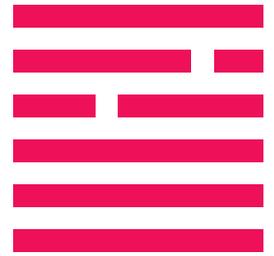


# SUPPORT REHABILITATION AFTER TORTURE



**Torture has devastating consequences. Beyond the physical scars, many victims suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), which includes symptoms such as flashbacks, intrusive thoughts, severe anxiety, insomnia, nightmares, depression and memory lapses. Rehabilitation supports victims to rebuild a life after torture.**

## WHAT IS REHABILITATION?

Rehabilitation helps victims restore their lives after torture through a combination of services including medical, psychological, legal and social support. It is a process that recognises the victims agency and empowerment and takes into account their individual needs as well as the cultural, social and political background and environment in which they live.

Rebuilding your life after your dignity has been attacked takes time. Victims need to be able to trust and have confidence in health professionals and other caregivers and they need to know that support will be available for them whenever and as long as needed.

All victims of torture and ill-treatment have an explicit right to rehabilitation. Unfortunately, very few among the hundreds of thousands of victims in the world receive the support they desperately need. This is because rehabilitation services are often not available where the victims are, lack the necessary quality, or are not accessible to all or certain groups of victims. In many countries, rehabilitation support is provided by non-governmental organisations that are not adequately funded to support all the victims who come to them for help.

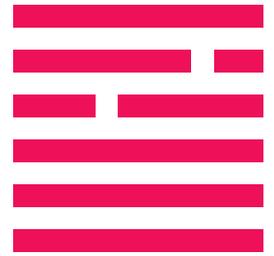
## WHY SUPPORT REHABILITATION?

Torture is a widespread phenomenon affecting people in more than 141 countries in the world. Torture victims often feel powerless and a sense of guilt and shame, triggered by the humiliation they have endured. Many feel that they have betrayed themselves or their friends and family. All such symptoms are normal human responses to abnormal and cruel treatment.

**All victims of torture and ill-treatment have an explicit right to rehabilitation.**

**Unfortunately, very few among the hundreds of thousands of victims in the world receive the support they desperately need.**

# SUPPORT REHABILITATION AFTER TORTURE



The effects of torture reaches far beyond the victims. It spreads to their children and family who suffer similar symptoms with devastating impact on their lives. In cases where torture is more widespread and systematic, it continues to affect the broader community and society as a whole.

For those who do not access rehabilitation, the suffering does not fade – it gets worse. It often ends up impacting all aspects of life including the ability to get an education, to hold a job, to love and to maintain a family life.

Rehabilitation is an essential step on the way to reversing these effects for the individual and their families, communities and societies. Victims who access appropriate rehabilitation support often manage to live with their physical and psychological scars and break down the barrier between them and the world.

*We know that rehabilitation works - but we all need to invest in making it available to all victims everywhere.*

## WHAT I CAN DO TO SUPPORT

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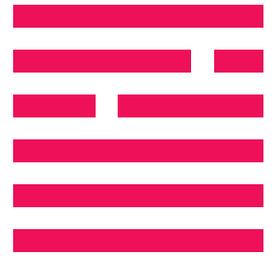
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# SUPPORT REHABILITATION AFTER TORTURE



## HOW TO SUPPORT REHABILITATION?

With the help of rehabilitation, victims can rebuild their lives after torture. We can all do something to support these efforts in our communities, countries and globally. Here is what you can do:

### **Political decisions makers at all levels should ensure that:**

- Laws and policies are put in place to guarantee all victims a right to rehabilitation and to facilitate the operation of independent rehabilitation programmes;
- Sufficient budgetary resources are allocated to ensure the effective operation of rehabilitation programmes;
- Systems are in place to collect data on the number of victims in the country and their rehabilitation needs in order to continuously monitor and evaluate whether quality rehabilitation services reach all victims who need it.

### **Health professionals working with torture victims should ensure that:**

- Ensure that they support victims in accordance with ethical and professional standards for rehabilitation;
- Ensure that they provide services in functional independence from the State.

### **Judges and prosecutors:**

- Should make sure that claims for rehabilitation are effectively pursued in cases where persons claim to be victims of torture.

### **We can all:**

- Hold political leaders accountable for providing adequate rehabilitation support to torture victims;
- De-stigmatise torture and abuse, speak up against it and advocate for the rights of victims;
- Support victims to empower themselves: raise awareness about their experiences and create an atmosphere that enables them to raise their voices as victims.

