



## PRESS RELEASE

### **OMCT alarmed over Hong Kong officials asking China to withdraw from universal torture framework**

**Geneva, 10 April 2016** – High-level government officials of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) are said to have publicly urged China to withdraw from the United Nations Convention Against Torture (UNCAT) amidst controversial plans of detaining and returning asylum seekers. The OMCT recalls that torture is absolutely prohibited under any circumstances and so is the return of people to places where there is a real risk of torture.

“That such a step is serious contemplated is a shocking precedent. No state has ever withdrawn from the universal convention on the eradication of torture. Such step would be in clear contradiction to a whole set of standards binding on Hong-Kong. It would make the province an international outcast setting back protections to the dark ages”, said Gerald Staberock, OMCT Secretary General.

The consideration now is even more astonishing as it comes only four months after the Committee Against Torture (CAT), the universal UN body overseeing countries compliance with the convention, has issued far reaching [Concluding Observations](#) with respect to Hong Kong, China.

“Let's be very clear. The problem are the countries that torture people and not the legal norm that prevents us from sending them back when we know they would be tortured.” said OMCT Secretary General Gerald Staberock.

Rather than considering the withdrawal from the Convention the OMCT calls on the HKSAR to assume its responsibility to implement the concluding observations adopted by the UN Committee Against Torture in December 2015 and to strengthen the rule of law.

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