

2025
2027

STRATEGIC PLAN

Convention against Torture Initiative



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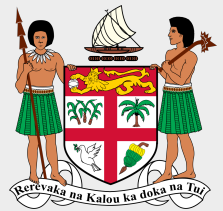
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INTRODUCTION

The Convention against Torture Initiative (CTI) is an inter-governmental, cross-regional initiative led by the Governments of The Bahamas, Chile, Denmark, Fiji, Ghana, Indonesia, and Morocco, supported by a full-time Secretariat based in Geneva, Switzerland. CTI's Core States drive forward the Initiative through an approach based on direct bilateral and multilateral diplomacy, as well as peer-to-peer sharing of national practices and challenges, and organising activities that provide capacity-building and technical advice to States. CTI is further supported by a Group of Friends network composed of UN Member States, organisations and experts. The Association for the Prevention of Torture (APT) and CTI are strategic partners, collaborating on joint activities.

CTI's work is grounded in the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (UNCAT), the principal international framework for prohibiting and preventing torture. Through strengthening ratification and implementation of UNCAT, CTI advocates for the integration of institutional, legislative, judicial, and executive measures to close gaps in laws and practices in order to prevent and address torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment (referred to as 'other ill-treatment'). This approach strengthens the fairness and efficiency of justice systems, bolsters the rule of law, and enhances good governance—particularly in areas such as police, prison and detention conditions, and security sector reforms. These reforms also contribute to broader national development, supporting democratic transitions, peaceful communities, and advancing the realisation of Sustainable Development Goal 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions).

Launched in 2014, CTI's initial ten-year phase notably aimed to achieve universal ratification of UNCAT and improved implementation of the Convention globally. 20 States have become Party to the UN Convention against Torture since CTI's establishment, bringing the total number of States Parties to 175. CTI has worked across globe, organising 33 regional seminars and engaging over 170 States in at least one of its activities, underscoring the reach and influence of CTI's work. CTI has also developed and published over 20 tools and publications, showcasing more than 200 examples of best practices by States in addressing torture and other forms of ill-treatment.

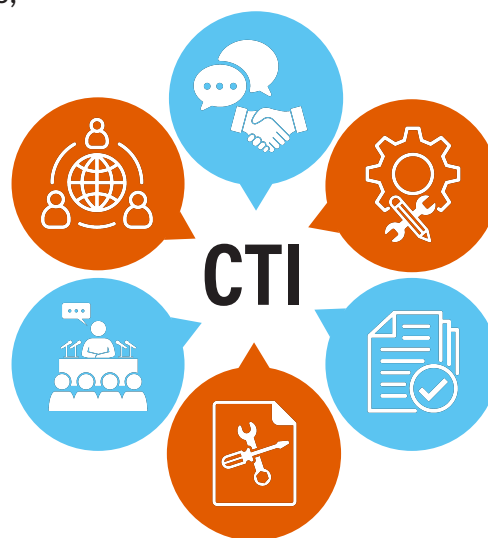


CTI's unique approach as a State-led initiative working in a diplomatic and oftentimes confidential manner has allowed it to gain credibility as a respected and reliable partner for States in their journeys to ratify and implement the Convention against Torture. CTI has established crucial relationships with States and partners, identifying key opportunities where continued support and collaboration of CTI would lead to significant contributions to global UNCAT implementation.

Building on these successes and lessons learnt, CTI's second phase will continue the overarching goal of achieving universal ratification of the UN Convention against Torture, whilst strengthening our focus on supporting States overcome challenges and barriers to fully implementing UNCAT. CTI is dedicated to raising awareness of the benefits of UNCAT ratification and implementation, sharing good practices between and among States, and deepening multilateral and bilateral diplomatic engagement with governments and key stakeholders.

CTI aspires to strengthen institutions, policies and practices for dignified and rule-based governance and to reduce and prevent the risks of torture and other ill-treatment, inter alia, through:

- dialogue and exchange between and amongst States;
- technical assistance, capacity-building support and institution-strengthening;
- sharing evidence-based recommendations, expert advice and States' best practices;
- developing, compiling and translating practical examples, experiences, tools, resources and other materials;
- convening seminars, conferences and workshops focused on State-to-State dialogue and exchange; and
- Facilitating/providing platforms for information and knowledge dissemination and awareness raising.

