



*Nothing can justify torture*

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# ANNUAL REPORT

# 2017

World Organisation  
Against Torture  
(OMCT)

**OMCT**  
SOS-Torture Network





**OMCT:**  
***More than the sum of our members***

*The OMCT is the leading global civil society network against torture. Our SOS-Torture Network includes more than 200 home-grown, local member organisations in our growing movement, operating in over 90 countries around the world. Driven by the needs of our network members, the OMCT engages in all areas of anti-torture work: accountability, prevention, impunity, direct assistance, rehabilitation, reparation, and protection – for victims, Human Rights Defenders (HRDs) and their families, and for the broader public to remain free of torture.*

*The OMCT is an independent, non-partisan, non-sectarian, Swiss international non-governmental organisation, founded in Geneva in 1985. The organisation's International Secretariat is based in Switzerland, with offices in Tunisia and Belgium. The OMCT is a board member of the European Human Rights Defenders protection mechanism.*

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# TORTURE MUST REMAIN A TABOO

***Looking back on 2017, I feel two competing souls in my heart: The pride for the achievements, the real-life differences we make for people and partners on the ground, and a sense of urgency about the retreat of human rights and the prohibition of torture. To those who have stood up in defense of another person, 2017 saw a continuation of threat to the human rights framework and a difficult year: threats, attacks and obstacles to their work have increased. Not only in the rhetoric and political developments in North America and Europe, but also on the streets of the Middle East, Central America, Turkey, in my country Pakistan, in the barangays of the Philippines.***

## **Re-tabooing torture**

In so many places torture is back or still there, and its absolute prohibition is being questioned. In many ways, breaking taboos has become the fashion of the day, a success model and strategy for populists to deconstruct the value systems we have built up together over years.

It irritates me when politicians hope to defeat populism and racism with appeasing discourses. On the contrary, we can only defend against the taboo-breaker by defending whole-heartedly the principles that need to be protected.

I ask myself what the world would look like when the ends can justify any means, when there are no constraints, no consensus, no commitment to the protection of the individual we have all agreed?

I can see myself that this would be a scary, arbitrary, corrupt and dangerous place for us all. As my colleague Yves Berthelot says, there is no “but” to the absolute prohibition of torture. I also say this to those who want to send migrants home despite real and foreseeable risks in torture. Or to those who say torture works.

## **Protect defenders**

If 2017 saw setbacks, we also saw advances, some of which you will see in this report. The struggle cannot be successful without those who assist victims, who document and speak out against torture, or who fight against other violations. They all need and deserve our protection and solidarity!

***“Being part of a Network I feel safer, I feel stronger.”***

Please do not fall prey to arguments that those defending rights are damaging to the State, harming development, or are bad for the morale of the police or military. Often, they are doing just the opposite – reducing exclusion and marginalisation, building justice, the rule of law, and peace. These are cornerstones of a democratic society, of human dignity, and of your and my own protection.

In this report, you will see how the OMCT has been mobilising new defense mechanisms and actions with partners and peer organisations to increase the protection of those most at risk.

## **Stay with us**

As the winds of these times threaten to pull the human rights movement backwards, I find that, being part of a Network rooted in local organisations around the world, I feel safer. I feel stronger.

But we need to press together stronger against the present challenges, and we need states to speak out on torture, donors to support human rights defenders and to be more flexible to the difficult environments we are working in. And as more governments shy away from sensitive human rights issues, we need the support of all of you, the broader public, to stay with us, to join the good fight.

Join us to keep torture where it belongs – as a taboo, an unacceptable, a never.

**Hina Jilani**  
OMCT President



# WINNING MORE BATTLES

***Human rights in crisis. Populism on the march. Liberal or democratic ideas on the defense. It could seem that hardly anything can be taken for granted nowadays. But it's short-sighted to conclude here, to stay in negativity, passive and complacent. I have seen a different, active, and more positive narrative.***

## Accompanying victims and fighting for change

Not all victories make the front page, but the OMCT will always be there to help those in need. For example, hundreds of individuals were assassinated in euphemistically called “fake encounters” in Manipur over more than 10 years, a place most outside of India probably know little about. In 2017, after a decade-long struggle, we helped our Network member in India to represent families of the victims. They achieved a landmark victory in the Indian Supreme Court, recognising these killings for the first time and ordering prosecution of those responsible.

This annual report offers a glimpse of the struggles we accompany in the course of a year, and some of our victories. Many, just like in Manipur, never make it into the international press.

Some are deeply personal – a victim is empowered to rebuild his or her life, a human rights defender is released from prison, charges against them dropped, or is able to relocate into safety. And yet others are institutional – passage of a general law on torture in Mexico after years of work, seeing that child prisoners in Benin are no longer held with adult prisoners where there was frequent abuse.

## Uniting against torture

In Germany, we say about the end of the Weimar Republic: “Democracy was not defeated by its enemies, but for its lack of friends.”

To me this serves as a *leitmotif* for our response to this changing global environment. We must mobilise better, work together, and bring more friends to the values we protect!

This is why, in late 2017, we launched a global initiative named “civil society united against torture”. This initiative focuses on support for our SOS-Torture Network members, in situations of closing space, ensuring that victim support and protection are still provided to those in need, and amplifying their voices from Turkey to the Philippines, from Burundi to Guatemala and back across countries of the former Soviet Union. It empowers more litigation to challenge impunity for torture and produces new collective research on protection of those most vulnerable: children, women, indigenous people, people on the move. It also addresses negative currents such as the debate on torture in counter-terrorism, so difficult for local organisations to counter alone, and will develop strategies collectively to strengthen public opinion on the fundamental and unchangeable prohibition of torture.



***“The active engagement from all sides encourages me greatly.”***

But the need for friends does not end here. It includes our partners, our donors, and crucially, vital support from the broader public. One highlight in 2017 was a theatre piece on Pinochet-era torture, performed at the initiative of our group of friends in the Château des Bois in Satigny, close to Geneva. The active engagement from all sides on what torture is and does to societies encourages me greatly for the future. As Hina says, we must press together more strongly, and we hope you will give us your hand to reach out to new opportunities.

Come and join us, support our Network member nearest to you, or become an Ambassador against torture!

**Gerald Staberock**  
Secretary General



# KEY NUMBERS AND EVENTS OF 2017

## 164

### victims of torture

The OMCT provided assistance for surgery, psychological support, complimentary housing, school fees, food, and legal support for victims of torture from 16 countries.

## 43

### countries engaged directly

### Protection and support to more than

## 720

### Human Rights Defenders

The OMCT brought protection and support to 721 HRDs and 88 local NGOs through protective advocacy in 70 countries.

### Almost

## 90

### authoritative recommendations by the CAT

In 2017, 65 organisations from 17 countries advocated in sessions on their countries held by the Committee Against Torture, yielding stronger, more useful recommendations against torture.

## 57

### prison monitoring visits, including child detention centres

Direct contact with victims and those most vulnerable to torture can change everything for them. In 2017, civil society access to places of detention steadily increased, with the OMCT, Network members and partners at the forefront.

## 30

### Tunisian psychologists trained

The OMCT and partner PDM-T gathered and trained over 30 psychologists to discuss and improve treatment of torture victims.

## 26

### missions in

## 15

### countries

Bangladesh, Benin, Burundi, Chile, Colombia, Ivory Coast, Kazakhstan, Mexico, Paraguay, the Philippines, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Uruguay.

## 32

### staff in

## 3

### offices

Geneva, CH (HQ);  
Brussels, BE;  
Tunis, TN.



The OMCT gender parity close to

**50%**

42% women in governing body and 50% in management team.

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**40**

**Human Rights Defenders set free**

In 2017, the OMCT, along with a host of other partners and international NGOs, succeeded in securing the release of 40 HRDs from detention centres or arrest.

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The OMCT in the media in

**27**

**countries**

71 news articles published in 27 countries and in 7 languages.

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**0**

**child held with adults in prisons in Benin**

A milestone after years of advocacy with ESAM and other local CSOs: since September 2017, no more male children are held with adult males in prisons in Benin.

