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Past and Present, United Against Torture

“For her it was all about the work, all about the goal, all about keeping pushing and trying to be as fair as possible all the time. She never sought out any recognition, and I think she doubted if she could. But she helped a lot of people. She could very vividly recall her experiences around the Second World War and when Denmark was liberated, and realising afterwards the enormity of the Holocaust. It would always bring her to tears, because there was something in her about injustice that became a driver within our mother. She had to do whatever she could. She had to give back. She had a great need for change.”

After a year that saw war return to Europe - bloody trenches torn by artillery, young soldiers cut down in their tens of thousands, mass rape, mass torture, mass murder; the tragic attempt by Russia to eradicate Ukraine - the words of two sons remembering their late mother, one of IRCT’s pioneers, resonated particularly strongly.

Dr Lis Danielsen, who died aged 92, was one of the original team of Danish doctors whose medical research into torture laid the foundations for the IRCT. Lis specialised in dermatology and used her knowledge to research how medical evidence of skin damage could prove allegations of torture. Her commitment was absolute: After a public outcry stopped experiments on the effects of electricity on pig skin, Lis would burn herself instead, researching how her skin changed and healed in order for doctors to better diagnose and assist torture survivors, and for human rights organisations, like Amnesty, to gather evidence. Lis’ dedication to the scientific study of torture was reflected in her ground-breaking work for IRCT’s Torture Journal and her contribution to the original Istanbul Protocol, the first internationally agreed standards for investigating and documenting torture.

Two generations on, young health professionals across IRCT’s global network of 160 centres in 75 countries carry Lis’ spirit forward, driven to help the 60,000 survivors of torture treated by IRCT members every year by that same sense of righting wrongs, of wanting to give back, of using their skills to make a change. Time has passed, but the causes and consequences of torture have changed little: From widespread, systematic abuse by authorities from Cuba to DR Congo, Spain to Sri Lanka, against protesters, prisoners, those seeking asylum, or simply those different in appearance or choice of partner.

And just as Lis partnered with IRCT founder Dr Inge Genefke (not always easily, but always to huge mutual benefit), so the work to eradicate torture and heal its survivors continues to see women leading the way: From Beatrice and Mary, social workers at ACTV Uganda, whose life-saving support to some of the most marginalised communities IRCT saw first-hand this year; to the lively female-led team of psychologists at TRC Palestine working under the intense pressures of the Israeli occupation; to the indefatigable Dr Uju Agomoh, psychologist, lawyer, PhD, founder of Nigeria’s Prisoners’ Rehabilitation and Welfare Action (PRAWA), and now member of the UN Sub-Committee on Prevention of Torture joining her IRCT colleague Suzanne Jabbour of Restart Lebanon, who now chairs the SPT; to Dr Alice Edwards, scholar, former Torture Journal board member, and now the first woman to hold the UN’s most important, and most demanding, role in the sector, as Special Rapporteur on Torture.

Continuing too, from past to present, the work of gathering high-quality forensic evidence of torture to which Lis, Inge and the other IRCT pioneers dedicated their lives. In June, after six years of work led by the IRCT, thousands of additions and revisions by 200 experts across 51 countries, and incorporating 20 years of advances and lessons learned, the updated Istanbul Protocol 2022 was launched in Geneva. With torture at the centre of an unprecedented Western-led push for accountability for Russia’s international crimes in Ukraine, there seems an opportunity to seize for greater global recognition and adoption of the Istanbul Protocol. The IP’s trauma-informed interviewing standards contribute to empowering survivors to play the central role in justice processes, rather than be treated only as witnesses to establish criminal liability, and its application for international accountability in other contexts of war crimes, such as Ethiopia and Myanmar, is sorely needed.

If the trauma-informed approach is an essential component of justice, it is also a key formula to the other side of the IRCT equation: Healing. Just as the IP sets out the UN’s best practices for torture investigation, so IRCT’s Global Standards on Rehabilitation represent the world’s first internationally agreed set of best-practices for treating survivors. To date, 109 participants from 72 IRCT members completed the new E-course on the GSR, and 51 centres report having survivors in decision-making roles, the first chapter in what we hope will be an expanding and evolving survivor-led capacity-building programme for all IRCT members, and beyond.

For in the words of one survivor from the torture regime in the prisons of Minsk, who spoke movingly about his experiences to an audience at our June 26 event this year, “another set of sanctions or media exposure won’t move the needle for the Lukashenko’s regime. We all understand not much can be done for things to change in Belarus. So I would really like you all to consider how you could help Belarusian people; how to help those families whose fathers and mothers are in jail being tortured; how to help those who had to leave their homes behind just to live peacefully in another country.”

Working with our partners, and as an advisor to the International Accountability Platform for Belarus (IAPB), IRCT is helping build the criminal case against Europe’s last dictator. And with over 12,000 legal supports to survivors, our global membership is as busy as ever on accountability. But we know too well that the wheels of justice turn slowly, and, for most survivors, not at all. Therefore, healing, helping others, doing whatever we can in the here and now, is also the way to tackle injustice, to serve that “great need for change”.

United Against Torture
2022 Highlights

Global Impact Data

- 61,823 Total torture survivors treated
- 12,751 Legal supports, about 245 per week
- 3,521 Partnership activities, about 22 partners each member
- 1 in 7 Survivors report sexual or gender-based violence
- 2.5% LBGTI+ survivors treated
- 42% Survivors living in poverty

Healing Highlights

More and Better
IRCT’s pioneering Global Standards on Rehabilitation are now being put into practice all around the world, improving treatment for torture survivors. And with thematic webinars, academic insights from Torture Journal, a brand new website, and vibrant social media, members have more ways than ever to exchange knowledge and develop their capacities. Page 14

Working It Out
From the beauty salons of the occupied West Bank of Palestine to the village milling machines of rural Uganda, IRCT members have been busy helping survivors, and their families, get back on their feet through getting back to work. Find out how they got on at: Page 23

