

Strategic guidance

The United Nations Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture (SPT) is a committee of experts with a preventive mandate working in innovative, sustained and proactive way to further the prevention of torture and ill-treatment. Through its country visits, and based on its work with NPMs and in places of deprivation of liberty, it advises States parties and national preventive mechanisms on how best they might prevent torture and ill-treatment.

The projects supported by the Special Fund contribute to the implementation of the SPT's recommendations arising from country visits. The selection of the projects to be supported is informed by the SPT's strategic guidance and experience.

How to apply

Applications can be submitted by State parties, national preventive mechanisms, non-governmental organizations and national human rights institutions in accordance with the eligibility criteria set out in the respective calls for applications. Eligibility to apply for grants is limited to projects in countries where SPT visit reports have been made public. Projects are expected to contribute to establishing, strengthening or supporting the work of the national preventive mechanisms.

The guidelines and application forms are available on the webpages of the Special Fund at the OHCHR website: <http://www.ohchr.org/opcatfund>

How you can help

The Special Fund relies entirely on voluntary contributions. Contributing to the Fund helps to prevent torture through tailored action on the ground. The aim is to ensure that torture is prevented, thus ensuring that people can properly enjoy the right not to be subjected to torture and ill-treatment.

The Special Fund accepts donations from Governments, inter-governmental organizations and private entities, including business companies, foundations, non-governmental organizations and individuals.

**HELP US CONTINUE TO PREVENT TORTURE
IN COUNTRIES AROUND THE WORLD.
DONATE TO THE SPECIAL FUND.**

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OPCAT SPECIAL FUND

A MODEL OF ENGAGEMENT TO PREVENT TORTURE



UNITED NATIONS
HUMAN RIGHTS
OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER

The Special Fund

– A Focus on Torture Prevention

The Special Fund presents a unique opportunity to further torture prevention. The projects which it has supported have had a major impact in eleven countries in four regions. This impact includes:

Legislative and policy changes, such as adoption of the revised Code of Criminal Procedure in Benin, the Prison Act in Honduras and the law prohibiting abusive body search for persons deprived of their liberty in Brazil.

Institutional changes, such as the development of a registry of detainees in Paraguay and improved forms for medical and legal examinations of torture and ill-treatment, in accordance with the Istanbul Protocol, in hospitals in the Maldives.

Changes in peoples' life, such as the release of 49 remand detainees held without justification in Benin.

Increasing knowledge

– A point of departure

Projects supported by the Special Fund have contributed significantly to capacity-building for a wide range of **key actors in torture prevention**. Beneficiaries include more than 120 judges, 600 police officers, 60 health professionals, 178 prison staff, and 110 representatives of authorities and members of more than 15 civil society organizations. Fund projects have also created a variety of information materials to help those affected, including more than 25'000 booklets, 10'000 posters, 500 guides, 10'000 flyers and 1'000 manuals. Many of these items have been translated into minority or migrant workers languages, and distributed within places of detention, including in remote areas.

"The OPCAT Fund has to date assisted in translating numerous recommendations of the Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture into practice. It directly links the recommendations of a treaty-based committee to work on the ground."

Sir Malcolm Evans, Chair, Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture (SPT)

National Preventive Mechanisms: New Strategic Direction of the Fund

The Fund is embarking on a new phase, in which it will focus on supporting national preventive mechanisms (NPMs) working in accordance with the Optional Protocol. NPMs visit places of deprivation of liberty and examine treatment of people held there in order to identify risks of torture and ill-treatment and recommend to respective authorities how to address those risks. NPMs also comment on exiting or proposed legislation relevant to torture prevention. Properly functioning NPMs are vital for the prevention of torture and ill-treatment of persons deprived of their liberty. Projects focusing on supporting the establishment and functioning of independent and effective NPMs are likely to have a major impact on torture prevention.

"The national preventive mechanisms represent the most significant single measure which States can take to prevent torture and ill-treatment occurring over time. It is key to support their establishment and functioning with expert knowledge."

Aisha Shujune Muhammad, Vice-Chair, SPT

Success story - Better protection for juvenile detainees in Benin

In 2012 and 2013, two projects focused on implementation of SPT recommendations concerning children deprived of liberty in Benin. The 2012 project focused on revisions to the Code of Criminal Procedure, providing stronger guarantees for children deprived of their liberty, coupled with training of juvenile judges in Benin. The 2013 project addressed the promulgation of the Code of Criminal Procedure and provided for training of police officers and juvenile judges on torture and ill-treatment of children in conflict with law and tools to enforce prevention and accountability mechanisms. Follow-up monitoring visits have shown a positive outcome: a 17% decrease in violence against children deprived of their liberty.



Photo OMCT, 2013

"The Benin projects show the importance of coupling legislative measures with training of law enforcement officials. The positive trend of decreasing child related violence in detention is a very concrete outcome of these efforts."

Enrique Andres Font, Vice-Chair, SPT