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**+ 19%**  
**likes on the OMCT Facebook page**

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# URGENT ASSISTANCE FOR VICTIMS OF TORTURE

***Assisting victims of torture is central to the OMCT's mission – to ensure that they receive recognition, assistance and support for rehabilitation. Through our Urgent Assistance Fund, any victim of torture or a member of her/his family, from anywhere in the world, at any time, can ask for and may receive assistance.***

## WHERE STRUCTURES AND RESOURCES ARE LACKING, THE OMCT CAN GIVE FIRST AID TO VICTIMS OF TORTURE

The OMCT Urgent Assistance Fund for Victims of Torture was established in 1986, following repeated requests by NGOs in the SOS-Torture Network to respond quickly to the immediate needs of victims of torture in all regions of the world. Victims can contact the OMCT directly or be referred to us by local organisations which may lack the resources to assist them themselves. All cases are assessed, verified and monitored by professionals in provision of such assistance and with local partners.

### Background

Torture and ill-treatment are often carried out in secret or in extreme situations, especially in times of war, and the exact number of violations is impossible to determine. However, estimations put the numbers at tens of thousands of cases each year. Torture is a weapon that is often used for extortion and by authoritarian regimes to extract confessions, to subdue political opposition or to humiliate and punish those of different sexual orientation, ethnicity, or political beliefs. Most victims are disadvantaged and marginalised, rarely aware of their rights. There is also presently an increase in the use of torture in cases related to suspected terrorism.

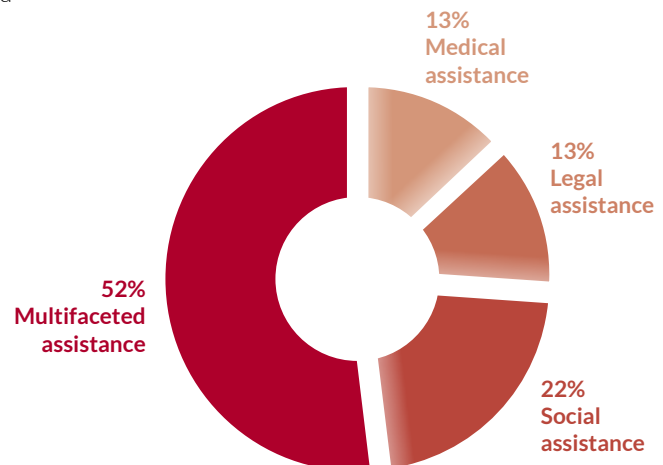
### What the fund provides

- **medical assistance** – first aid to victims for physical recovery or psychological rehabilitation
- **social assistance** – support for basic needs to victims and their families for survival and social reintegration
- **legal assistance** – support to seek justice and compensation for damages suffered and/or ensure fair defence at a trial, official recognition of the torture suffered, or prosecution of the perpetrator

Where local legal remedies are exhausted, the OMCT can provide its expertise and support to lawyers or local partners to submit cases to regional and international human rights courts; e.g. African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights, Inter-American Court of Human Rights, European Court of Human Rights, the UN Committee Against Torture or the UN Human Rights Committee, in order to obtain justice when it is impossible locally.

### 2017

In 2017, the OMCT increased its support to the Fund, providing medical, legal and social assistance to 92 victims of torture in 16 countries. It also continued providing direct assistance to victims in Tunisia through its SANAD centres.



ASSISTANCE PROVIDED IN 2017\*

\* Most victims are provided with at least two kinds of assistance, the majority being medical and legal needs.





Torture victim Shah Jalal's wife Rahela Begum and his father Zakir Hossain. © Odhikar

## *Blinded, but still seeking justice*

Torture is endemic in Bangladesh, routinely used by police and other state agents for extortion or to quash dissenting voices and vulnerable citizens. Journalists and Human Rights Defenders (HRDs) investigating torture cases are often targets of threats and violence in an increasingly repressive environment. Here is the story of one of the victims the OMCT has aided.

Mr. Shah Jalal, a 35-year-old man, lived in a slum in Khulna City (in the southwest of Bangladesh) with his mother, wife and 10-month-old daughter. The sole breadwinner in his family, he sold fruit and vegetables in the street, barely earning enough to feed his loved ones. One evening in July 2017, while buying powdered milk for his baby daughter, he was picked up by the police and taken to a police station where he was accused of stealing and was heavily beaten. The police demanded a payment of 150,000.00 Taka (around CHF 1,800) for his release. As the Jalal family was unable to pay such a sum, Mr. Shah Jalal was taken to the city's outskirts where the officers tied him up and gouged out his eyes. "A police officer squatted on my chest and choked me, while a second held my head down firmly. I saw a third one lean over my face with a wrench with which he ripped out my eyes. These were the last things I saw with my own eyes." Jalal later recounted. They abandoned him half-dead at the hospital. The day after his arrest, Mr. Shah Jalal's wife Rahela found him lying on the floor of the Khulna Medical College Hospital, blinded and bleeding from both eyes. "We are poor.

*“A police officer squatted on my chest and choked me, while a second held my head down firmly. I saw a third one lean over my face with a wrench with which he ripped out my eyes. These were the last things I saw with my own eyes.”* – Jalal later recounted.

My daughter is starving. We cannot survive unless my husband can find work again. Why did the police do that to us?" – she said. Odhikar – an OMCT Network member in Bangladesh – was informed of the case by local activists reporting on abuses across the country. Alarmed by the case of Mr. Jalal, Odhikar sought support from the OMCT's Urgent Assistance Fund, which immediately provided assistance for the family's most urgent needs, enabling them to survive the immediate aftermath of Mr. Jalal's torture. He is now slowly recovering, but he remains severely traumatised and needs further medical and social assistance.

With the support of local activists, the Jalal family filed a case with the Khulna Metropolitan Session Court in September 2017. The Asia Human Rights Commission, an OMCT partner, called for the intervention of the Bangladeshi Authorities and the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture. However, the family continues to live in fear of further ill-treatment as it is regularly threatened and offered bribes by the police demanding the withdrawal of the case.

*“I shall never get back my eyes, but I want justice.”* – Jalal declared.

Odhikar and the OMCT stand ready to support this effort in the coming period. Torture is widespread in Bangladesh. But measuring this remains difficult as survivors and their families choose silence for fear of reprisals. Odhikar maintains a registry of persons who have been tortured to death by state agents during the last decade – so far there are just over 100 cases.

# CONVENTION AGAINST TORTURE

*The OMCT strives for all States to comply with the UN Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. It amplifies the voices of civil society around the world fighting against torture by triggering, supporting and coordinating their work with the Committee Against Torture (CAT), submitting reports, building coalitions, and carrying out advocacy missions, follow up activities, and joint campaigns against torture with our members in a wide range of countries.*

## HOW GLOBAL ADVOCACY YIELDS CHANGES NATIONALLY AND INTERNATIONALLY

### India takes a step towards ratifying the UN Convention Against Torture and enacting anti-torture legislation

The use of torture and ill-treatment in India is widespread and mainly affects the poor, minorities and marginalised communities. However, under the present Indian domestic legal framework, torture is not yet criminalised and India is the only major democracy that has not accepted the UN Convention Against Torture. While there is still a long way to go to eradicate torture and impunity, continued pressure from the OMCT and local partners, as well as a legal brief submitted at the Indian Supreme Court, has resulted in the Indian government drafting an anti-torture bill and reiterating its commitment to ratify the Convention.

### Local Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) influence CAT recommendations and push for local change

Despite having ratified the UN Convention Against Torture, Afghanistan and Pakistan were long overdue in reporting to the CAT. After the submission of State reports in 2016, the OMCT mobilised its local partners to ensure that the CAT, when reviewing these countries in early 2017, could also draw on first-hand information from civil society. To this end, a training for Afghan CSOs was organised by the OMCT to strengthen their capacities for an effective use of the UN mechanism. Alternative reports were thus submitted to the CAT, which in turn relied on them heavily when crafting its recommendations. These will then be used afterwards by the OMCT and local partners to trigger change in-country, by pushing for law reforms and better compliance.