Speaking Up
“Sharing the story is like taking a burden from your soul. You feel so much lighter. That’s when the healing begins.” Shyhrete Tahiri-Sylejmani is one of thousands of women raped during the Kosovo War. But she’s one of the first to speak publicly about it, as she told IRCT’s Survivor Engagement Committee when met at KRCT in Pristina. Page 31
**Justice Highlights**

**Nigeria: From Court to Compensation**
Years of investigation and advocacy by IRCT member PRAWA in Nigeria has put evidence of torture by the notorious Special Anti-Robbery Squad in front of national and regional human rights courts. Backed by IRCT’s forensic experts, the justice process is finally beginning to remedy decades of wrong.
Page 33

**Istanbul Protocol 2022**
Six years of work, thousands of additions and revisions by 200 experts across 51 countries, incorporating 20 years of advances and lessons learned, in a process led by the IRCT, the global best-practice standards for all aspects of torture documentation was launched in Geneva.
Page 45

**Bringing Rights Home**
IRCT support to members briefing UN human rights reviews of their States made good progress in Geneva, while the all-important follow-up work to put those recommendations into practice began to bear fruit at home. Iraq, Palestine and Nepal had successes to share.
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**Unity Highlights**

**Ukraine: Members in Action**
Russia’s invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 created the largest refugee crisis in Europe since the end of the Second World War. With generous donor funding, IRCT was able to support members across Europe to mobilise rapidly and bring their expertise in torture, trauma and PTSD care to assist the refugees.
Page 50

**Partnering for Progress:**
With 37 partners in 2022, IRCT is well on course to meeting targets for increasing the number of international anti-torture organisations we actively collaborate with. Active partnerships this year included Danish Red Cross, Save the Children, Amnesty, Human Rights Watch and the Danish Institute for Human Rights.
Page 59

**#UnitedAgainstTorture:**
With civil society space shrinking, budgets squeezed and impunity for human rights abuses rampant, IRCT sees collaboration with partners in the anti-torture sector as essential. 2022 saw several highly effective coordinated campaigns and important steps to coalition building, supported by a renewed focus on professional public communication.
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Global Impact Data 2022

Survivors treated

61,823

- **North America**: 6,899
- **Asia**: 7,935
- **Latin America**: 1,107
- **Europe**: 14,685
- **Pacific**: 16,853
- **Sub-Saharan Africa**: 7,864
- **Middle East and North Africa**: 6,480

Poverty rate: 25,665

- **2021**: 26,663, 44% / **2020**: 27,829, 52%

Sex

- **2021**: 47% male / 51% fem. / 1% Other / 1% Not Recorded
- **2021**: 42% / **2020**: 52%

LGBTI+

1,531

Survivors treated in 2022 self-identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex or non-binary.

- **2021**: 1,841 / **2020**: 1,186 / **2019**: 2,104

Survivor Engagement

58

Members (45%) said they have survivors in decision-making roles such as managerial roles, advisory boards, hiring panels, or executive committees.

Sexual or Gender-Based Violence

8,744

2021: 9,442 / 2020: 9,427 / 2019: 10,935

Legal Support

12,751

Supported to trial, or other psychosocial support, administrative or legal support or medico-legal evaluation

- **2021**: 11,487 / **2020**: 11,420 / **2019**: 13,686

Advocacy Activities

5,850

Activities such as cases, meetings, conferences, and trainings

- **2021**: 7,213 / **2020**: 11,905 / **2019**: 11,015

Partnerships

3,521

Organisations or institutions members worked with in 2022 in relation to anti-torture work, including both state and non-state NGOs

- **2021**: 3,456 / **2020**: 2,993 / **2019**: 3,546

Response Rate

75%

- **2021**: 82% / **2020**: 88% / **2019**: 90%

Livelihood Support

21,450

Torture survivors (35%) received livelihoods support

- **2021**: 13,885 survivors, 23%
IRCT: A Global Movement

We are a global network of civil society organisations that provide rehabilitation to torture survivors and fight for justice. Our membership consists of 160 organisations in 75 countries, with over 4,000 staff backed by a Secretariat in Copenhagen and an office in Brussels. Each year, we collectively support more than 60,000 torture survivors to rebuild their lives and engage in over 12,000 legal supports to promote justice and reparations for victims, and to try to end torture.

Who We Are

Our Mission

Is to ensure that torture victims everywhere are able to access appropriate rehabilitation services. We are equally dedicated to fighting impunity, advancing access to justice, and preventing torture from reoccurring.

Our Vision

Is a world without torture. We work to ensure that individuals and communities subjected to torture receive the rehabilitation and justice, as well as other reparations, that they deserve and are entitled to.
5. Healing

ACTV Uganda supports livelihood projects in the remote north-west Paibona

5.1 Improved Rehabilitation Capacity

All 160 IRCT members around the world work to fulfil the human right of survivors, recognised in Article 14 of the Convention Against Torture, to “as full rehabilitation as possible”. What does this mean in practice? “Rehabilitation for victims should aim to restore, as far as possible, their independence, physical, mental, social and vocational ability; and full inclusion and participation in society.” said the Committee Against Torture, the Convention's treaty monitoring body, in its General Comment No.3. The foundation for this restoration is the capacity of our members to provide survivors with the best possible medical treatment to become healthy again. Yet systemic underfunding and the continuation of torture practices mean current needs far outstrip the human and financial resources available in our members. In 2022, we worked to overcome some of these limits to improved rehabilitation by upgrading standards and expertise within our existing capacity: through an online curriculum, and through continuous training and support.

5.1.1 Members Certified in Global Standards Course

IRCT’s Global Standards on Rehabilitation (GSR) are the world’s first comprehensive set of internationally agreed best-practice standards aimed at ensuring survivors of torture can receive the best possible rehabilitation wherever they are. Produced by 90% of IRCT members and translated into six languages, the 17-point GSR represent a statement of collective wisdom and universal applicability from the world’s largest reservoir of experience in the field of torture rehabilitation. They are thus an integral component of the current IRCT Strategy 2022-2025.

