



## PRESS RELEASE

# **'OMCT launches global initiative to mobilize civil society on implementing universal anti-torture standards'**

Geneva, 30 April 2014

**The World Organisation Against Torture, the principal global civil society coalition against torture, launches a new initiative to mobilize on the implementation of the main UN anti-torture body (UNCAT).**

The Convention Against Torture remains the principal legal authority in the fight against torture. While outlawed in law torture and ill-treatment remain however common experiences around the world. The UN Committee Against Torture is the principal anti-torture body charged with examining the compliance of state with their obligations. The Committee has proven to be an important element in the global fight against torture. Its authoritative recommendations can make a real difference. However, in OMCT's daily work we see that the Committee continues to face multiple challenges, such as late or non-reporting by states, a chronic lack of implementation on the part of state parties to the Convention, and the reluctance by states to disseminate and debate the results with openly with society at home.

*'In the coming years we will undertake a concerted effort with our global network to mobilize local actors on the implementation of the Committee's recommendations',* said Yves Berthelot, OMCT President, on the occasion of a reception in honour of the 52<sup>nd</sup> session of Committee Against Torture. *'Ultimately we will only succeed if we manage to generate local civil society support and build real constituencies for change',* he added.

OMCT will support civil society access to the Committee's proceedings including from difficult countries, provide support, policy advice and mentoring to defenders from the field. In addition we will implement new and innovative ways to ensure that the reporting process is discussed in the countries concerned, and a coherent and systematic follow-up to the Committee's recommendation.

*'We all have a responsibility to ensure that the legal obligations of the UN Convention of Torture do not only exist in law, but trigger real change for people around the world threatened with violence and torture',* noted Yves Berthelot.

OMCT will conduct in depth and sustained advocacy on the implementation of the Convention in six focus countries, including Bangladesh, Pakistan, Ivory Coast, Togo, Mexico and Colombia. The initiative is implemented jointly with its members of the SOS torture network in the six partner countries. It includes authoritative research on torture, national consultations on legal reforms, effective victims support and remedies and public outreach to generate support for anti-torture reforms.

The OMCT wishes to express appreciation for those supporting the program, notably through the financial support from the European Union.

**For further information, please contact:**

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