*“Thank you for not letting down the most disadvantaged when they most need it.”*

*- says a Mexican torture victim.*



© Contraluz/Juan Carlos Cruz

### Anti-torture law adopted in Mexico

Over the past few years, the OMCT has engaged intensively with Mexican Network members. Together, we have tirelessly advocated for the ratification of the “General Law to Prevent, Investigate, and Sanction Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment or Punishment”. Finally, in April 2017, it was adopted by the Senate by a large majority vote and passed into law. It complies with international human rights standards and includes;

- the exclusion of evidence obtained through torture or ill-treatment
- the establishment of a national preventive mechanism
- provisions for the protection and compensation of victims
- safeguards to guarantee the independence of investigations and the use of medico-legal reports in line with the Istanbul Protocol

The OMCT continues to engage with local partners and authorities to ensure that the law is implemented and applied correctly.





## KEY FIGURES

11

**65** CSOs participated in CAT sessions

**Almost 90** recommendations from the OMCT and its partners adopted by the CAT

**8** country reports submitted with local partners to the CAT

**Over 15** advocacy, fact-finding missions and training sessions in Africa, Asia and South & Central America

*“The Committee conveys special thanks to non-governmental organizations, particularly the World Organisation Against Torture, for its crucial role in coordinating the input of non-governmental organizations to the work of the Committee.”*

*- UN Committee Against Torture - annual report*

## IN FOCUS

### ***Russia-Chechnya: Training journalists to better cover human rights issues***

In March 2016, a bus with six journalists and two human rights activists was heading towards Chechnya to report on human rights abuses. The bus was stopped by masked men who physically assaulted its occupants and set fire to the vehicle. The press trip had been organised by the OMCT's local partner, Committee Against Torture, one of the rare Russians NGOs still working on torture in the North Caucasus region.

Following this violent event, local journalists have become more motivated to report on human rights violations and torture in Chechnya. Consequently, in 2017, the OMCT and its Russian partner organised a training session in Geneva for Russian journalists in which the UN mechanisms for the prevention and protection of torture were explained, with a focus on providing coverage of the conclusions for public awareness. This initiative increased awareness in Geneva of the current situation of torture in Russia and reinforced the capacities of Russian journalists to report on abuses back home.



# CHILD PROTECTION AGAINST TORTURE

***Children are highly vulnerable to torture and ill-treatment, especially when deprived of liberty. Since 1993, the OMCT has built actions and projects to protect children from torture and other forms of violence. Along with local organisations, the OMCT fights for their protection, rights and freedom from torture and abuse around the world.***

## TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN

### Advocacy and campaigning against torture

In 2017, the OMCT and local partners continued building on long-term, holistic work combining legal and advocacy interventions, both nationally and internationally, with regular visits of places of child detention in our current focus countries. The objective is to drive public awareness and direct support to child victims, always with one goal in mind: protection of children from torture.

### Philippines

With its local partner, the Children's Legal Rights and Development Centre (CLRDC), the OMCT contributed to defeating a bill proposing to lower the minimum age of criminal responsibility to nine years old. Advocacy for the end of extrajudicial killing of children achieved major media attention and public awareness for the issue, bringing people outraged by the killings into the streets, notably in support of Kian delos Santos, a 16-year-old shot by police officers.

### Benin

Together with local partner Enfants Solidaires d'Afrique et du Monde (ESAM), the OMCT advocated for better protection of children including through separation from adults in prisons and improvement of prison conditions, also in rural areas.

### Uruguay

With local partner Instituto de Estudios Legales y Sociales del Uruguay (IELSUR), the OMCT advocated for improvements in the juvenile justice system and denounced child rights abuses, calling for dialogues between police, juvenile judges and prison authorities to better protect children in prison in Uruguay from torture and ill-treatment.

### Brazil

In Brazil, the OMCT has engaged with local partners to oppose an initiative to reduce the age of criminal responsibility, to address the high levels of violence in places of detention for children, and to develop new projects on torture prevention as well as child protection in Pernambuco State.

## MONITORING AND DIRECT ASSISTANCE

The OMCT's work benefits greatly from its almost unique access, with its partners, to conduct prison monitoring visits to places where children in conflict with the law are deprived of liberty.

### Philippines: 34 detention centres visited in 2017

In addition to the OMCT's support for CLRDC to conduct prison monitoring visits, in June 2017, an OMCT delegation led by Dick Marty, Vice-President of the OMCT, conducted a mission with two Philippine members of the OMCT SOS-Torture Network in order to:

- monitor the situation of children deprived of liberty
- assess the degree of recommendations of the CAT from its 2016 Review
- document other grave human rights violations

The mission concluded that none of the key recommendations on the situation of children deprived of liberty made by the CAT had been implemented, and it advocated in particular for the closure of centres with inhuman conditions of detention and reports of abuse and torture of children.







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## *Violence against children in Caloocan City, Philippines*

During the OMCT's regular prison visits over the past years, close to 60 children have reported suffering violence at Yakap Bata Holding Centre (YB) during interrogations. Violence included: beatings with guns, heads covered with plastic bags, punches to the stomach, electric shocks, and being handcuffed for hours with hands behind their backs. Children reported never being able to leave their cells and never having access to a patio or a room with sunlight. The food was insufficient and of bad quality and numerous reports of illnesses and infections were registered. In addition, several boys and girls at YB are being held without having ever been convicted of any crime. Throughout 2017, the OMCT and CLRDC called for their release and closure of YB, but so far this has only produced new plans to move the children to another centre before the definitive closure of the Yakap-Bata prison.

### **Uruguay: 9 detention centres visited in 2017**

In addition to the OMCT's support for IELSUR to conduct prison monitoring visits, in June 2017, the OMCT participated in a mission with UNICEF-Uruguay and IELSUR, including Jorge Cardona Llorens, member of the UN Committee on Rights of the Child (CRC). The mission included:

- prison-monitoring visits to detention centres where children are held
- a visit to a protection centre for young children at risk
- trainings on use of CRC recommendations in advocacy and public awareness campaigning
- meetings with authorities to demand changes to excessive deprivations of liberty, to conditions of detention, and to the use of violence against children

Though degrading conditions of detention and long hours of confinement are still reported, the number of children who have claimed to suffer violence inside the centres has decreased following years of work by the OMCT with IELSUR.

### **Benin: 11 detention centres visited in 2017**

In addition to the OMCT's support for ESAM to conduct prison monitoring visits, in November 2017, the OMCT and local partners carried out a mission to Benin in order to:

- conduct monitoring visits to four detention centres where children are held
- hold a training session for community leaders and local authorities on the reintegration of children once released from detention centres
- distribute child-friendly posters on child rights in juvenile detention centres
- hold meetings with the Ministry of Justice to advocate for improved conditions for children

The mission was an occasion to bring international experts to an isolated rural region of the country and create a dialogue between different actors responsible for the reintegration of children. The participants in the training session agreed to start advocating for inclusion of activities for the reintegration of children in the municipality's budget – which has never been done before.

### **CAPACITY BUILDING AND NETWORK ACTION**

In 2017, the OMCT and its partners organised training sessions in Benin, Uruguay and the Philippines to increase understanding and dialogue among civil society and local governments, and to raise awareness of the issues of child detention and torture.

#### **Philippines**

Encouraged by CLRDC and the OMCT, universities have worked to raise awareness of students on the human rights situation of children in the Philippines and encouraged their involvement in lobbying and social media campaigns.

#### **Uruguay**

The OMCT helped to bring together governmental authorities and civil society organisations at an event co-sponsored by UNICEF to highlight the many challenges that the juvenile justice system encounters in that country.

#### **Benin**

The OMCT organised a training session on the reintegration of children deprived of liberty. Among the 25 participants were community leaders, religious leaders, juvenile judges, prison directors, a former child in conflict with the law and his family, and civil society organisations.



Human Rights Defender  
Onesmo Olengurumwa  
from Tanzania, at the  
ProtectDefenders.eu  
Annual Meeting 2017.



# HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

***Fighting against torture and for human rights is a high-risk activity. Human Rights Defenders (HRDs), including anti-torture activists, are often victims of threats, defamation, attacks, arrests, prosecution, arbitrary detentions, or even acts of torture or killings. Since the creation of the OMCT, their protection has been at the very heart of the organisation's mission and work worldwide.***

## DECADES OF SUPPORT

For more than 20 years, the OMCT has been one of the core international NGOs that ensure effective and comprehensive protection and support for HRDs, wherever they are in the world, whatever human rights work they do.

