



Why ratify the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention against Torture?

All States that have ratified or acceded to the UN Convention against Torture (UNCAT) can ratify or accede to its Optional Protocol (OPCAT). States who have not yet ratified the UNCAT can ratify both treaties at the same time.

Implement existing obligations

The OPCAT does not set out additional standards, nor does it create new rights. It assists States to concretely implement their existing obligations to prohibit and prevent torture contained in the UN Convention against Torture, other international human rights treaties, regional human rights standards and domestic law.

Build trust in the State

Torture and other forms of ill-treatment poison societies, as they destroy human dignity, as well as societal relations and faith in State institutions. By ratifying the OPCAT, States take concrete steps to protect persons deprived of their liberty. Ensuring transparency and independent monitoring in all places of detention lessens the risks of abuse, reduces corruption and restores trust within the society. Places of detention which respect human rights also contribute to increase social reintegration, to reduce recidivism and to build a safer society.

Become part of the OPCAT system

By ratifying the OPCAT, States become part of the growing global community of States that proactively prevent torture and other forms of ill-treatment. State authorities and National Preventive Mechanisms benefit from concrete advice and cooperation by the UN Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture to improve the situation and conditions in places of detention. They can also exchange with other States parties and their National Preventive Mechanisms.

Relevant to any State at any time

States from all regions of the world have ratified the OPCAT. No country is immune from dangers of torture and other forms of ill-treatment, as the possibility of abuse exists in all situations where persons are deprived of their liberty. The OPCAT aims at reducing the risks of abuses in places of detention and is therefore relevant to any State at any time, even if there are no reported cases of violations.

Enhance international credibility

Torture is one of the most serious violations of a person's fundamental rights. By ratifying the OPCAT and taking their human rights commitments seriously, States enhance their standing in the international community and could benefit from improved cooperation at the international level as a result.