Put simply, we believe that the more IRCT members who use the GSR, the greater the capacity to provide improved rehabilitation. To that end, 2022 saw the first cohort of graduates from the new GSR E-course, a series of multiple choice problem questions that test users’ understanding of the applicability and ethical dilemmas they may face when implementing the 17 best practice standards. The E-course was developed under the guidance of IRCT’s Health Advisory Board including Australia member AseTTS.

During a visit by IRCT Secretariat to ACTV, Uganda in November 2022, staff undertook the GSR E-learning course.

Nearly 100 participants from 11 members have started or completed the course within its first few months, and by the end of 2024 we aim to have 80 members, or about half our network, GSR certified.

To expand its applicability, the E-course has now been translated into French, Spanish and Arabic and to address the accessibility challenge of poor Internet for many members in the Global South, the GSR E-course will soon be available to download through the Fabo app.

“We have a very diverse membership, so the GSR allows us to have a common understanding of what our standards are.”

LELA TSISKARISHVILI, IRCT President, Executive Director of the Georgian Centre for Rehabilitation of Torture Victims (GCRT).
5.1.2 Training and Support

The production of the GSR has been a collective effort, with some 40 members contributing to a series of videos, published in 2022, that explain the application of the 17 GSRs in the different contexts in which they work. The videos showcase the common purpose, but often differentiated approaches, that members follow as they seek to implement the GSR, and why continuous training and support is required. In Washington DC, America, for example, IRCT member TASSC works to implement GSR 9 ‘Victims’ Participation in Rehabilitation’ by enabling survivors to speak directly to staff working for members of the US Congress, lobbying them on specific immigration laws that impact torture survivors from abroad, and thus enhancing their rehabilitation through restoring a lost sense of agency. In the far more constricted political space of Zimbabwe, Tree of Life pursues the same rehabilitation purposes, but cannot risk the safety of their survivors by having them lobby politicians. Instead, Tree of Life employs many survivors both in their administration and as primary healthcare providers, training survivors to help others and thereby enhance their own healing journey.

To better understand how members meet the challenges of putting the GSR into practice in their centres, IRCT conducted a further 22 online meetings this year to help us map out next steps, including completing a GSR Practice Guide with support from the Health Advisory Board that sets out key indicators to assist members in monitoring how they meet the GSR targets. A peer support mechanism between members will help those strong in implementing certain standards assist those less able, and a series of GSR posters will soon hang on the walls of centres to inform survivors what they can expect when they seek treatment at an IRCT member.

Nothing beats the experience of learning face to face, so in 2022 members of IRCT’s Secretariat were able to visit our members in Palestine (TRC), Uganda (ACTV) and Nepal (TPO) to both present the GSR to staff members and to hear directly from those who undertook the E-course about the way they turn theory into practice in their everyday work with survivors.

Building on those visits, a series of regional trainings in Asia, Africa and South America will be held in 2023/24 during which dozens of members will be directly trained on the GSR and will have an opportunity to share their own best-practices with each other. Those examples will be used to further expand and enrich the existing E-course, ensuring the GSR evolve to reflect the expertise of IRCT’s global membership.
5.2 Knowledge Sharing

The IRCT exists because of and for its members. As a membership organisation, engagement by members is the driving force and democratic basis of the organisation. With our 160 members in 75 countries, IRCT centres come in all shapes and sizes, from the highly specialised medical clinic working in a single city, to the local branch of sprawling social welfare organisation, working across a continent. Together, the sheer diversity of IRCT members’ expertise, gathered together in solidarity for the shared purpose of providing rehabilitation to survivors of torture, represents the organisation’s greatest strength. In 2022, we aimed to provide more members than ever with tools, expertise and knowledge exchange spaces to improve their provision of rehabilitation.

2022 was another busy year for sharing knowledge through IRCT webinars

5.2.1 Webinars

The principal means for gathering members together to share knowledge was through our demand-driven thematic webinars. In 2022, IRCT hosted 9 webinars (see sidebar) drawing a total audience of over 1,000 participants, including a total of 72 member centres. There was particularly strong member engagement around livelihoods as a component of rehabilitation, the updated Istanbul Protocol, and Care for Caregivers.

IRCT’s Strategy goal is that by the end of 2024, well over half our 160 members are actively contributing to knowledge sharing through webinars.

To further promote the active exchange of knowledge between members, the IRCT has established a communications product called Insights. Many of these 9 webinars were edited into shorter, focused videos for the Insights series that highlight the key learnings from members and other experts in the anti-torture field. Alongside thematic interviews with members, Insights aims to showcase to IRCT members and other key stakeholders in the field the experiences and best-practices of those providing rehabilitation to torture survivors. Whenever possible, 2-minute clips from the Insights series were produced for social media to increase the audience and potential for knowledge exchange between members.

2022 A Year in Webinars

- Advocacy Initiatives: Protest Toolkit
- Care for Caregivers: Supporting Frontline Staff
- Documenting Torture: Using Istanbul Protocol 2022
- Global Standards on Rehabilitation: Putting them into Practice
- Livelihoods in Torture Rehabilitation: Experiences from IRCT members
- MHSS and Humanitarian Support: How they Work Together
- Russia Invades Ukraine: Psycho-Social Needs of Refugees
- Survivor Engagement: Experiences from Members
- War Trauma and Children: Using Istanbul Protocol 2022
5.2.2 Torture Journal

Now in its fourth decade of publication, IRCT’s Torture Journal is the world’s leading academic source for peer-reviewed research and debate from the medical and legal frontiers of torture rehabilitation and prevention. Begun in 1991, the Journal was originally a newsletter for IRCT members to share best practices on treating torture survivors. Today, through its publication in major databases such as MEDLINE and Scopus, the Journal reaches a global audience of medical and legal professionals, academics and interested members of the public. In 2022, Torture Journal published its largest ever edition, a double issue collecting together 25 papers to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the Journal and which reflect on the long experiences of the authors in torture prevention and rehabilitation. Divided into three sections – learning from the past; understanding the present; preparing for the future – the “unique issue”, “should be read from cover to cover,” says Editor in Chief Pau Perez Sales, as it represents the “many challenges we have overcome together over these past 30 years, and acknowledges the vitality of a field that still has countless challenges still to face.”

