



25th anniversary of the UN Committee Against Torture

OMCT calls upon States to renew commitments in making the Convention against torture a reality worldwide

Geneva – May 15, 2013 Twenty five years ago the United Nations Committee Against Torture (CAT) assembled for the first time in Geneva, Switzerland, to provide effective monitoring on the implementation of the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (UNCAT). This marked a decisive step to ensure the right of every person not to be subjected to torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment (thereafter “ill-treatment”) throughout the world.

‘The Committee Against Torture has proven in these 25 years to be an important element in the global fight against torture. But this anniversary reminds us also on the challenges still ahead of making the rights in the Convention a reality for all’, said Yves Berthelot, President of the OMCT.

‘For the OMCT the most pressing need is to double efforts that the current [153 States](#) parties fully respect and implement the Convention and cooperate effectively with the Committee. It is unacceptable when states ignore the Committee for years or by complying only formally reporting to the Committee and ignoring its conclusions and recommendations’, he added.

Moreover, the 42 States not yet parties to the Convention should promptly ratify it thus sending a strong signal that nothing can justify torture in any circumstances. It is equally important that States accept the competence of the CAT to receive individual complaints in an effort to end impunity for torture and commit to implement the Committee’s decisions to provide redress and rehabilitation to victims of torture

Over the last twenty years the OMCT has been at the forefront of submitting credible information on torture to the Committee and in mobilizing and supporting members of its global network SOS torture along the implementation of the Convention.

‘The OMCT has played a particularly valuable role in supporting the work of the Committee Against Torture, by providing vital information from the field about the real situation of torture and ill-treatment. Without this it would have been difficult to engage in a credible dialogue with states on the implementation of the Convention’, said Claudio Grossman, Chair of the UN Committee Against Torture.

In the coming years OMCT will reinforce its work towards the implementation of the recommendations of the Committee Against Torture. ‘We need to make the next step ensuring that the Committee’s work is known in the countries concerned beyond a selected experts and is leading to real change in laws and policies and the respect of the right to live free from torture’, concluded Yves Berthelot.

This is not possible without human rights defenders able to document torture and effectively address the Committee free of fear of reprisals. States need to act to protect those facing reprisals when working with the CAT, including human rights defenders providing written and oral briefings to the Committee.

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