



## **Universally Prohibited, Still Widely Practiced: Time to Stand United Against Torture**

**8 December 2023** — Marking the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) on 10 December, the United Against Torture Consortium calls on the international community to once again stand together to achieve a world in which all persons enjoy the fundamental right to be free from torture.

Since the adoption of the Declaration, the world has come a long way in making torture a crime. There is international recognition of the absolute prohibition against torture, and the systems of protection have become more robust, including to prohibit returning people to countries where they risk torture, to improve the investigation of torture, to better the conditions of detention and safeguards during arrest and custody, and to ban incommunicado detention and prolonged solitary confinement, among others.

Yet there remain challenges that threaten the right to be free from torture and other ill-treatment enshrined in Article 5 of the Declaration. Many States do not criminalise torture as a specific offence under their national laws, and governments around the world continue to defy international law by torturing people. In its latest [global report](#) on torture, Amnesty International received reports of torture in 141 countries, three quarters of the world.

Other challenges include the rise of authoritarianism and populism worldwide, which weaken universally accepted values and consensually developed principles and standards; exceptional powers taken to address Covid-19; the criminalisation of migration; prison overcrowding; the failure of States to fulfill their obligations to protect civilians in armed conflict; widespread impunity for torture; and the lack of effective protection for marginalised and discriminated groups.

Amidst these widespread threats, civil society organisations remain a steadfast force for upholding the founding principles of the Declaration adopted 75 years ago. The United Against Torture Consortium is resolute in combining our strengths to ensure that the next 75 years witness greater progress in the realisation of human rights globally, especially the right to be free from torture.

As we mark a milestone in the universal protection of human rights, we call on all States to join our efforts to eradicate torture once and for all, by fully complying with their international obligations to prevent and protect against torture. We also call on UN and regional human rights bodies and mechanisms to take the necessary steps to respond to the current challenges in the eradication of torture as they are a crucial recourse to many torture victims around the world to obtain redress. We invite these bodies and mechanisms to strengthen their procedures to offer a prompt and effective response to victims, including by increasing their collaboration.

We commit to working alongside States and regional and international bodies to ensure that the prohibition of torture enshrined in the Declaration is fully realised.

Read our full pledge to counter torture and other ill-treatment as we mark 75 years of the UDHR.

**For more information, please contact:** Claire-Marie Germain at [cmg@omct.org](mailto:cmg@omct.org).

**About the Consortium:** The United against Torture Consortium pools the strengths and expertise of six leading anti-torture organisations (IRCT, OMCT, FIACAT, APT, Omega Research Foundation and REDRESS), in

partnership with over 200 civil society organisations in more than 100 countries, to strengthen and expand the anti-torture movement. The project is funded by the European Union.