As one of the main global players in the protection system for HRDs, the OMCT operates a comprehensive protection strategy incorporating early warning, prevention, advocacy, monitoring, outreach, capacity building, physical safety, and direct assistance. This has grown since 1997 through our joint venture with the FIDH in the Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders. In 2015, following an increase in attacks and systems of repression, the OMCT further expanded its collaboration with 11 other global and regional NGOs to form ProtectDefenders.eu, now the largest global HRDs protection and assistance mechanism.

## PROOF THAT THE HUMAN RIGHTS MOVEMENT IS EFFECTIVE

HRDs' actions are always peaceful, but they are increasingly threatened and have become frequent targets of attack - on their work, on their support for victims, and directly, on their lives and families. They work to defend us against various human rights violations, including summary executions, torture, arbitrary arrest and detention, forced evictions, destruction of property and environment. They are also the main positive force in the promotion of respect for all human rights. But the situation of HRDs around the world continues to deteriorate, perhaps a reaction to a human rights movement that has never been as global, diverse and successful in achieving victories in all regions of the world. In 2017 the OMCT saw the following trends and developments:

- The repression of HRDs fighting for land and environmental rights continued to increase in all regions of the world
- HRDs were particularly targeted in countries where violations are especially serious or systematic, such as in contexts of conflict, crisis, or political transition
- HRDs are operating in increasingly restrictive environments through legal frameworks that inhibit freedoms of association (including the right of NGOs to access foreign funding), expression and peaceful assembly
- HRDs worldwide face attacks and legal and policy restrictions in the name of counter-terrorism and related security laws and policies.

## OMCT PROVIDES FOR HRDS

- Emergency material assistance to provide for, inter alia, medical rehabilitation and psychological assistance, digital and physical security, and/or legal support or emergency relocation to HRDs at risk and their families
- Financial support to local human rights organisations to enable them to consolidate their operational activities and continue essential human rights work in highly adverse contexts
- A systematic international alert mechanism monitoring the situation of HRDs and the environment in which they operate, and advocating for a protection agenda for HRDs at local, regional and international level - including the dispatching of international missions and the publishing of reports
- Training and capacity building aiming at improving HRDs' security, sharpening their advocacy strategies, connecting them into stronger networks, and deepening their expertise in key areas of human rights

## KEY FIGURES

**40 HRDs released from detention following action from OMCT and other organisations**

**Financial support to 12 NGOs and 38 HRDs in 23 countries**

**351 urgent interventions for 721 HRDs and 88 NGOs in 70 countries**

**15 international fact-finding, advocacy, and trial observation missions**

**98 HRDs and 6 NGOs helped by quasi-judicial complaints to universal and regional mechanisms**

## HUMAN STORIES



Max Bokayev and Talgat Ayanov during one of their 2017 hearings.

## *Kazakhstan: OMCT campaigns against arbitrary detention of two land rights HRDs*

Max Bokayev and Talgat Ayanov, two land rights HRDs in Kazakhstan, had played a crucial role in organising peaceful protests that took place in April and May 2016 against proposed amendments to the Land Code of Kazakhstan. The amendments were aimed at facilitating the lease of agricultural land to foreigners, which protesters opposed as a violation to the rights of Kazakh citizens and landowners. Following their arbitrary detention later that year and subsequent sentencing to five years in prison, the OMCT documented violations to these HRDs right to a fair trial and called for their release and appropriate compensation. As a result of a submission made by the OMCT and other human rights advocacy, in April 2017 the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention (WGAD) declared their detention as arbitrary since it was linked to their “exercise of the rights to freedom of expression and freedom of assembly”. The Observatory continues to monitor the situation through various advocacy actions and joint submissions to the UN Human Rights Committee.



## *Colombia: Release on parole after almost seven years in prison*

During over 30 years of human rights defence work, David Ravelo Crespo, a founding member of the Regional Corporation for the Defense of Human Rights (Credhos), had made numerous denunciations including against enforced disappearances, extra-judicial executions and forced displacements. This included denunciations and actions to accuse powerful paramilitaries and even former Colombian President Alvaro Uribe Velez. After surviving numerous attacks and still refusing to leave Barrancabermeja or stop his human rights advocacy, Mr. Ravelo was arrested and imprisoned on 14 September 2010, accused of the 1991 murder of a public official of Barrancabermeja. However, the accusation against Mr. Ravelo was based entirely on the testimony of incarcerated paramilitaries, one of whom is currently being prosecuted for false testimony, and other accusers, previously jailed for human rights abuses, who were given reduced sentences as rewards for their testimony against Mr. Ravelo.



Before he was imprisoned in 2010, David Ravelo endured ten years of death threats. © PBI Colombia

But Mr. Ravelo has never been left alone in his struggle. The OMCT has repeatedly denounced the series of attacks against him in retaliation to his legitimate human rights activities since 2006, but his case became particularly emblematic following the detention and judicial harassment he was subjected to after 2010. Mr. Ravelo's case was also brought to the Inter-American Human Rights Commission (IACHR), and formed part of a joint campaign, Stand4HRDs, organised by the OMCT and other national and international NGOs in the framework of the Human Rights and Democracy Network (HRDN). Finally, in 2017, Mr. Ravelo was released on probation after almost seven years in prison. Despite his release, his case remains pending and will be reviewed by the Special Justice Tribunal for Peace. The OMCT and its local and international partners continue to monitor the process and support all active and legitimate human rights work in this region and across Colombia.



## PROTECTDEFENDERS.EU

ProtectDefenders.eu is the European Union Human Rights Defenders (HRDs) mechanism to protect defenders at high risk. Implemented in 2016 by a Consortium of 12 international and regional NGOs, it not only provides HRDs with direct support and protection, but also brings together resources and expertise, triggering an overall higher level of protection for HRDs. Of the four board members of the Consortium, the OMCT is the only Swiss-based organisation.

Implemented by international civil society, ProtectDefenders.eu has proven to be very effective in providing support for Human Rights Defenders at risk. Through this initiative, the OMCT shares its resources with 11 other international and regional NGOs, bolstering the support provided to HRDs and to local human rights NGOs worldwide.

In 2017 alone, 943 alerts on violations against HRDs were issued by four members of ProtectDefenders.eu, including the OMCT, thus contributing to give visibility of the scale of risks HRDs face in their everyday work. The expansion of the ProtectDefenders.eu network, which involves local organisations, international NGOs, members of the EU Temporary Relocation Platform (EUTRP) and European institutions, such as the European Parliament and the European External Action Service, has also played an important role in the defence of HRDs.

## KEY FIGURES

**346** emergency grants provided  
to high risk HRDs

**188** relocation initiatives benefiting  
**667** individuals

**55** grants to local NGOs and groups  
of HRDs to help them expand their  
operational capacities

**98** training and capacity building  
initiatives for over **2,000** HRDs

**40%** of the overall beneficiaries were  
Women Human Rights Defenders (WHRDs)

## IN FOCUS

### **Mexico: OMCT campaign in favour of HRDs**

In 2017, the OMCT pursued its intensive advocacy work in Mexico in order to seek the release of HRDs *Damián Gallardo Martínez*, *Enrique Guerrero Aviña* and *Librado Baños Rodríguez*, who have been victims of arbitrary detention, criminalisation, torture and ill-treatment for three and a half years despite recommendations from the UN WGAD. To obtain their release, the OMCT has published many Urgent Interventions and conducted numerous advocacy actions in various international forums such as the European Union and the UN, as well as with the Mexican authorities. In February 2017, the OMCT was able to visit the three defenders in prison and met with many civil society representatives from across the State of Oaxaca as well as official representatives in Oaxaca and Mexico City. In addition to addressing the pattern of arbitrary detention of Human Rights Defenders in Mexico, the mission also noted the lack of guarantees for human rights defence in the State of Oaxaca. Work with media led to presence in at least 19 media networks as well as a radio interview. To increase public awareness, the OMCT produced a video telling their story entitled "Mexico: A voiceless democracy?" that also described the situation of HRDs in Mexico.



