



Coalition of International NGOs Against Torture
Coalition d'ONG internationales contre la torture
Coalición De ONG Internacionales Contra La Tortura

- CINAT



CINAT Open Letter addressed to the States Parties to the United Nations (UN) Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

In view of the upcoming elections for the UN Committee against Torture on 8 October 2007, the Coalition of International Non-Governmental Organisations Against Torture (CINAT) calls on States Parties to fulfill their important duty to nominate only independent, committed and highly qualified candidates for election as Committee members. The CINAT further calls on States Parties to ensure greater transparency in the national selection processes of candidates for the Committee.

Relevant experience and high standards for the candidates

Committee members shall be of "recognized competence in the field of human rights" as stated in article 17 of the UN Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. States Parties should therefore select candidates with a broad experience relevant to the Convention, including international human rights law and criminal law, conditions in prisons, and closed psychiatric institutions, as well as health related aspects. Candidates should also demonstrate in-depth knowledge and understanding of issues relevant to torture and deprivation of liberty as well as a long-standing commitment to human rights.

Independence

Committee members shall be of "high moral standing" and "serve in their personal capacity". Given the importance of impartiality and objectivity in the work of the Committee, both substantive independence and the appearance of independence of the members are essential. The CINAT calls on States Parties not to nominate or vote for candidates who hold positions in the executive or legislative branches of government.

Transparent process

To ensure the selection of candidates fulfilling the above criteria, it is imperative to establish a consultative and transparent selection process at the national level.

Drawing on the experience of those states which are already doing so, States Parties should make a public call nationally for candidates who fulfill the criteria set out above, and they should actively encourage civil society to propose candidates. States Parties should also promote the selection of female candidates. States Parties should disseminate information about candidates at the national level.

As the deadline to present candidates is **10 August 2007**, the CINAT recommends that, if they haven't already done so, States Parties start the national consultation process as soon as possible.

CINAT is a coalition of the following international NGOs: Amnesty International (AI), the Association for the Prevention of Torture (APT), the International Federation of ACAT – Action by Christians for the Abolition of Torture (FI.ACAT), the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ), the International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims (IRCT), The Redress Trust (REDRESS) and the World Organization Against Torture (OMCT).

The selection process must also be transparent at the international level. States Parties should encourage the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to publicize candidates' curricula vitae on its website, well before the elections.

Finally, at the time of the election of the members of the Committee, the CINAT urges all States Parties to give priority to independent candidates who possess the requisite skills and relevant experience.

The Committee against Torture is the guardian of the Convention against Torture and advises States Parties on the implementation of the Convention. It is in the interests of all States Parties to elect a Committee comprising individuals who are independent experts in the field of preventing or combating torture and ill-treatment in order that the Committee may perform its functions effectively.

CINAT, 5th July 2007

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