The IRCT publishes an average of 30-35 Torture Journal articles per year, making it a vital space for members to share their research. In 2022, 11 out of 49 submissions of research came from members, including research from TRC Palestine into the impacts of integrating livelihood support into rehabilitation (see below). To better promote the knowledge in Torture Journal publicly and to members a social media campaign of posters and videos was also established in 2022.

### Torture Journal’s Year in Numbers:

- **3** Issues Published
- **21,703** Downloads
- **46,235** Abstracts Viewed
- **49** Total Submissions (11 from members)

5.2.3 Website

Finally, a new website was launched for IRCT in 2022 that reflects its new Strategy and better showcases to members and the wider audience the best knowledge the organisation has to offer. See: www.irct.org. The new website has a dedicated page for the Torture Journal listing every single issue back to the very first IRCT newsletter of 1988, as well as a page for all the thematic, country and annual reports the IRCT has published. IRCT’s Protest Toolkit, Guide on Implementing the Right to Rehabilitation, and Global Impact Data, all have dedicated pages, as well as work by our partner organisation, the Association for the Prevention of Torture (APT), on effective interviewing. Wherever possible, materials are made available in multiple languages to reach wider audiences.

**Anti-Torture Database**

Although the current phase of support for the ATD was formally concluded in May, support was maintained to the four member centers (TRC Palestine, TPO Nepal, ACTV Uganda, and AVVDH DRC) involved in the trialing and development of upgrades to the system. Details of the project can be found here: www.irct.org/anti-torture-database.
5.3 Better Livelihoods

During consultations for IRCT’s Strategy 2022-2025, a clear consensus emerged among members from the Global South that within varying contexts of conflict and economic hardship, the ability of members to deliver as full rehabilitation as possible to survivors of torture was severely constrained in cases where the survivor was struggling to meet basic needs for themselves and their family. IRCT’s Global Impact Data for the past three years shows that between 40% to 50% of all torture survivors treated around the world, Global North and South, also live in poverty, according to their national standard. That makes poverty the leading risk factor for torture: Being poor makes you more likely to be tortured. And being tortured makes you more likely to be poor, as survivors struggle to return to work, putting them at risk of falling into a cycle of poverty and social exclusion, aggravating the trauma already suffered. Therefore, it was agreed that in such circumstances rehabilitation outcomes can be improved through livelihood support, and that livelihoods projects would be a central component of IRCT’s Strategy on Healing.

In 2022, IRCT’s Livelihoods Steering Committee was formed by five members from the Global South: ACTV, Uganda; TPO, Nepal; Restart, Lebanon; TRC, Palestine and PVCHR, India. All had pre-existing experience with livelihood work and wished to pilot a more structured integration with their rehabilitation services with the view to developing good practices to share with IRCT’s full membership. A Project Outline was completed, contracts were signed and funds distributed to the five members. From July, implementation of the five livelihoods projects began. The projects support a variety of activities: income generating activities, workshops and vocational trainings (nail salon, agro-business, tailoring, kitchen garden), as well as capacity building on village savings and loan schemes (VSLA) and financial skills. The Steering committee met once per month to share progress, challenges and good practices.

Members of IRCT Secretariat conducted three monitoring visits to members of the Livelihoods Steering Committee through 2022. In September, the Secretariat visited TRC Palestine (see box) and in November travelled to Uganda to spend a week with ACTV. Staff visited a range of survivors in Kampala and in remote rural areas north west of Gulu. Survivors were from torture perpetrated by Ugandan security forces, militias in the Democratic Republic of Congo (M23) and northern Uganda (Lord’s Resistance Army) and were mainly Ugandan women, but some Congolese refugees. Staff saw first-hand the hugely beneficial micro finance projects and VSLA, as well as training, helping 44 survivors make and sell staple goods such as men and women’s clothes, and flour. In December, a visit was conducted to monitor progress of the livelihoods project implemented by TPO Nepal. The IRCT visited survivors of torture who reported mental health and income gains from projects centred on goat and pig husbandry and small businesses. IRCT met with local government as well as local activists and civil society who are collaborating on advocacy to push the Nepalese government to compensate conflict-affected victims.

“Here people live on less than a dollar a day. And torture leaves them even more impoverished. They must pay rent to enter the prison, and a ransom to leave. They cannot afford it so go further into debt.”

— VAINQUEUR KALAFULA LUSU, President, Remak, DR Congo

In 2022, TRC supports Palestinian women to find work after their release from Israeli jail. Khader Rasras, General Director, of TRC Palestine says: vocational training for victims of torture is an integral part of their treatment.

“Here people live on less than a dollar a day. And torture leaves them even more impoverished. They must pay rent to enter the prison, and a ransom to leave. They cannot afford it so go further into debt.”

— VAINQUEUR KALAFULA LUSU, President, Remak, DR Congo
5.3.1 Palestine: The Work of Healing

Bakr Abdullah al-Saad was arrested by Israeli troops in 2013 crossing back into Israel from Jordan. Initially told he would be held for two months, Bakr was imprisoned for two years, and subjected to a range of psychological torture and ill-treatment, including solitary confinement and denial of family visits. “In the beginning, when the prisoner is released from prison, he is in a state of loss,” said Bakr, interviewed by IRCT at his barber shop in Beit El, just north of Ramallah.

Watch: Palestine: The Work of Healing

Since its occupation of the West Bank and East Jerusalem in 1967, local NGOs estimate Israel has detained around one million Palestinians, a fifth of the entire population. Israel says its treatment of Palestinian detainees complies with Israeli law. But each year, TRC Palestine receives around 900 cases of Palestinians detainees having mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) at TRC. 20 were selected for additional vocational training. Results from TRC’s surveys with the women showed huge improvements in outcomes for survivors receiving additional livelihoods support. Levels of self esteem and family integration were twice as high among the women who received MHPSS with vocational training as compared to those who received only MHPSS. “Vocational training for victims of torture is an integral part of their treatment,” says Kahder Rasras, General Director, TRC Palestine. “Once you are done with the psychosocial and the psychiatric services provided to these victims, you have also to push them a step forward. You need to help this person to be integrated into their society and to live a normal life, a successful life.”