# FIGHTING TORTURE IN TUNISIA

***While still undergoing a transition, torture and impunity continue to remain deeply rooted in Tunisia, both being legacies of the past regime. Since opening its country office in 2011, the OMCT fosters legislative and institutional reform for the absolute prohibition of torture. Along with its civil society partners and in cooperation with local authorities, the OMCT provides direct assistance to victims of torture, advocates for justice and the eradication of torture, and works to increase public awareness.***

## **PROGRESS IN HUMAN RIGHTS, BUT...**

Although there has been progress in anti-torture reforms in Tunisia since the fall of the old regime, the practice of arbitrary police violence, torture and impunity still prevails. This is mainly due to:

- Failures in the legal system preventing victims from obtaining justice
- The lack of a strong political will to put an end to impunity
- The absence of concrete measures to rehabilitate victims and pursue perpetrators

## **Advocacy and legal reforms**

In August 2017, the OMCT submitted a follow-up report to the UN Committee Against Torture (CAT). The report, signed by 10 civil society partners, put forward observations and recommendations on the fight against impunity, conditions of detention and transitional justice. This has resulted in the opening of a structured dialogue between the public authorities and various stakeholders.

Since then, the OMCT has sought to maintain an ongoing effort to better inform the Tunisian public of these issues, notably by publishing an explanatory report on the CAT ([CAT for you and me](#)) and by raising awareness of local, national and international media on human rights in Tunisia.

In the same spirit, the OMCT organised a campaign entitled “[Is this normal?](#)” Through workshops, meetings and victims’ testimonies, the campaign, in which media were actively involved, addressed the scourge of total impunity and its consequences on Tunisian society.

The OMCT is furthermore carrying out important capacity building and technical assistance work with Tunisia’s National Authority for the Prevention of Torture (INPT), the first of its kind in the region, and itself created with the support of the OMCT.

## **Direct assistance to victims**

The OMCT’s direct assistance programme in Tunisia is called SANAD and provides legal, social, psychological and medical assistance to victims and their families through two counselling centres in Kef and Sidi Bouzid. Since 2013, more than 300 victims have benefitted from SANAD’s services, of whom 224 were direct victims and 80 indirect victims. In 2017 alone, 72 new people benefitted from these services.

In 2017, the OMCT obtained three convictions for violence against state agents for torture or ill-treatment, despite the resistance and apathy of the judicial system.

A remaining challenge in the country is the lack of trained and activist professionals to engage in the fight against torture by providing direct assistance to survivors. In 2017, the OMCT partnered with the Tunisian association “Psychologists of the World - Tunisia” to enlarge their network in the interior regions of the country so that victims have easier access to psychological support through individual or group counselling.

## **Using culture to heighten public awareness**

The OMCT firmly believes that culture is a major tool for the fight against torture in Tunisia. Throughout the year, the OMCT organised, or participated in, concerts, festivals, film screenings and exhibitions to increase public awareness about the importance of human rights violations in the fight against torture.

For example, the OMCT distributed over 5,000 books to prisons in southern Tunisia and organised screenings of films from the official selection of the Carthage Film Festival (JCC) in prisons and reintegration centres, including the presence of film crews and national and international journalists.

Drawing from the experience of the photo exhibition “[Beneath the Jasmine](#)”, created in 2013 with the French photographer Augustin le Gall, workshops were organised to encourage and teach young Tunisians to take portraits and collect testimonies from fellow citizens who had suffered torture.

## THE HUMAN STORY



Mosbah, just after his brain surgery that helped him to recover his sight. © OMCT

### *OMCT gives hope to a young man*

#### **Mosbah's ordeal**

In 2016, Mosbah, a 30-year-old street vendor from a small town in central Tunisia, was suspected of having committed a robbery. He was arrested by the Tunisian national guard and taken to the police station where his ordeal began: he was so severely beaten that he lost consciousness. Mosbah then spent 75 days in hospital – in a coma for the first 30. The consequences of his beating were so excessive that when SANAD visited him a few months later, he was severely paralysed and blind – his family, full of despair.

#### **Influential support**

The OMCT's programme SANAD helped Mosbah and his family along every step of the way to reconstruction through medical, legal, administrative and social assistance:

- Medical – by taking charge of Mosbah's operation on his skull and joints and of his re-education
- Psychological – by providing him with regular psychological support
- Social – by helping the family obtain social aid from the Tunisian State
- Legal – by filing and following-up on a criminal complaint

#### **When the combat leads to positive results**

- Thanks to the skilful surgical intervention, by July 2017 Mosbah had regained his sight and ability to move
- The OMCT obtained social assistance and the exoneration of the costs of his first hospitalisation (75 days in a public hospital)
- The authorities opened an investigation. No one has yet been held accountable for Mosbah's ill-treatment, but the OMCT still follows the case closely and provides legal support

Mosbah has finally found hope and agreed to have his name and image published to denounce the excessive abuse still going on in his country. Dozens of victims like Mosbah seek help from the OMCT every year in Tunisia.

*“I had lost the use of both of my legs, I could not see, and I was abandoned by everyone without any hope.”*



# THE OMCT SOS-TORTURE NETWORK

*The SOS-Torture Network was established by the OMCT in 1985 and now includes over 200 member organisations working in over 90 countries around the world. Our Network is the silver thread that runs through and empowers all of the work of the OMCT, enabling victim assistance, joint advocacy and protection, collective learning, and direct action in all areas of the anti-torture movement.*

## WORKING TOGETHER TO STRENGTHEN CSO IMPACT WITH INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

In 2017, the OMCT Network Programme was accompanied and supported by our members and partners through multiple actions – both in their countries and at regional and international levels. This included accompaniment and support for their advocacy efforts with the UN Human Rights Council (HRC), the European Union and various European governments, raising the awareness and mobilising support and pressure for local advances against torture or protection for victims and defenders.



## COLLECTIVE APPROACHES: SHARING KNOWLEDGE, CREATING COALITIONS AND BUILDING WORKING GROUPS

The OMCT members are a locally grown, community-driven, and highly diverse set of organisations. Connecting them nationally, regionally and globally to share tactics and build coalitions is key to our approach. Activities in 2017 included:

- Tactical exchange – a workshop for Tunisian lawyers on “public investigations”, a documentation, litigation and advocacy strategy pioneered by Russian Network members
- Coalition building – creating an international solidarity group in Bangladesh to raise awareness and advocate together on the critical situation in the country
- Knowledge sharing – creating tools to better document torture in crises countries
- Joint advocacy – ensuring advocacy strategies include more voices to strengthen quality, visibility and legitimacy for anti-torture work

## CAMPAIGNS AND HIGHLIGHTS FROM ACROSS THE OMCT NETWORK

- **26 June 2017 campaign – International Day in Support of Victims of Torture:** #STAND4VICTIMS campaign, stories of women victims of torture who received support from the OMCT Network members and partners, in order to raise awareness of torture and gender-based violence throughout the world.
- **10 December 2017 campaign – Human Rights Day:** The OMCT launched #MakeNoise4HRDs, promoting Human Rights Defenders and their work – in the Maldives, Russia, Honduras and Mexico.

## The OMCT congratulates its Network members

**Olga Sadovskaya** (Committee Against Torture, Russia and the OMCT Executive Council Member), who won the highly prestigious Sakharov Prize Freedom Award for her work in Russia against torture, sharing the honor with Novaya Gazeta's Elena Milashina.

Adilur Rahman Kahn (Odhikar, Bangladesh), Rosemarie Trajano (PAHRA, Philippines), Mandira Sharma (Advocacy Forum-Nepal), and Liliana Ortega Mendoza (COFAVIC, Venezuela), who received the prestigious Franco-German Council of Ministers Prize for Human Rights and Rule of Law.