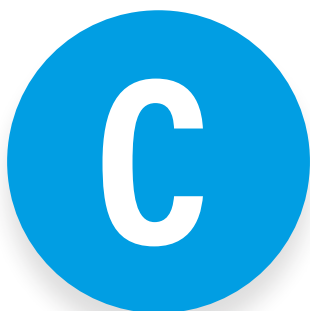


The Strategic Plan 2025-27 was approved by the CTI Core States in January 2025 and provides the foundation for the initial three-year period of CTI's second phase from 2025 to 2030. Guided by this Strategic Plan, CTI will deliver an annual programme of activities aimed at delivering tangible progress towards a world free from torture.

OUR MISSION

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.

OPERATING PRINCIPLES



CONSTRUCTIVE

CTI is an intergovernmental initiative by States for States, through which States' experiences and good practices can be shared based on the philosophy of constructive (“no name, no shame”) dialogue. This collaborative approach allows States to discuss sensitive issues that they may not otherwise be prepared to discuss in other settings and for States to inspire each other towards better performance across the board. It is clear that no State has a perfect record in this area, and recognising and acknowledging this has helped CTI support frank and positive State-to-State discussions.



TRANSFORMATIVE

CTI is committed to supporting and fostering States' efforts towards systemic changes to ensure long-lasting prevention and eradication of torture and ill-treatment globally through the implementation of UNCAT. CTI will work to support and empower States in their initiatives to strengthen policies, laws and practices, through a State-led approach that addresses root causes and promotes sustainable reforms.



INSPIRATIONAL

CTI aims to inspire, facilitate and motivate by amplifying the positive experiences of other states through peer-to-peer bilateral and multilateral engagement and the development or dissemination of practical tools. CTI will also seek to highlight – in the UN, in multilateral fora, and to the public – States' efforts to ratify and implement the Convention.

THE CTI APPROACH



Governments hold the primary responsibility for ratifying, implementing, and enforcing the UN Convention against Torture. As a cross-regional State-led initiative, CTI is uniquely placed to engage bilaterally with governments on issues in a diplomatic, constructive and confidential manner.

During its initial phase, CTI found that maintaining an emphasis on its diplomatic approach proved beneficial and welcomed amongst States at various stages of ratifying and implementing the Convention across all regions. Maintaining this approach as the core of its work will be crucial for CTI's continued success and upholding its credibility amongst States and other strategic partners.

State-to-State dialogue and engagement, as opposed to naming and shaming-based advocacy from external actors, helps encourage governments to feel that their autonomy and national contexts are acknowledged and respected. When governments feel understood and are engaged directly on a peer-to-peer level, it creates a conducive environment for States to identify real challenges, and fosters greater national ownership over reforms. This is vital for the long-term sustainability of anti-torture measures. CTI's cross-regional composition also allows us to use diplomatic channels to influence peers, where States can support and encourage each other on their own journeys, which can be a powerful tool for encouraging ratification and meaningful implementation of UNCAT. CTI's Core States and its Group of Friends may do this through multilateral mechanisms, such as the Universal Periodic Review, regional bodies, or through confidential bilateral discussions.

CTI's State-led nature has also given it the legitimacy and credibility to be able to talk to other States, as it offers evidence and experience-based advice that is directly applicable to governments, their legal frameworks and institutional challenges. CTI's Core States, Group of Friends States, and other State partners exchange on practical solutions and strategies, that have been tested in similar contexts, demonstrating that the process of implementing UNCAT is realistic and beneficial for all States. It can be easier for State officials to justify and implement reforms at the national level, when they can present these changes as part of accepted international practices among peer States.