Looking forward ...

In 2023, IRCT will continue its direct support to members implementing livelihoods projects through provision of six more grants to the following successful applicants:

- Sri Lanka: Family Rehabilitation Centre (FRC)
- DR Congo: Fédération des Femmes pour le Développement Intégral au Congo (FEDICONGO)
- DR Congo: Regroupement des Mamans de Kamituga (REMAK)
- Burundi: Solidarité d’Action pour la Paix - Grand Lacs (SAP-GL)
- Pakistan: Human Development Organisation (HDO)
- India: Vasavayak Rehabilitation Centre for Torture Victims (VRTC)

5.3.2 India: Seeds of Healing

Ghurahu, a day labourer from Varanasi and a member of India’s most marginalised caste, knows all too well the link between poverty and torture. Unlawfully arrested and beaten unconscious by police, Ghurahu was left too traumatised to return to work as a day labourer earning just €1.4 a day. “The torture left me with problems,” says Ghurahu. “I was beaten, but my condition is improving slowly, slowly. I did not having any saving or more money to spend on good food. I have to work daily. If I do not earn then my family will starve.”

Healing began with talking therapy at IRCT member the People’s Vigilance Committee on Human Rights (PVCHR), who also filed a complaint against the police through the National Human Rights Commission. But Ghurahu’s life was also improved by some very practical assistance: Seeds to plant his own kitchen garden. “I’ve got pumpkin, bitter gourd, and sweet gourd seeds, and mango, guava and pomegranate plants. The vegetables are blooming now,” says Ghurahu. “I started the kitchen gardening last year and all together I grew 15 kg of vegetables. They grew in one season and they were sufficient for my family.”

“Poverty, caste system, patriarchy are the main reasons behind torture and organised violence in this country,” says Lenin. “If you want to eliminate torture you are going to eliminate poverty. If you are going to eliminate poverty you need to eliminate torture.”

Watch India: Seeds of Healing

“…”

— PEACE AVOLA, Social Worker, Livelihoods Programme, ACTV, Uganda
5.4 Survivor Engagement

Torture stigmatises and silences its victims. Powerlessness is a key reason why torture has such a high impact on the mental health of survivors. For this reason, helping survivors empower themselves is not only the ethical thing to do, it also has significant potential for making rehabilitation processes more effective. The IRCT therefore seeks to enable its members to ensure that survivors who wish to become active participants in the design and delivery of rehabilitation services and in speaking out and advocating against torture are able to do so. In the Global Impact Data collected for 2022, there was an encouraging response to survivor engagement as 58 members in 31 countries reported having survivors in decision-making roles such as managerial roles, advisory boards, hiring panels, or executive committees.

ASSAF, Israel piloted a project, ‘Experts from Experience’, which trains asylum seekers in Israel who have undergone a rehabilitation process to use their personal experience to help others who are in crisis and provide mental health responses in their community. Freedom From Torture, UK facilitated two webinars on survivor engagement within torture rehabilitation services: ‘Moving From Consultation To Partnership’ and ‘Survivor Engagement in Institutional Advocacy’.

Tree of Life, Zimbabwe implemented its Trauma Healing & Empowerment (TH&E) project. A regional workshop was held in Harare, Zimbabwe with five IRCT members and six other partner organisations. The TH&E model builds the capacity of torture survivors who have undergone their own rehabilitation, and who are physically and psychologically stable, to support other survivors of torture who are starting their rehabilitation journey. The model is tailored to the context of Sub-Saharan Africa, where there is a scarcity of clinicians who can address torture survivors’ needs for psychosocial support. Furthermore, survivors have expressed their wish to heal with people that speak their language and understand their cultural context. The TH&E model also fosters social cohesion and an understanding of healing from a communitarian perspective, with aligns with cultural expectations in the region and contributes towards fighting stigmatisation. KRCT Kosovo hosted an in-person three day workshop in November for members of the Survivor Engagement Steering Committee.

5.4.1 Survivor Engagement Committee

In 2022, the IRCT established a Survivor Engagement Steering Committee composed of the five members with a systematic approach to survivor engagement: ASSAF Israel; Freedom From Torture UK; TASSC US; Tree of Life Zimbabwe; and KRCT Kosovo. The role of the Steering Committee is to develop best practices and tools for survivor engagement and to provide technical and advisory support to the broader membership on how to implement these. To establish an evidence base for how to do this, each Steering Committee member received a sub-grant to support the piloting of new approaches, production of tools and the sharing of knowledge on improved Survivor Engagement with IRCT’s global membership.

TASCC, US presented a model on how they coach survivors to advocate for human right issues before congressional aides in Washington DC. TASSC’s Advocacy Programme engages torture survivors in educating policymakers and the broader public about torture and other human rights abuses, especially in Africa, and about the changes needed in US asylum policy. TASSC has achieved excellent results and the survivors involved in engaging with political stakeholders regularly report high levels of satisfaction with their engagement, highlighting how important it is for them to contribute in this way to their own rehabilitation. During the Committee meeting in Kosovo, it was decided that a call for project proposals would be put out during 2023 to engage other organisations, and that an assessment tool would be created for member centres to assess their current and future survivor engagement approaches. Torture survivors from Freedom From Torture and KRCT contributed by sharing part of their experiences and their insights about survivor-lead advocacy.
5.4.2 Survivors Speak Out