- In Burundi, the OMCT supported SOS Torture-Burundi in documentation and the investigation of human rights violations in Burundi, and in pushing for the International Criminal Court (ICC) to open an investigation on crimes against humanity committed since April 2015.
- In India, the OMCT worked with People's Watch and Human Rights Alert to push for the ratification of the Convention against Torture and for the criminalisation of torture in India.
- In Turkey, the OMCT worked with Sohran-Casra to support more than 3,300 victims of torture and war in Diyarbakir and to educate the public on torture prevention.
- In Cambodia, the OMCT supported the Cambodian Center for Human Rights (CCHR) amidst a deterioration of human rights in Cambodia, and advocated for the release of criminalised Human Rights Defenders, the ADHOC 5, released on June 29, 2017.
- In Mexico, the OMCT continued work with Centro Prodh to bring the case of 11 women, the so-called "Women of Atenco," before the Inter-American Court of Human Rights.
- In Bangladesh, the OMCT worked with Odhikar to raise awareness, support victims and strengthen the international Solidarity Group for Bangladesh to monitor violations.
- In Colombia, the OMCT advocated with the Coalición Colombiana Contra la Tortura (CCCT) in the post-Peace Agreement context to expand CSOs access to prisons and pursue reparations for victims of torture during the armed conflict. (The CCCT includes 4 OMCT Network Members: REINICIAR, CCJ, CCAJAR, and the FCSPP)



The 11 women litigating their case of sexual torture in San Salvador Atenco, outside the Inter-American Court of Human Rights in November 2017. © Centro Prodh

### KEY FIGURES

**15** written and **15** oral statements with the HRC

**16** side events at the HRC

**4** joint Universal Periodic Review (UPR) submissions

**2** global campaigns supporting torture victims and HRDs

***Created in 2003, the OMCT's office in Brussels is a growing advocacy and support hub for the OMCT and its SOS-Torture Network by coordinating and amplifying CSO voices and demands before European Union institutions with the aim of improving EU policies against torture and for HRDs.***

In 2017, the OMCT also chaired the EU Human Rights Defenders Mechanism, ProtectDefenders.eu, ensuring continuous EU support to the protection of defenders under threat.

### **Celebrating the Convention Against Torture**

2017 marked the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the entry into force of the UN Convention Against Torture, a pivotal convention to the OMCT's mission. To celebrate this milestone, the OMCT organised an event together with the APNU and the Parliament of the Federation Wallonia-Brussels.

### **Latin America in the spotlight**

Last year, the OMCT in Brussels spared no efforts to raise awareness on the situation of human rights in Latin America, especially in Mexico and Guatemala, where rampant violations and impunity remain the norm.



OMCT Brussels Staff (Chiara Cosentino and Miguel Martín Zumalacarregui) in advocacy with EU institutions. © OMCT

### **A resolution on Guatemala**

In coordination with its partners in Guatemala and other Civil Society Organisations (CSO) in Brussels, the OMCT successfully contributed to the adoption of a human rights resolution on Guatemala by the European Parliament. The resolution advocated for the implementation of a public policy for the protection of Human Rights Defenders in Guatemala in line with a 2014 decision issued by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, and a longstanding demand of the OMCT. The resolution also highlighted the need to reform the justice system and keep fighting impunity and corruption in Guatemala.

### **Advocating for improvements in Mexico**

In Mexico, the OMCT coordinated the EU civil society's participation in the Human Rights Seminar and the EU-Mexico Human Rights Dialogue, resulting in a CSO publication calling for improvements of the human rights situation in the EU and in Mexico. The publication most importantly highlighted the need to establish an international mechanism against impunity in Mexico, but also emphasised the need for the EU strategy on human rights in the EU to be coherent with the EU's human rights strategy in its foreign policy.

The many sessions in which the OMCT participated at the European Parliament included an event on the situation of human rights in Mexico in the context of the negotiations of the EU-Mexico Global Agreement.

## KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

**39** advocacy actions with EU institutions

**14** advocacy missions with the OMCT partners covering all regions of the world

**4** open letters and **5** parliamentary interventions by Members of the European Parliament expressing concern for human rights issues following the OMCT's advocacy actions

**5** human rights resolutions adopted by the European Parliament impacted by the OMCT advocacy actions



# SEEN IN THE PRESS

*The OMCT communications work is network-driven, focused on amplifying the multiplicity of voices, agendas, and identities of local civil society actors around the world who together form up the core of the international anti-torture movement. Below is a selection of media articles from 2017 mentioning or discussing the work of the OMCT and our Network Members.*

After eight years in Guantánamo, he yearns to return

*An OMCT psychologist who counsels him, says that his family is also being threatened and harassed and that they fear the Tunisian security forces.*

February 2017 - New York Times (United States of America)

**The New York Times**

International human rights protest against the verdict for blogger Mother Mushroom

*[...] Gerald Staberock, Secretary General of OMCT, called for the release of “Mother Mushroom”, an anti-government blogger who was given a 10-year prison sentence [...]*

February 2017 - RFA (Vietnam)



Four elements of high risk to Human Rights Defenders

*“The lowest homicide rate in Colombia in 40 years contrasts with a sharp increase in murders of human rights defenders” – concluded an international mission to Colombia by the OMCT and FIDH.*

July 2017 - Contagio radio (Colombia)



Workshop focusing on the reintegration of children in conflict with the law

*The NGO ESAM, in collaboration with the OMCT, organized a workshop [...] on how to improve the integration back into their communities of children who are in conflict with the law [...]*

November 2017 - Agence Bénin Presse (Benin)



Torture makes a comeback in Tunisia

*Mokhtar Trifi, OMCT Vice-President, declared that “torture is making a comeback in Tunisia.”*

April 2017 - Huffpost (Maghreb)



Defenders of human rights: life under threat

*[...] Miguel Martín Zumalacárregui, Head of OMCT Europe Office, described his visits to prisons in Latin America following arbitrary arrests of human rights defenders [...]*

March 2017 - Deutsche Welle “Made for Minds” (Germany)



Collective rapes, point-blank shooting and torture: the inspiring story of Karla Avelar, the voice of transgendered people in El Salvador

*OMCT and the UNHCHR called for security guarantees for LGBTI human rights activist Karla Avelar in El Salvador after she received death threats [...]*

May 2017 - BBC News (South America)



*In 2017, the OMCT was mentioned in press articles in at least 27 countries and 7 languages.*





# INDIVIDUAL DONORS

*The work of the OMCT is primarily enabled by partnerships and contributions from institutional donors. However, our work has always been supported by individual donors who share our vision of a world without torture and provide unrestricted support to strengthen our work around the world.*

*Such support is crucial as it increases the OMCT and its Network members' ability to better respond to torture in crisis situations around the world.*



## INDIVIDUAL DONATIONS TO THE OMCT ARE USED MAINLY:

- to **assist** victims of torture, no matter where they are, to recover from their injuries, seek justice, recuperate their dignity and rebuild their lives
- to **monitor** places of detention where children are deprived of their liberty and protect them from inhuman treatment
- to **respond** quickly to emergencies and urgent requests from anti-torture organisations in crisis situations
- to **investigate** violations and conduct new research on those most vulnerable to torture – women, children, minorities, refugees, etc.
- to **protect** HRDs and their organisations around the world, enabling their anti-torture and other human rights work to continue





## The OMCT benefactors evening at Château des Bois

In October 2017, the OMCT presented "Tejas Verdes, the hour of truth has come", inspired by the work of Fermin Cabal and played by Les Curieux Polyglottes. Proceeds from the event, attended by nearly 180 people, went to the OMCT.

The OMCT extends its gratitude to its generous sponsors, including Bernard Nicod Group, Lombard Odier, Options, Les Ambassadeurs, Girard-Perregaux and Champagnes de Venoge, as well as the support committee, for their remarkable mobilisation and energy.





