



PRESS RELEASE

Launch of 10 Days of Activism Against Torture and Ill-treatment 1st to the 10th of December 2013

Geneva, 29th November 2013. On the occasion of the Human Rights Day, the World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT), the principal global civil society coalition against torture, is launching its Campaign “10 days of activism against torture and ill-treatment” together with members of its network “SOS Torture” to call for public support against torture.

Torture and ill-treatment continue to occur all over the world and can take many features. It can be inflicted in the name of national security or counter-terrorism, in the fight against organised crime or drug cartels or to repress social protests. But in the large majority of cases it is used against persons detained on ordinary criminal charges, notably to extract confession or obtain information, and disproportionately on those belonging to minorities, marginal groups or the poor. These human rights violations remain too often unpunished.

“Torture and ill-treatment are egregious acts and a negation of the core of human dignity itself”, said Gerald Staberock, Secretary General of OMCT. *“But let’s not be mistaken - torture and impunity have repercussions far beyond the individual violation. They corrupt the state apparatus, the rule of law and democracy. Nobody should remain indifferent before this barbaric practice”,* he added.

Human rights defenders are the voice of those who are deprived of it because they are victims of torture and ill-treatment. OMCT has been supporting the fight of torture victims and of human rights defenders over the years.

In the framework of its global campaign “Nothing can justify torture under any circumstances”, OMCT invites the public to discover from the 1st to the 10th of December ten videos of human rights defenders speaking out against torture and ill-treatment. Each day, one video will feature one human rights defender responding to one question in relation to the practice of torture and ill-treatment.

In parallel, member organisations in Kenya, Lebanon, Malaysia and Pakistan will hold events in order to remind States of their obligations to respect and guarantee the absolute prohibition of torture and ill-treatment, to create awareness among vulnerable groups of citizens on torture in order to empower them on how best to seek redress and also to mobilise the public at large against such practices that cannot be justified under any circumstances.

“Each and everyone of us has the possibility to take a stand against torture and ill-treatment. We invite people around the world to discover the ten videos against torture and impunity on OMCT’s website (www.omct.org) and social medias”, added Gerald Staberock. *‘These videos are a powerful reminder, that it is the courage of defenders working often amidst serious threats, assembled in the network of the OMCT, that makes a difference in the global fight against torture’,* he concluded.

This global public campaign forms part of an OMCT’s project seeking the effective implementation of the UN Convention Against Torture and anti-torture reforms with the financial support of the European Commission and the Oak Foundation.

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