CTI works with government actors at technical, leadership, or political levels. This approach allows for CTI to take into account the needs, necessities and realities of individual States, and acknowledges the varying dynamics of States' internal mechanisms. Such an approach also allows for CTI to support meaningful change, and to encourage and support the implementation of UNCAT through a range of implementing actors, and ensure appropriate buy-in at varying levels of government.

PARTNERSHIPS

The prevention and prohibition of torture and other ill-treatment is a collaborative effort by multiple actors. Collaboration and partnerships are an integral part of CTI's operating philosophy, and such an approach ensures efficient use of its resources, as well as sustainable and impactful implementation of UNCAT.

CTI will continue to work closely with a wide group of States in different regions, particularly developing countries, as well as regional bodies. CTI will continue working with key partners, including international and regional organisations, States, NGOs, experts, and beyond, at the national, regional, and global levels. CTI will also build upon its strong relationships with the

UN human rights mechanisms supporting and monitoring the implementation of the UN Convention against Torture, such as the OHCHR and the UN Committee against Torture, as well as at localised levels, such as UN Regional Coordinators. A wide group of international, and regional organisations, NGOs, and independent torture experts have joined CTI's Group of Friends, and may contribute to a range of CTI activities at the national, regional, and global levels, bringing their wealth of expertise and commitment to the issues at hand.



CTI views its work and approach as one of the many jigsaw pieces necessary to achieve universal ratification and robust implementation of the UN Convention against Torture, and places immense value on the complimentary efforts of non-State actors and international and regional bodies. Partnerships with other key stakeholders are vital to



reaching the overarching goal to eradicate torture and other ill-treatment globally. CTI relies upon experts and practitioners who address and prevent torture and other ill-treatment. CTI will continue to partner with them and create and promote spaces where their experiences and expertise can be shared and utilised for improved implementation of UNCAT. CTI counts on such partnerships in order to be able to deliver capacity building that is reliable, expert-driven, and evidence-based.

STRATEGIC GOALS

In its second phase, CTI will strive towards the following three overarching strategic goals:

1

CONTINUE TO SUPPORT STATES' PATHWAYS TO UNCAT RATIFICATION

The general prohibition against torture is universal. However, specific obligations of UNCAT are not universally applicable, as not all States are yet party to the Convention. Universal ratification of UNCAT will foster an international commitment against torture and ill-treatment, and the benefits of domestic implementation are clear, such as strengthening of systems of fair administration of justice, improved legislation to address torture and other ill-treatment, and capacity building for key implementing actors, such as law enforcement. In particular, through processes of preparation, capacity building, consultation, and transparency, public trust in institutions and authorities can be enhanced, and knowledge and expertise of national authorities can be improved. A State's decision to ratify UNCAT is an indicator of progress, as well as a catalyst for further capacity building, and indicates a clear commitment to ongoing legislative, institutional and practical reforms.

The majority of States yet to ratify the Convention are Official Development Assistance (ODA) recipient countries, with more than half being Small Island Developing States. For this reason, CTI will continue, through its diplomatic approach, to work closely with ODA-recipient countries on torture prevention and response more broadly, but specifically on the ratification and implementation of UNCAT, both prior to and post ratification.

GOAL

Building upon the successes of its first phase, and through its ongoing multilateral and bilateral diplomatic engagement with Non-States Parties, CTI will provide targeted technical assistance, legal advice, and continue its diplomatic dialogue with States seeking to become Party to UNCAT.

CTI will encourage and support at least two States annually to ratify the UN Convention against Torture by 2030.

Since CTI was launched in 2014, 21 States have acceded to the Convention, with a total of 175 States currently Party to the Convention. It is a natural evolution for CTI to widen its scope with greater emphasis on further supporting States in their implementation of UNCAT, including those States that have ratified with CTI's support.

