

OMCT Newsletter - June 2014

International Day in Support of Victims of Torture

On June 26, 1987 the Convention against torture came into force. A decade later, to eradicate torture worldwide and assure the effective implementation of the Convention, the UN General Assembly officially proclaimed June 26 as the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture.

On this day dedicated to the victims of torture and ill-treatment, OMCT as the leading civil society movement against torture together with members of SOS-Torture Network organised events all around the world to mobilize support to victims of torture, to call on governments to take concrete steps to eradicate torture and to reaffirm that respect for human dignity must be respected under any circumstances.

Events

- OMCT
- Colombia
- Côte d'Ivoire
- Togo
- Bangladesh
- Pakistan

OMCT

Global anti-torture coalition: Torture victims need to be given their rights with real remedies

The UN International Day in Support of Victims of Torture is reminding us year after year of the same sad story. Despite the universal consensus under international law persons from all strands of society and in all regions of the world continue to suffer from torture and other forms of cruel and inhuman treatment or punishment.

In order to raise awareness and mobilise public opinion all over the world against such practices, members of the SOS-Torture Network organised specific activities on the 26th. Several events are carried out in Bangladesh, Colombia, Ivory Cost, Mexico, Pakistan and Togo targeting public support for reforms implementing the UN Convention Against Torture.

Read [OMCT's press release](#)

Switzerland

#TortureFreeWorld Campaign

On the occasion of the UN Day in Support of Victims of Torture, the Special Rapporteur on torture and Anti-Torture Initiative organised a campaign entitled [#TortureFreeWorld](#), which intended to generate discussion by disseminating positive messages about a future without torture on social media. The campaign culminated with a live Q&A on Twitter with the Special Rapporteur on torture, Mr Juan Mendez.

"What does a Torture Free World look like to you?"

A [#TortureFreeWorld](#) would be a world in which we treat everyone with the [dignity](#) inherent to human beings.

Juan E. Méndez,
UN Special Rapporteur on Torture

A [#TortureFreeWorld](#) is a [right](#) not an illusion.
States need to stop acting like criminals.

Gerald Staberock
Secretary-General,
World Organization Against Torture

Solitary confinement and high security detention, Roundtable, Bern

OMCT supported a roundtable organised by Amnesty International and APT on solitary confinement in Switzerland.

The participants were representatives from civil society, academia, the cantonal and federal government, prison authorities, as well as the national preventive mechanism. The main outcome of the discussion was the need for more specialized psychiatric facilities, as most of the long-term solitary confined prisoners suffer from severe psychological disorders. Several participants also demanded independent and mandatory representation of those detainees, because they are usually unable to exercise their rights. The roundtable attracted a lot of interest. Among the public were not only representatives of civil society but also government officials and prison directors.



Tunisia

OMCT together with 22 other Civil Society Organisations carried out a series of events all day long. The day started with a march between the Courthouse and the former "9 Avril" prison. A tent was also installed on Avenue Bourguiba and materials (flyer, stickers, balloon) have been distributed to raise awareness among the public. Then, the film "L'affaire Barraket Essahel" by Ghassen Amami was shown. To conclude this day and pay tribute to all victims of torture, candles was distributed and put in front of the Grand Theatre.



Colombia – Call for solidarity with victims of torture whose cases remain widely unpunished

La Coalición Colombiana contra la Tortura together with OMCT organised several cultural events, including theatre plays, live music, an exhibition entitled "Memory Gallery" and spaces of dialogue with victims. Approximately 1'000 persons attended the events.

Read our [Joint Press Release](#) (only in Spanish)



Côte d'Ivoire – Victims of torture have to obtain justice and reparation



On this day dedicated to the victims of torture, Le Mouvement Ivoirien des Droits Humains (MIDH), OMCT together with other Civil Society Organisations organised debate on "Mechanism protection for victims of torture" and "Contribution of civil society for the restoration of the victims' rights", calling for a number of reforms to ensure that the rights of victims are recognized presented in widely covered press briefing.

Read our [Joint Press Release](#) (only in French)

Togo – State has to criminalise torture and protect the victims

On 26 June, CACIT, ACAT-Togo and OMCT organised a series of events in Lomé, including:

- A workshop with health professional mobilizing and empowering them to provide assistance to victims of torture and other forms of ill-treatment
- Radio and TV shows across the country highlighting the need to fight torture
- The launch of a petition and a campaign on Internet to push for the adoption of the new Criminal Code and Penal Procedure Code and the organic law on the National Human Rights Commission (CNDH) as part of an agenda to implement the Convention Against Torture.
- The participation of our partners at the “Night Vigil”, event organised by all the ACAT around the world
- The provision of medical assistance to 5 victims of torture representative of the need to reinforce direct assistance and support to victims



Read our [Joint Press Release](#) (only in French)

Bangladesh – Call for ending torture and systemic impunity



To mark the UN International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, Odhikar organised a discussion meeting in Dhaka and human rights defenders associated with Odhikar also organised rallies and human chains in 39 districts across the country on this occasion. The rallies across the country called for an end to torture and systemic impunity in the country and accountability. It also called the government to ratify the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention Against Torture.

Read our [Joint Press Release](#)

Pakistan – Need for an effective implementation of the Convention against torture

On 26 June, the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) and OMCT organised rallies and walks in Lahore to remind Pakistani authorities of their promise to eradicate torture. As the government is about to adopt security legislation that lowers safeguards against torture both organisations called for a series of measures to translate the Convention Against Torture into domestic law and reality.

Read more our [Joint Press Release](#)



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OMCT wishes to thank the European Commission for their financial support to OMCT's global June 26 activities. The views expressed in the document are solely those of OMCT and do not represent those of the European Commission.