# INSTITUTIONAL DONORS 2017

## **FOUNDATIONS AND OTHER PARTNERS**

Brot für die Welt  
Civil Society and Human Rights Network  
Fondation de bienfaisance du Groupe Pictet  
Fondation Pro Victimis  
National Endowment for Democracy  
Oak Foundation  
Open Society Foundations  
Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie  
Prague Civil Society Centre  
Private Geneva Foundation  
The Sigrid Rausing Trust

## **GOVERNMENTS**

Germany  
Ireland  
Liechtenstein  
Switzerland  
The Netherlands  
United States of America

## **INTERNATIONAL AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS**

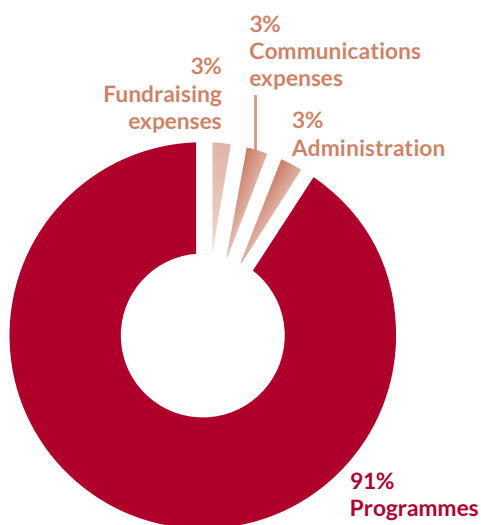
European Commission  
Special Fund for the OPCAT UN  
UNICEF

## **LOCAL GRANTS (CANTONS AND COMMUNES IN SWITZERLAND)**

City of Geneva  
City of Meinier  
City of Meyrin  
City of Plan-les-Ouates  
Republic and Canton of Geneva

# FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Financially, 2017 was a positive year for the OMCT. This is visible in the sustainability of funding as well as development of new funding for our growing engagement and network. New projects have increased the overall budget, grown our programmes and strengthened the organisation. However, unrestricted funding has remained a low proportion of the total, limiting both response to urgent needs and new opportunities. In an effort to rebalance this situation and build for the longer term, the OMCT is now being supported by a growing group of friends reviving key individual private support initiatives with advice and events, such as our donors' event held at the end of 2017. This will deepen the roots of the OMCT tree, enabling its branches to reach further and provide support where needs are rising.



**BREAKDOWN OF EXPENDITURE BY CATEGORY**

\*Institutional incomes include unrestricted funds from private individual donors and core funding – which are also used for Programme Expenses and assistance to Network Members work – as well as some funds which are dedicated to specific institutional areas (communications, institutional development, etc.).

## FINANCIAL OVERVIEW 2017

### INCOME STATEMENT FROM 1 JANUARY TO 31 DECEMBER 2017 - CHF

INCOME	3,644,431.16	
Urgent Assistance to Victims of Torture	28,908.13	
Child Protection Against Torture Programme	96,186.13	
Human Rights Defenders	598,147.01	
Committee Against Torture Programme	858,204.37	
OMCT Tunisia	367,050.30	
Network mobilisation	1,285,120.40	
<b>TOTAL PROGRAMMES INCOMES</b>	<b>3,233,616.34</b>	
Federal, cantonal, communal grants	18,600.00	
Other grants from governments	20,000.00	
Private contributions, including foundations and philanthropies	357,148.05	
Bulletins and various donations	15,066.77	
<b>TOTAL INSTITUTIONAL INCOMES*</b>	<b>410,814.82</b>	
EXPENSES	3,671,038.74	
Urgent Assistance to Victims of Torture	93,479.58	
Children's Protection Against Torture Programme	172,220.60	
Human Rights Defenders	546,588.58	
Committee Against Torture Programme	767,207.13	
OMCT Tunisia	437,026.97	
Network mobilisation	1,414,932.91	
<b>TOTAL PROGRAMME EXPENSES</b>	<b>3,431,455.77</b>	
Fundraising expenses	76,823.77	
Communications expenses	84,512.62	
Administration	78,246.58	
<b>TOTAL INSTITUTIONAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>239,582.97</b>	
<b>GROSS SURPLUS</b>		<b>-26,607.58</b>
FINANCIAL CHARGES		5,574.58
Financial charges	5,574.58	
Exchange rate	0.00	
FINANCIAL PRODUCTS		40,324.78
Financial revenues	445.80	
Exchange rate	39,878.98	
<b>ANNUAL RESULT (BEFORE CHANGE IN THE CAPITAL OF THE FUNDS)</b>		<b>8,142.62</b>
CHANGE IN THE CAPITAL OF THE FUNDS		80,783.27
ANNUAL RESULT (BEFORE ALLOCATION TO THE CAPITAL OF THE ORGANISATION)		-72,640.65
ALLOCATION (USE) OF THE FREE CAPITAL		-72,640.65

# EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

## President

JILANI Hina / Pakistan

## Vice-Presidents

MARTY Dick / Switzerland

TRIFI Mokhtar / Tunisia

## Treasurer

TRAVIS Anthony / United Kingdom

## Members

BERTHELOT Yves / France

DIEYE Aminata / Senegal

MOHOCHI Samwel / Kenya

QUIROGA CARRILLO Jahel / Colombia

SADOVSKAYA Olga / Russian Federation

SAMAYOA Claudia / Guatemala

TIPHAGNE Henri / India

ZANGL Peter / Germany

## OMCT EUROPE - EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

### President

GALAND Pierre / Belgium

### Members

BERTHELOT Yves / France

BOTTAZZI Menotti / France

PETTITI Christophe / France

SEIDENSTICKER Frauke Lisa / Germany

STABEROCK Gerald / Germany

ZANGL Peter / Germany

# GENERAL ASSEMBLY

## Africa

AFANOU André / Togo

CHUKWUMA Innocent / Nigeria

DIALLO Oumar / Senegal

DIEYE Aminata / Senegal

DOUGAN BEACA Jose / Equatorial Guinea

MASIKA BIHAMBA Justine / Democratic Republic of the Congo

MESSAOUD Boubacar / Mauritania

MOHOCHI Sam / Kenya

## Americas

ALAYZA Ernesto / Peru

ARRIAGA Luis / Mexico

BREWER Stephanie / Mexico

GOMEZ ZULUAGA Alberto L. / Colombia

HARRIS Theresa / United States of America

MEDRANO AMADOR Celia / El Salvador

PEDERNERA Luis / Uruguay

QUIROGA CARRILLO Jahel / Colombia

SAMAYOA Claudia / Guatemala

## Asia

BAKHRIEVA Nigina / Tajikistan

GROVER Vrinda / India

JILANI Hina / Pakistan

RAHMAN KHAN Adilur / Bangladesh

SHIRAIISHI Osamu / Japan

TIPHAGNE Henri / India

TRAJANO Rose / Philippines

XIA Renee / China

## Europe

BERTHELOT Yves / France

DIMITRAS Panayote / Greece

MARTY Dick / Switzerland

SADOVSKAYA Olga / Russian Federation

TRAVIS Anthony / United Kingdom

YUNUS Leyla / Azerbaijan

ZANGL Peter / Germany

## Middle East and North Africa

ABU AL-ZULOF George / Palestine

ASSAF Georges / Lebanon

BENABDESSELAM Abdel-ilah / Morocco

DUTOUR Nassera / Algeria

GHAEMI Hadi / Iran

SABER Karim / Egypt

TRIFI Mokhtar / Tunisia



# TEAM

## GENEVA

STABEROCK Gerald, Secretary General

### Programmes

#### Child Protection Against Torture

BARBARA Carolina, Programme Coordinator

#### Convention Against Torture

BENNINGER-BUDEL Carin, Programme Director

BUERLI Nicole, Human Rights Adviser

SOLA MARTIN Helena, Human Rights Adviser

#### Human Rights Defenders

RECULEAU Delphine, Programme Director

#### Victim Assistance & Network Programme

ANASTASIA Stella, Human Rights Officer

### Institutional

AEBERSOLD Marc, Accountant

BRUMAT Lori, Head of Communications

DEKHISSI Halima, Administrative Assistant

GERASSIMIDIS Yannis, Finance and Fundraising Officer

PILETICH Radosh, Institutional Development Officer



## BRUSSELS

### Programmes

#### Human Rights Defenders

MARTIN ZUMALACARREGUI Miguel, Head of Office

COSENTINO Chiara, Human Rights Officer – until May 2017

CHEANNE Juliette, Human Rights Officer – from June 2017

### Interns & fellows

The OMCT would like to thank all its interns and fellows for generously contributing their time, energy, creativity and good spirits in 2017:

ADEL Yasmine, BOWERS Camille, CHERNI Safa,

DEBERNARDI Valérie, DIONNE-LANIER Ana, FIN Martina,

GARCIA RIOS Tania, GHDIRI Ishraq, GHRISSA Dhafer,

GIONCO Marta, HECKMANN Justine, HEMPEL Olga,

JASPERS Theodore, JUNOT Loris, KNELLER Elyse, LELIFELD

Anne Maaike, LODI Sara, LUDMANN, Flora, MERCADER

VERDES Rosa, PARDAL BELINCHON Carolina, PELLICER Y

MARTINEZ Joana, PEYTHIEU Lou, PFEIFFER Pablo, PILLOUD

Hélène, RAPIN Nicolas, ROUCHE Melissandre, ROUX Camille,

SANCHEZ REINA Gloria, TEWOLDE-BERHAN Zara.