To support the goal of Survivor Engagement, in 2022, IRCT Communications launched the Survivors Speak Out series, a space where survivors of torture tell their own story, their own way. All videos are made by the IRCT Secretariat and/or IRCT members and the survivors they support (see below). In 2022, IRCT put a survivor’s voice at the centre of its event to mark the June 26 international anti-torture day, interviewing a survivor of torture in Belarus at a gathering at the Swiss embassy in Copenhagen. Dozens of Copenhagen-based diplomats, Danish officials, and members of human rights organisation in Copenhagen heard compelling testimony of systematic torture by the regime known as ‘Europe’s last dictatorship.’ After many months of working with the survivor to ensure their identity and family contacts could not become public, a half hour documentary, based on the interview, was produced, and was premiered at an event for key decision makers and Belarusian exiles in Brussels in April 2023. Further safe space was created for survivors of torture and ill-treatment to tell their stories on camera during visits by IRCT Secretariat to TRC Palestine and ACTV Uganda. IRCT Secretariat collaborated with and used video material produced by DIGNITY and OASIS DK, including survivors speaking out, as part of a project to inform school children in the larger Copenhagen area about torture and how they can contribute to its eradication and rehabilitation for survivors.

“Sharing your story is like taking a burden from your soul. You feel so much lighter. When you share your pain, that’s when the healing begins.”

— SHYHRETE TAHIRI-SYLEJMANI, Kosovo

After torture and 15 years in prison for a crime he did not commit, IRCT member in Mexico, the Collective Against Torture and Impunity (CCTI) helped secure Osvaldo Rodriguez’ acquittal and release.

Osvaldo Rodriguez, Mexico
https://youtu.be/84hwFgRFbUo

Osvaldo Rodriguez is one of tens of thousands of Mexican citizens tortured with impunity over the past two decades. In their ‘war’ on organised crime, Mexican police use arbitrary arrest and torture to extract confessions from the innocent. After 15 years in prison for a crime he did not commit, IRCT member, the Collective Against Torture and Impunity (CCTI) helped secure Osvaldo’s acquittal and release. “The most difficult aspect of torture is not really the beatings. It’s more the damage that leaves you marked for the rest of your life. I would prefer not to feel it. Fear of not knowing where next ... I still need to do a lot of work. There is much left to do.”

— Osvaldo Rodriguez, Mexico

Manar Shweiki, Palestine
https://youtu.be/z1hYhlr9IMg

Manar was 14 years old when she was arrested and beaten by Israeli police after an altercation with Jewish settlers as she walked home from school in Jerusalem. Manar denied charges of possessing a knife and plotting a stabbing attack, and was interrogated without a lawyer or her parents.

She was convicted after she says an Israeli police woman, posing as a social worker, visited her cell and tricked her into agreeing with anti-Israeli statements, while secretly filming her. Manar was sentenced to 15 years in prison, but was eventually released after four years, and received rehabilitation treatment at TRC Palestine. “Now I study psychology and social science at Birzeit University,” says Manar. “After my arrest I became interested in the psychology of other people. I noticed that sometimes people have an emotional reaction but don’t have anyone to turn to. I would love to be that person to turn to.”
Ahmed, Syria
https://youtu.be/sm9ezs-jryw

The Syrian uprising of 2011 began after the Assad regime’s secret police arrested and tortured children. Ahmed, a 13-year-old schoolboy at the time, describes why he joined a protest for freedom in Syria and the torture he endured after his arrest. “He was shouting at me, ‘You want freedom? You want to topple the regime?’ And he beat me ... We were demanding freedom because in our country there is no freedom. There are no human rights. There’s nothing. Everything is oppressed ... When we were in the cell they started beating me. They electrocuted me in my leg and in my chest ... They hammered the big toe nail with the screwdriver, until it became loose, then they ripped it out with pliers. I started crying because it was the ultimate pain.”

Suha Jabara, Palestine
https://youtu.be/oy01GIH8rAI

The West Bank of Palestine has been under military occupation by Israel since 1967. But since the Oslo Accords of 1993, the Palestinian Authority (PA), based in Ramallah, also deploys its own security forces. Suha, who is a Palestinian, US and Panamanian citizen, was arrested by the PA on suspicion of spying, and taken to its detention centre in Ariha.

“I felt like I wasn’t human from the way they treated me,” says Suha “I watched the young men being arrested and tortured, so I knew that what they will do to me.” Suha, who has a heart condition and was hospitalised three times during her detention, says she was beaten, forced to strip, threatened with rape and put in solitary confinement. After 70 days in custody, Suha was released and was referred to TRC Palestine. “When I started at TRC I was not in a good mental state. My religious faith had been shaken ... You no longer trust anyone and everything is broken. TRC helped me to get up again, and to feel safe. I was able to get married and to go on with my life and with my children, helping them with their education.”

Shyhrete Tahiri-Sylejmani, Kosovo
https://youtu.be/fercDGVEeuE

Shyhrete Tahiri-Sylejmani is a survivor of sexual torture from the Kosovo War. In April 1999, Serbian soldiers, with their faces covered, entered her home and raped her in front of her two small children. “Sharing the story is not an easy thing because you’re sharing your pain that is inside of you and the pain that never recovers,” says Shyhrete. “You just learn to live with the pain.” Local rights groups estimate up to 20,000 women, and some men, were raped by Serb forces in Kosovo between February 1998 and June 1999. Yet intense social stigma around rape silenced survivors for decades. Shyhrete is only the second woman to speak publicly about her ordeal, and one of the first to file a criminal complaint with Kosovo’s Special Prosecution for War Crimes. Shyhrete received rehabilitation at the Kosovo Rehabilitation Centre for Torture Victims, which specialises in documenting and treating wartime sexual violence. “They were there for me, the psychologist, and they are professional. How to prepare you, how to feel better, not pushing you, but making you comfortable. To go by yourself it’s really, really hard ... But sharing the story is like you take a burden from your soul that is hundreds of pounds and you feel so much lighter in your soul. I encourage other survivors that healing is when you share your pain, when you share your story. That’s when the healing begins.”

Looking forward ...

