, Fiji, Ghana, Indonesia, and Morocco, and now being joined by The Bahamas, CTI was created *by States, for States*.



Practical and confidential, recognising that no State has a perfect human rights record, we provide guidance tailored to States' specific needs on a 'no name, no shame' basis.



Through multilateral fora, bilateral and closed door dialogues, we share **evidence-based recommendations and expert legal and technical advice** in order to strengthen institutions, policies, and practices.

Goals

CTI's two **core goals** are to support States to achieve:

- ✓ Universal ratification of the UN Convention against Torture; and
- ✓ Improved implementation of the UN Convention against Torture.

Guiding principles



CONSTRUCTIVE

It is not our role to 'name and shame'. but rather to **offer constructive support** to governments as they seek to strengthen their anti-torture frameworks.



TWINNING

We act as a hub to **connect governments** dealing with similar challenges, enabling them to learn from each other's experiences alongside the support of technical experts.



INSPIRATIONAL

Our approach is **motivational** rather than prescriptive, highlighting examples of progress and challenges successfully overcome.

Ratifications

21 New States Parties

Kiribati

The Bahamas

St Kitts & Nevis

Dominica

Grenada

The Gambia

Suriname

Sao Tome and Principe

2014
154

States Parties
to UNCAT



2024
175

States Parties
to UNCAT

Universal ratification creates a globally binding commitment that torture is absolutely unacceptable, reinforcing a *jus cogens* norm and ensuring legal accountability across all States. It also facilitates international cooperation and victim protection, leaving no safe havens for perpetrators.



85%

As of 2024, over 85% of newly ratifying States over the previous ten years were Small Island Developing States and /or Least Developed Countries

Impact

33 Regional seminars



7 Country visits



5 Study visits



170+ States participated in CTI Events



210+ Good practices featured



These figures represent only a portion of the activities undertaken by CTI, with much of CTI's work taking place behind closed doors, through direct bilateral engagement with States, and confidential guidance, quietly strengthening the capacity of implementers and stakeholders.



I would like to thank CTI,
as well as other development
partners who have made it
their mission to assist the
Pacific States in appreciating
tasks that lie ahead in our
endeavour to eliminate
torture in all its forms,
and to implement the
Convention in our respective
Island Nations.

Hon. Sione Vuna Fa'otusia, Former Minister
for Justice of Tonga, February 2019



Capacity building

CTI's capacity building events are designed to enable practical support and experience sharing through peer-to-peer exchanges, knowledge transfer, and on-ground support to help resolve institutional gaps. Events may be **tailored to specific local or thematic needs** and may include seminars with experts, technical capacity building workshops, and awareness-raising activities to equip decision-makers at political and governmental levels as well as in the justice, security and prisons sectors.

33

regional events

170+

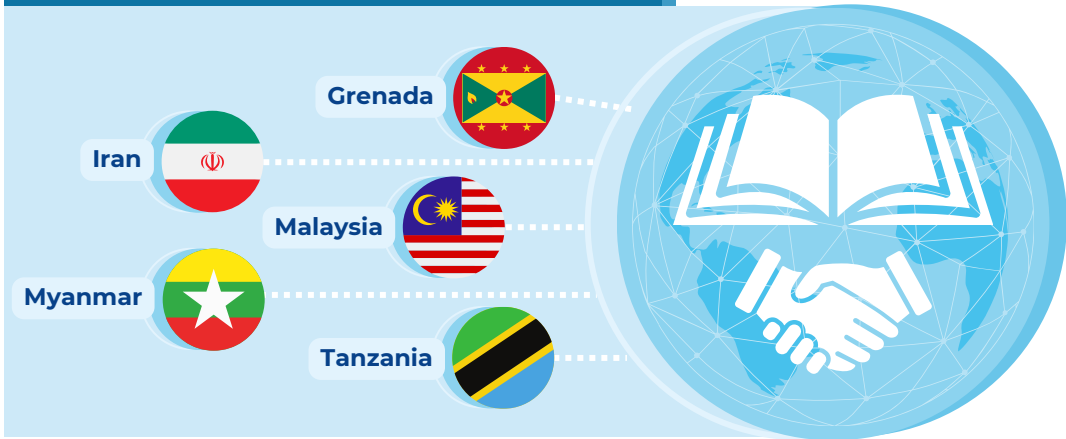
States'
participation

CTI's capacity building events are needs-based and demand-driven.

CTI's capacity building activities are oftentimes organised **in partnership** with relevant international institutions, regional bodies, and with the support and facilitation of experts and practitioners in various fields. **This has been key to ensuring that States and regions feel ownership over the event and its outcomes.**

CTI's State-led approach also creates a conducive space for States and their representatives to have **candid and constructive dialogues** on effective measures based on their lived experiences.

5 Study visits



CTI has hosted five government delegations in Geneva for them to learn more about what being a State Party to UNCAT entails, what steps are needed to ratify, and to prepare the groundwork to become party to the Convention, as well as on implementation and reporting. Study visits are tailored to the needs and wishes of the individual government(s).