## TUNIS

REITER Gabriele, Country Director

FRAOUI Samia, Head of Operations

TARAOUI Mohamed, Head of Finance and Administration

### Programmes

#### Awareness Raising

BELLALI Emyez, Coordinator Awareness Raising

GHRISSA Dhafer, Project Officer

#### Advocacy and Legislative/Institutional Reform

MZEM Mohamed, Legal Adviser

HENRY Camille, Coordinator Advocacy

#### Direct Assistance SANAD

TALBI Najla, Coordinator Programme SANAD

LAMLOUM Inès, Coordinator of SANAD's legal platform

MLIKI Taoufik, Administration and Logistics Officer SANAD – until March 2017

#### SANAD Centre Kef

GATRI Sabrine, Social Coordinator

KHELIFI Mohamed, Legal Coordinator – from August 2017

ZOUARI Seiffeddine, Administration and Finance Officer

#### SANAD Centre Sidi Bouzid

CHOKRI Afef, Social Coordinator

RABHI Housseem, Legal Coordinator

BOUAZIZI Ashraf, Administration and Finance Officer – from

June 2017

HAFSAOUI Mourad, Administration and Finance Officer – until

April 2017

### Institutional

SFAR Marwa, Financial Assistant

ECHTIOUI Safa, Executive Assistant (Admin. and Comm.) – from September 2017

BRAHAM Iman, Executive Assistant (Admin. and Comm.) – June to August 2017

BEN NAYA Rahma, Executive Assistant (Admin. and Comm.) – until May 2017



# TIME TO SAY THANK YOU

***When looking at this annual report, I feel as I do most years: how on earth did we manage all of this with the limited number of colleagues in our three offices in Geneva, Brussels and Tunis? My first thank you has to go to an incredibly skilled and probably overworked team making this all possible. I also thank the many interns who've made such an invaluable contribution to our work.***

The OMCT is a Network and the reason why we continue to see so much hope and faith rather than the suffering we often address is you, the members of our Network and our partners. Stay with us, stay safe!

I thank our Geneva partners, Isabelle, Anne-Claire, Philippe of the International Film Festival and Forum on Human Rights (FIFDH), and Michael from the Martin Ennals Foundation for Human Rights Defenders for the joint work and friendship. I also thank the eleven partners in the EU Human Rights Defenders Mechanism, a prime example of how joining forces creates better impact and becomes on top of it enjoyable.

My thanks also go to the members of the OMCT Executive Council, and our General Assembly, as we are blessed with an active Council and Assembly working side-by-side, and strengthening our work in so many ways. You enrich and inspire!

## **A growing committee of support**

Finally, any thank you would be incomplete without you, our supporters and friends who have organised, fundraised for and hosted, the marvelous event at the Château des Bois. We

thank the Curieux Polyglottes (Christine Marest Blanc-Bernard, Marie Lola Fernandez, Isabelle Bonnadier and Sarah Krstian), and Jean-Phillipe Rapp for his repeated willingness to lead us through the evening. Merci Sylvie van Berchem, Merci Léopold d'Arenberg, Eliane Babel-Guérin, Dominique Brustlein-Bobst, Catherine Fauchier-Magnan, Eric Freymond, Catherine Haccius, Antonella Hillgarth, Sophie de Laguiche, Cathy de Lame, Julien Lüchinger, Ariane Mandosse, Isabelle de Montpellier, Anne de Rham, Esther Rotenberg, Chrystèle Schoenlaub, Bérengère de Senarclens, Enza Testa Haegi, and Cordula Wolf, as well as the sponsors of this event.

I could not close without mentioning the support from Christine Sayegh, Pierre de Senarclens, Olivier Mach, Yves Berthelot and Eric Sottas.

Thank you. You are all OMCT. We would not have gotten where we are without you.

**Gerald Staberock**  
Secretary General



## GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS

**ACHPR:** African Commission on Human and People's Rights  
**ADHOC:** Cambodian Human Rights and Development Association  
**APNU:** Association for the United Nations for the french-speaking community in Belgium  
**BE:** Belgium  
**CAT:** United Nations Committee Against Torture  
**CCCT:** Coalición Colombiana Contra la Tortura  
**CCHR:** Cambodian Center for Human Rights  
**CCJ:** Comisión Colombiana de Juristas  
**CCL:** Children in Conflict with the Law  
**CENTRO Prodh:** Centro de Derechos Humanos Miguel Agustín Pro Juárez, A.C.  
**CFP:** Cartooning for Peace  
**CH:** Switzerland  
**CHF:** Swiss francs  
**CLRDC:** Children's Legal Rights Development Center, Inc  
**CMDPDH:** La Comisión Mexicana de Defensa y Promoción de los Derechos Humanos, A.C.  
**CRC:** UN Committee on Rights of the Child  
**CREDHOS:** Regional Corporation for the Defense of Human Rights (Colombia)  
**CSHRN:** Civil Society and Human Rights Network (Afghanistan)  
**CSO:** Civil Society Organisation  
**DGPR:** General Direction of Prisons and Reeducation  
**ECHR:** European Court of Human Rights  
**ESAM:** Enfants Solidaires d'Afrique et du Monde  
**ETA:** Euskadi Ta Askatasuna  
**EU:** European Union  
**EUTRP:** European Union Temporary Relocation Platform  
**FCSP:** Fundación Comité de Solidaridad con Presos Políticos  
**FIDH:** International Federation for Human Rights  
**HRC:** Human Rights Council  
**HRD(s):** Human Rights Defender(s)  
**HRDN:** Human Rights and Democracy Network  
**IACHR:** Inter-American Commission on Human Rights  
**IADH:** Arab Institute for Human Rights  
**ICC:** International Criminal Court  
**ICJ:** International Commission of Jurists  
**IELSUR :** Instituto de Estudios Legales y Sociales del Uruguay  
**INPT:** National Instance for the Prevention of Torture  
**JCC:** Carthage Film Festival  
**LGT:** Mexico - General Law to Prevent, Investigate, and Sanction Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment or Punishment (Ley General para Prevenir, Investigar y Sancionar la Tortura y Otros Tratos o Penas Crueles, Inhumanos o Degradantes)  
**MACR :** Minimum Age of Criminal Responsibility  
**NGO:** Non-Governmental Organisation  
**NPM:** National Preventive Mechanism

**OHCHR:** The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights  
**OMCT:** World Organisation Against Torture  
 Organisation Mondiale Contre la Torture  
**OPCAT:** UN Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture  
**OSCE:** Organisation for Security and Cooperation for Europe  
**PAHRA:** The Philippine Alliance of Human Rights Advocates: Public Benefits Organisation  
**PDM-T:** Psychologists of the World - Tunisia  
**SPT:** UN Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment  
**TDH:** Terre des Hommes  
**TN:** Tunisia  
**UN:** United Nations  
**UNHCR:** United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees  
**UNHRC:** United Nations Human Rights Council  
**UNICEF:** The United Nations Children's Fund  
**UPR:** Universal Periodic Review  
**WGAD:** UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention  
**WHRD:** Women Human Rights Defender  
**WoD:** War on Drugs (Philippines)  
**DCI:** Defense for Children International  
**YB:** Yakap Bata Holding Centre, the Philippines

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Organisation Mondiale Contre la Torture (OMCT) - 2018

### Edition and production by

Stiefel, Irvin & Associates  
[www.stiefelirvin.com](http://www.stiefelirvin.com)

### Graphic design by

Fanny Lanz  
[www.graphica.fr](http://www.graphica.fr)

### Translation by

Human Rights Language  
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### Front cover

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**As a result of your generous support, OMCT and its partners have been active in over 40 countries during 2017, helping and protecting the most vulnerable against torture.**

**We thank you for your engagement and trust.**

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