The Survivor Engagement Assessment Tool will be launched on Fabo. In 25 questions, the Tool allows member centres to self-assess their survivor engagement practices, or lack of. In 2023, IRCT will continue its direct support to members implementing survivor engagement projects through provision of up to 9 grants ranging in value between EUR5k to EUR20k. Applications are being assessed from the following 11 members:

- Spirasi Ireland
- LAPS Liberia
- Counselling Services Unit (CSU) Zimbabwe
- Vive Zene Bosnia
- Justice Centre Hong Kong
- AJPNV Chad
- VAST Canada
- (ALDP) Indonesia
- KRCT Kosovo
- Tree of Life Zimbabwe
- TASSC US.
6. Justice

6.1 Evidence for Accountability

States usually deny that torture occurs and obstruct attempts to investigate it leaving victims without access to justice and reparations, including rehabilitation. Therefore, to increase State accountability and justice for survivors, the IRCT works with other leading campaigning, legal and human rights organisations to leverage forensic evidence, which can be used to substantiate allegations of torture and hold perpetrators accountable though public advocacy and strategic litigation. We do this in close collaboration with the IRCT coordinated Independent Forensic Expert Group (IFEG).

6.1.1 Nigeria: From Court to Compensation

With Nigerian NGO Gavel, IRCT-IFEG submitted medico-legal reports based on our evaluation of three survivors of the 2020 shooting dead of at least 12 civilians by the Nigerian Army at the Lekki Toll Gate in Lagos, which began as a peaceful protest calling for accountability for Nigeria’s Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) which has perpetrated torture and ill-treatment against Nigerians for three decades. IRCT’s submission supports a legal case filed at the Court of Justice of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and advances two novel points of jurisprudence: 1) that the survivors who the law might consider mere witnesses (they were not killed or physically injured) suffered from serious psychological trauma because of their attendance at the massacre and should be qualified as victims of torture and ill-treatment; and 2) that subsequent fear and harassment of these individuals supported by an environment of impunity, driving them into isolation, devastating their social and familial networks, are part of the torture event.

Building further on its collaboration with IRCT member in Nigeria, Prisoners Rehabilitation and Welfare Action (PRAWA) and with the National Human Rights Commission of Nigeria (NHRC), IRCT drafted a report analysing all of the torture case decisions taken by the Federal Independent Investigative Panel (IIP) in relation to torture and ill-treatment perpetrated by SARS. The IIP rendered final decisions in 20 cases involving 38 petitioners. By most accounts, this represents only the tip of the iceberg, with hundreds of cases of alleged torture by SARS still being investigated by state-level panels across Nigeria.
Decisions were rendered in favour of the petitioner in 17 cases including three where acts of torture led to the death of the victim. The IIP awarded monetary compensation to the victims and their families totaling NGN 117,500,000 (approximately EUR 250,000) as compensation for unlawful arrest, detention, torture, cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment, and reimbursement of medical fees and of the money extorted in detention by SARS. The Panel also ordered the respondents to tender public written apologies and recommended the dismissal, demotion and due investigation or prosecution of the individual police officers and public authorities involved in the incidences.

To promote the report, a mission to Nigeria was conducted in December to advocate on the report. Dr. Uju Agomoh (PRAWA’s executive director) chaired a session with NHRC’s executive director during an NGO Forum attended by about 200 civil society organisations. The report was widely promoted by the NHRC and was covered by print and broadcast media, including at the Presidential Town Hall on Human Rights & the 2023 Elections. The NHRC and UN and Government of Nigeria Dialogue on Human Rights Priorities referred to the report as one of the most important achievements of 2022.

The IRCT is still actively involved together with PRAWA in promoting criminal prosecutions and ensuring that adequate reparations are provided to the victims including by continuing to provide duty bearers, as well as civil society groups, with the expertise and capacity to undertake their work.

Nigeria: Implementing UNCAT Recommendations

Throughout 2022, the IRCT worked closely with PRAWA to promote implementation of the first ever set of recommendations by the UN Committee Against Torture to Nigeria, issued in December 2021. Activities combined local advocacy throughout the year with an IRCT advocacy visit during December 2022. Outcomes included:

The National Committee Against Torture (NCAT) was constituted and includes representatives from government agencies, including the security sector. NCAT received an initial training by IRCT and PRAWA, which will be followed up in 2023.

Many states have established SARS victim compensation funds that have paid out to victims, though more work needs to be done to ensure all victims who deserve compensation receive it.

Some cases from the SARS investigation have been referred to the Attorney General for investigation and prosecution.

NHRC has established a permanent panel to receive and review complaints of torture and ill-treatment.

In August 2022, the Nigerian Correctional Service (NCoS) inaugurated the National Parole Board with responsibility for recommending deserving cases for parole in order to reduce overcrowding in places of detention.

“Our examination of the torture cases decided by the IIP reveals an indiscriminate use of torture and ill-treatment by the SARS and the pervasive environment of impunity in which they operated [...] Now that the veil of impunity has been removed, our organisations are dedicated to advancing the right of all victims to reparations, including rehabilitation, and to helping institute the necessary reforms to address the violations committed, including the establish of an effective system of accountability to prevent similar future occurrences.”

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Support a system of Regular Visits to places of Detention of Liberty by National Human Rights Institutions in Nigeria
6.1.2 Belarus: Building the Case Against Europe’s Last Dictator

In 2021, the IRCT’s forensic expert assessment that found “compelling evidence” of a “coordinated policy and practice of systematic torture and ill-treatment against Belarusian citizens” detained for protesting against 2020’s rigged presidential elections (See Annual Report 2021 and irct.org/Belarus). In March 2022, the UN Human Rights Council renewed its investigation of Belarus through a joint effort by IRCT, Human Rights Foundation of Turkey (HRFT), World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT), the EU, Denmark, other engaged States and NGOs. The UN’s Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) Belarus report had an extensive focus on torture, and made use of IRCT’s evidence and report on torture in Belarus, while making strong recommendations for accountability and reparation.