They may include:



Expert seminars on the Convention's provisions;



Meetings with the representatives of CTI's Core States and Group of Friends to discuss benefits, opportunities, and how to overcome challenges to ratification, implementation, and/or reporting;



An opportunity to "experience" a session of the Committee against Torture in their review of a State Party report and hear the State Party's replies;



Meetings with senior UN officials, including members of the Committee against Torture and representatives from the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights;



Briefing sessions with representatives of States Parties who can share their own experiences.

7 Country visits



Angola



The Bahamas



Dominica



The Gambia



Grenada



Suriname



Tonga

CTI has organised seven high level diplomatic country visits, bringing expertise and providing an opportunity for decision-makers, government officials, and other relevant stakeholders to learn more about what being an UNCAT State party entails; what steps are needed to ratify/accede, report and implement; to share and take stock of existing national laws, policies, procedures, and practices; and to identify and discuss benefits, opportunities, and challenges to ratification and/or implementation.

Country visits provide States considering becoming a party to UNCAT the opportunity to have confidential and candid dialogues with Ambassadors and senior representatives from CTI's Core States.

Oftentimes, CTI's visits may include **capacity building and awareness raising activities** for the visited State's representatives on UNCAT and its obligations.

CTI may also meet with in-country partners, and Group of Friends members, to shore up support for the visited State.

Multilateral forums

CTI actively engages with States and the international community through numerous multilateral mechanisms, such as the:

- Human Rights Council (HRC)
- Universal Periodic Review (UPR)
- Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)
- UN Committee against Torture (CAT)
- UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)



CTI engages with multilateral bodies in New York, participating in the UN General Assembly (UNGA), and in other multilateral stations, such as Vienna, as may be appropriate.



Throughout the year, CTI's Ambassadors deliver statements on behalf of the Core Group at the HRC, UNGA, and other forums, highlighting the availability of CTI's unique modality of support, and continued efforts to address torture and other ill-treatment through diplomacy.

Confidential dialogue

CTI works with States through direct bilateral engagement, conducting confidential dialogues to encourage and support States in ratifying and implementing the UN Convention against Torture.

CTI's experts respond confidentially to requests for advice from governments. **CTI provides one-to-one technical advice** on areas such as UNCAT obligations, legislative reviews, and drafting of anti-torture laws and policies, and operational changes in policing, prisons, security and justice sectors. CTI also operates as a "**referral service**" connecting requests for technical or capacity support with appropriate partners, where the CTI Secretariat may not be best placed to support or advise.

CTI has also held several **closed-door events**, to ensure that States can discuss sensitive topics and issues of concern confidentially amongst peers and experts.



CTI is concrete proof that genuine dialogue and constructive cooperation are the most effective tools for the advancement of human rights, such as preventing torture and ill-treatment.

H.E. Retno L.P. Marsudi, Former Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, February 2020

Sharing good practices

CTI identifies, collates, and shares real world examples of successful

State practices in eliminating torture. CTI has developed and published numerous tools, publications, and training materials showcasing these good practices.

These resources help States educate and inform officials, presenting examples of how different States have developed effective national laws, policies, procedures, and practical standards and addressed challenges for an efficient and functioning system of justice, built on laws, codes of conduct, innovation, transparency, and accountability.

Drawing on expert technical knowledge and practical experience,

these resources are disseminated through our e-library of publications as well as through events, bilateral, and multilateral dialogues.

Alongside tools designed to demystify UNCAT and the process of ratification and reporting, we have produced

implementation tools, such as the Police Resource Toolkit, a joint project of CTI and the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), designed to capacity build law enforcement officials towards a human rights-compliant and more effective policing.

UNCAT RATIFICATION TOOL



"It is one of the newest States parties to the United Nations Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (UNCAT). At the International Meeting of UNCAT held in Fiji in October 2016, Fiji's ratification to UNCAT was celebrated as a landmark achievement for the country."

"We are proud to have signed the Convention and we are committed to ensuring its implementation in Fiji."

Acknowledging past cultural practices that were in line with the Convention, the Government of Fiji has taken steps to ensure that the Convention is implemented in a way that is consistent with the country's values and traditions.

Fiji positive constitutional framework

Like many other Pacific countries, Fiji has a robust constitutional framework that provides a strong foundation for the implementation of the Convention. The Constitution of Fiji, which was adopted in 2013, contains provisions that are consistent with the Convention's principles and objectives.

Fiji takes steps towards ratification

Fiji has taken several steps towards ratification of the Convention, including the signing of the Convention in October 2016 and the submission of its ratification instrument to the UN Secretary-General in December 2016.



TRAINING TOOLS 2020

INVESTIGATIVE INTERVIEW FOR CRIMINAL CASES

Conducting interviews is a core task of law enforcement, and it is essential to ensure that interviews are conducted in a way that is consistent with the Convention's principles and objectives. This training tool provides guidance on how to conduct interviews in a way that is consistent with the Convention's principles and objectives.