In working with States to prevent and eradicate torture and ill-treatment, it is necessary to understand the conditions that allow it to occur in the first place, and how and why it persists across all regions. Research shows that a combination of political, economic, legal, cultural and social processes and structures create the conditions conducive for its usage. Evidence also shows that the poorest and the most at-risk sectors of society are more likely to encounter ill-treatment. As those who torture or abuse their position of power or authority are only one part of a complex bureaucracy, any approaches to preventing torture and ill-treatment should address all aspects that contribute to the overall process that permits such practices, and should be properly located within broader processes and structures governing the rule of law and the administration of justice. At the centre of CTI's approach to eradicate and prevent torture is UNCAT. The Convention guides States, step-by-step, on how to put in place policies, legislation, and prevention responses, with ample flexibility for States to tailor these to their own national constitutional, legal, cultural, and practical realities.

CTI's work covers a range of areas relevant to the fight against torture and ill-treatment and to broader processes of institution-strengthening, such as advising States on legislative reforms, as well as, alongside partners including international and regional organisations, States, NGOs, experts, and beyond, on practical implementation of the Convention, such as police custody, complaints and investigations, interviewing techniques, safeguards and procedures, prison overcrowding and conditions, juvenile justice, the link between corruption and torture and other ill-treatment, security/counter-terrorism, independent visiting or oversight bodies, and other aspects of the justice sector that support fairness, transparency and accountability, such as the rule of non-admission of torture-tainted evidence in court proceedings, as well as on reporting to the UN Committee on Torture.

GOAL

Together with key partners, CTI will deliver tailored capacity-building workshops, disseminate tools, and offer legal and technical expertise to support States develop and implement robust anti-torture laws and practices in order to effectively implement UNCAT.

CTI will support at least 10 States annually to improve their national frameworks for the prevention and prohibition of torture.

Peer-to-peer learning and experience sharing, both at political and technical levels, are essential for the effective implementation of UNCAT, as they allow States to inspire and guide one another through real-world examples and proven practices. When States engage directly, they exchange practical knowledge that can address both common challenges and context-specific obstacles to implementing anti-torture measures. Such State-to-State interactions foster an environment of mutual trust and credibility, where States and their representatives are more likely to adopt solutions from peers who have faced similar practical, governance or legal hurdles. By sharing successes, setbacks, and lessons learnt, States can inspire each other to take ambitious steps towards ratifying and implementing UNCAT, thereby increasing global commitment to preventing and prohibiting torture.

CTI aims to continue fostering such platforms for States and stakeholders to learn from each other. CTI will utilise its particular strength to bring States together, and will continue to hold activities and capacity building sessions that are focused on peer-to-peer learning and expert-led – for example, having police officers speak to the other police officers, prosecutors speak to other prosecutors – that are conducive to constructive dialogues.

Creating and fostering platforms for such exchanges is crucial for enabling these meaningful interactions. Dedicated forums, such as regional workshops, online networks, and global peer-to-peer meetings, provide structured opportunities for dialogue and cooperation at both the political and technical levels. These platforms allow leaders, technical experts, legislators, and diplomats to come together, exchange tailored solutions, and build relationships that drive progress. By establishing and encouraging the development of such spaces, including with and through CTI's Core States and Group of Friends States, the international community strengthens the capacity of individual States to implement UNCAT and also cultivates a global network of support that can drive the momentum towards the elimination of torture and other ill-treatment.

GOAL

Acknowledging the immense value of peer-to-peer exchanges and experience sharing, CTI will organise regional and global peer-to-peer meetings, facilitate online platforms for information sharing, and maintain a record of promising practices in anti-torture measures.

CTI shall identify and showcase promising practices from at least three States annually, through events, publications or other communication modalities.

HOW CTI WORKS

CTI will strive towards its strategic goals utilising a variety of working modalities and methods:

Activities – National, regional, and international

Through its annual programme of work, CTI will support States by organising activities at the national, regional and international levels, to support the ratification and implementation of the UN Convention against Torture. This may include, inter alia, in-country or regional technical capacity-building workshops and seminars at expert level; in-country events at political and governmental decision-making level; closed-door diplomatic dialogues amongst States; diplomatic country-visits to States to continue dialogue, address concerns, and build capacity towards ratification and implementation of UNCAT; State representatives' study visits to Geneva to build capacity on UNCAT; as well as online events and seminars. Such activities offer diplomatic solidarity, technical expertise, and capacity building assistance, opportunities for exchange and dialogue, and strategising for government policy-making and delivery.