UN CONVENTION AGAINST TORTURE - EXPLAINER

The UNCAT Explainer summarizes the main basic obligations of UNCAT. It may be used by non-State parties in preparing cabinet submissions or other documentation necessary for raising the decision to ratify or accede to UNCAT. It can be used in conjunction with <https://www.unhcr.org/refugees-and-asylum-seekers/2016/11/16-11-2016-uncat-explainer.html> for States party to the Convention. This document may be used in conjunction with <https://www.unhcr.org/refugees-and-asylum-seekers/2016/11/16-11-2016-uncat-explainer.html> to support plans for implementing the Convention and identifying areas where reform may be needed.

DEFINITION OF TORTURE

- The definition in Article 1.1 of UNCAT contains 4 elements for a act to constitute torture:
- Intentionally inflicted
- For a particular purpose (for example obtaining information or a confession or for any reason based on discrimination on the basis of race, religion, sex or national origin)
- Inflicted by or at the instigation of or with the acquiescence of a public official or other person acting in an official capacity

ANTI-TORTURE STANDARDS IN COMMON LAW AFRICA: Good Practices and Way Forward



CONVENTION AGAINST TORTURE INITIATIVE
CTI2024.ORG

CTI/UNCAT Implementation Tool 1/2017

STATE STRATEGIES TO PREVENT AND RESPOND TO TORTURE AND OTHER ILL-TREATMENT OR PUNISHMENT

Putting in place measures to prevent and eradicate torture and other ill-treatment in all its forms, and which provide redress for victims, takes time. Ratifying the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (UNCAT) is just the start of a process of ongoing implementation and improvement leading to more efficient and fairer administration of justice, improved rule of law and governance, strengthened independence of the judiciary, and a safer and freer society. Because UNCAT does not prescribe how its various articles are to be implemented, each State party is free to develop laws, policies, practices and mechanisms that reflect and respond to their own unique national context and character. Preparing a strategy (or action plan) can help to identify and plan the specific short-, mid- and long-term steps proposed to prevent torture and other ill-treatment or punishment.

Strategies aimed at torture prevention have sometimes been developed during reform initiatives, or in response to a particular incident that exposed some weakness in policy or practice, or to effect positive change during a period of transition. Even in the absence of such triggers, torture prevention strategies have been put in place to strengthen the rule of law and protection for individuals and to develop good relations between citizens and the State authorities.

Different approaches to strategies have been adopted by individuals and to develop good relations between prevention strategies either as a specific strategy or as part of a broader strategy. Some strategies have been adopted in relation to specific elements of the Convention, such as the prohibition of torture, the prohibition of ill-treatment, or the prohibition of punishment.



Guide on anti-torture legislation

association pour la prévention de la torture
asociación para la prevención de la tortura
association for the prevention of torture





Group of Friends network

What is the GoF?

A diverse coalition that shares CTI's vision and objectives to address torture.

Who are the members?

UN Member States, international and regional organisations, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), researchers, academics, torture prevention experts, and other theme related experts.

Annual Forum

Bringing together discussions on as well as the the Convention experts from M

Partnerships

CTI regularly collaborates with a wide group of international and regional organisations, and non-governmental organisations (such as the Association for the Prevention of Torture (APT)), as well as independent thematic experts, in order to deliver its programme of work.

CTI views its work and efforts as one of the many jigsaw pieces necessary in a collaborative effort to prevent and address torture. All actors play a critical role in building and advancing the global movement of solidarity against torture and other ill-treatment.



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Through CTI's Group of Friends, the Annual Forum provides a platform for sharing the latest innovative developments in tackling torture and related abuses, lived experiences and challenges countries face with the implementation of the Convention. It is attended by Ambassadors, State representatives, as well as leading NGOs, international and regional organisations, and academia.



Recognising the impactful role that CTI plays in our shared aspiration for a world free from torture, and given the momentum of our work with States ratifying and implementing the Convention, I am therefore both pleased and proud to announce that CTI will continue up to the end of 2030.

Together, we will continue to contribute to a world where there is no space for torture or other ill-treatment.

H.E. Ambassador Ib Petersen, Permanent Representative of Denmark to the United Nations in Geneva

The future of CTI

2025

2030

Based on the successes of CTI and the continued appetite from States to engage with CTI, the second phase of the Initiative was publicly announced at CTI's 2024 Annual Forum. Building upon lessons learnt from its first phase, CTI's second phase - from 2025 to 2030 - will concentrate on deepening engagement with governments and key stakeholders while maintaining the needs-based, constructive, and confidential approach, which has repeatedly proven to be highly effective and impactful.

CTI will continue its diplomatic engagement and capacity building activities to encourage and support States to become parties to UNCAT, as well as to support States in implementing the Convention and improving States' national frameworks for the prevention and prohibition of torture.

CTI also welcomes The Bahamas as its seventh Core State for its second phase, which will strengthen CTI's ability to offer support tailored to the unique perspectives and challenges faced by Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and countries from the Caribbean region.

Together with its partners, CTI will continue to strive for universal ratification and implementation of the Convention against Torture, committed to the ongoing work of inter-State cooperation to build a future where torture is a relic of the past.



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