Technical advice and guidance

CTI's expert team in the CTI Secretariat will continue to provide one-on-one technical and legal advice to governments and government institutions in the process of considering UNCAT ratification or implementation of the Convention, responding confidentially to technical queries on a wide range of issues, including UNCAT obligations, legislative reviews, and drafting of anti-torture laws and policies, and supporting operational changes in policing, prisons, security, and justice sectors. CTI Secretariat also operates as a "referral service" connecting requests for technical or capacity support with appropriate partners, in cases where the CTI Secretariat may not be best placed to support or advise.

Tools and resources

CTI has developed numerous tools, publications, and resources covering operational areas, policies, and laws. During its second phase, CTI will place greater emphasis on the dissemination of these tools, and utilising the tools as a pathway to train and build the capacity of States and other stakeholders. Upon the request of States, CTI may consider developing, compiling and disseminating additional tools and resources to support the effective implementation of UNCAT.

Platform for knowledge transfer

CTI collaborates with and inducts a diverse range of expert partners to bring up-to-date knowledge, analysis and expertise to bear on the work of CTI. CTI's website, www.cti.international, provides a repository of tools and information on UNCAT. The website showcases major CTI news items, event reports, tools, and other resources. Given the importance of disseminating CTI tools, materials, and resources in multiple languages, CTI maintains an "e-library" of CTI materials and resources available in other languages (oftentimes in relation to States that CTI has engaged with, as well as UN languages).

CTI will continue to build and maintain a social media presence. CTI will expand and enhance communication on the vision, work, and achievements of the CTI in relevant publications, through online media platforms and other outlets, with a view to building global momentum and raising greater awareness of CTI and UNCAT.



Utilising UN platforms and regional mechanisms

CTI will continue to engage with States and relevant stakeholders through key multilateral platforms and mechanisms, such as the Universal Periodic Review mechanism, the Human Rights Council (HRC), the UN Trust Fund to Support the Participation of Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States in the HRC, and in deliberations of the four UN anti-torture entities, the UN Committee against Torture, the UN Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture, the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture, and the UN Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture.

CTI will remain orientated on the work of the UN's Third Committee, given that the agenda includes items impacting security, counter-terrorism, policing and development. CTI will also engage with Vienna-based UN mechanisms, such as the UNODC. CTI shall explore additional impactful avenues for involvement in New York, Vienna, and other key multilateral stations.



CTI has partnered with a number of regional multilateral organisations in the design and delivery of CTI's programme of regional seminars, and will continue to do so. In addition, CTI will seek to raise greater awareness of the Convention at the sessions of regional organisations, where relevant, including through their representations based in Geneva. CTI will further continue to engage with States through their representation in Geneva and New York, and bilateral embassies, as may be appropriate. Direct bilateral engagement and diplomacy-based communications will remain central to CTI's key modalities of engagement.

Needs-based and demand-driven approach

Taking a needs-based and demand-driven approach to supporting States in implementing UNCAT ensures that the support provided is tailored, relevant, and effective. By engaging in direct diplomatic dialogue with States and regions to assess their needs, CTI aims to avoid a one-size-fits-all strategy, which may overlook the unique legal, political, and cultural contexts in which each State or region operates. This approach fosters a deeper sense of ownership and cooperation, as States are more likely to embrace reforms and implement anti-torture measures when they feel that the support they receive addresses their actual challenges and needs.

Direct engagement at national level, with national governments, policy-makers, practitioners, national institutions, civil society and other stakeholders allows for deeper understanding and identification of national opportunities, challenges and experiences, as well as ways to overcome obstacles. Such engagement builds and strengthens positive relations between CTI and States and within relevant ministries, government departments and other interlocutors in order to advance progress on prevention.

MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REPORTING

As part of efforts to monitor, evaluate, and report on progress and impact, an annual report will be prepared and made available by the CTI Secretariat, and an annual forum will bring together CTI and its Friends to discuss progress and opportunities.



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