In June, hosted at the Swiss Embassy in Copenhagen before an audience of dozens of Copenhagen-based diplomats, Danish officials, and members of human rights organisations, the IRCT brought together a survivor of torture in Belarus, a Belarusian lawyer who played a crucial role in gathering evidence of torture, the lead IFEG forensic expert who analysed the evidence, a psychologist specialised in treating torture, and the head of IRCT’s torture investigations, for a panel discussion. The result was a half-hour documentary telling the story of torture in Belarus through the survivor’s experience and the panelists who worked to prove the evidence and provide healing.

The film was premiered at an event for key decision makers and Belarusian exiles in Brussels in April 2023 and has been made available to IRCT’s partners in the anti-torture sector. A few weeks earlier, the latest OHCHR report concluded that some of the human rights violations it documented, particularly torture, could amount to international crimes against humanity, being an intentionally-directed, widespread and systematic attacks against the civilian population. IRCT and OMCT, along with 26 other human rights organisations, are now advocating for the Human Rights Council to establish an independent investigative mechanism with an expanded mandate, distinct from the OHCHR examination.

Belarus: Dictatorship in Digits

- **29 Years in power for Alexander Lukashenko**
- **80.23% officially announced as voting for Lukashenko in 2020**
- **1,189 NGOs closed down or closing since 2021**
- **56% voted for opposition leader Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, according to Golos election monitors**
- **1,446 Number of political prisoners in Belarus as of 1 January 2023**
- **83.5% officially announced as voting for Lukashenko in 2015**
- **31% Trade union leaders under criminal prosecution**
- **30,000 Russian troops in Belarus, many used to invade Ukraine in February 2022**
- **33 Journalists imprisoned at end 2022**

* Source: Human Rights Watch

IRCT produced a documentary telling the story of torture in Belarus through a survivor’s experience.
IRCT ANNUAL REPORT 2022

6.1.3 Forensic Expertise for Human Rights in Latin America

IRCT continued its collaboration with Human Rights Watch (HRW) working on investigations into grave abuses by authorities in Latin America. In Colombia, IRCT expert analysis of evidence was used to inform HRW’s strategic advocacy approach in the case of the extrajudicial killing of four civilians by the Colombian military in the indigenous area of Puerto Leguízamo. The UN subsequently called for a probe into the military operation. On Cuba, IFEG wrote an expert opinion on the unreliability of smell evidence, as was used by Cuban authorities to arrest a protester, who was then beaten while in police custody. The extensive report on Cuba’s systematic repression against the July 2021 protests, the largest against the Communist dictatorship since the 1959 revolution, received almost 350 media mentions, with most engagement coming from the US, Brazil, Mexico, Spain, Portugal, and Argentina. It was covered by a range of media outlets, including The New York Times, infobae, El País, CNN, Folha de São Paulo, and many others. And for the situation in El Salvador, IFEG issued two separate expert opinions in cases of suspicious deaths in custody and the extrajudicial killing of individuals during the State of Emergency, imposed following a spike in gang murders. HRW later published a report relying on IFEG’s assessment of evidence, which was covered by at least 277 media sources in three languages across 32 countries, including by international media such as Al Jazeera, AP, and VOA.

Advocacy at UNCAT:

The IRCT supported members in Kenya, the Independent Medico Legal Unit (IMLU), Iraq, Jiyan Foundation for Human Rights, Palestine, Treatment and Rehabilitation Centre for Victims of Torture (TRC) and Uganda, African Centre for Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture Victims (ACTV) to report to and engage with the UNCAT during its reviews of their respective countries. In all instances, our interventions resulted in recommendations to the four countries that closely follow the specific priorities established by our members in advance. As documented in IRCT’s 2021 evaluation of this work programme, members reported such recommendations play a key role in putting pressure on governments to eradicate torture at home and catalyse concrete changes. The four members rated the quality of IRCT’s support at an average of 4.6/5, and the utility of the recommendations for national advocacy at an average of 4.2/5.
Priorities at UPR:
The IRCT supported its members in the Philippines, Medical Action Group (MAG) and Balay Rehabilitation Centre (Balay), South Africa, Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR), and Uganda, African Centre for Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture Victims (ACTV) to report and advocate in relation to the UPR of their respective countries. This included reporting to the OHCHR, development of country briefing notes and advocacy with embassies in capitals, and Permanent Missions in Geneva. For each country, the IRCT and our members engaged with more than 25 States to promote strong recommendations focused on our members’ key priorities. As a result, torture and related priorities were key focus areas in the UPRs of the three countries. This provides crucial political pressure and momentum for political change in the fight against torture at the national level. The members involved rated the quality of IRCT’s support at an average of 4.75/5 and the utility of the recommendations for national advocacy at an average of 5/5.

6.2.1 Iraq: Commitment to Better Implement Yazidi Survivor Law

Following the May 2022 UNCAT recommendations to Iraq, the IRCT supported its local member, Jiyan Foundation, to promote implementation of the recommendations through a series of bilateral meetings. A larger multistakeholder meeting specifically discussed the implementation of the Yazidi Survivor Law, which guarantees reparations to the victims of Islamic State (ISIL). The intervention achieved the following results:

► The Ministry of Justice agreed to update the National Human Rights Action Plan to correctly reflect recommendations issued by the UNCAT and HRC.
► The General Directorate of Survivor Affairs stressed that it would prioritise employing survivors in order to ensure representation and better reflect survivors’ needs, requests and priorities.
► The United Nations Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) agreed to continue supporting the Government of Iraq in implementing recommendations issued by the UNCAT and HRC. While commending the Iraqi government for progress towards accountability for crimes, UNAMI acknowledged many survivors are still waiting for justice.
► IRCT became part of a project by Jiyan Foundation to help measure implementation of the Survivor Law using the IRCT’s Right to Rehabilitation indicators.

6.2.2 Palestine: Ending No-Touch Torture Methods

Following the first review of Palestine by UNCAT, IRCT supported member TRC Palestine to hold a series of events focused on implementation of UNCAT recommendations to the Palestinian Authority to end so-called no-touch torture methods, such as threats, sleep deprivation and solitary confinement. The action focused on three elements:

► That no-touch torture methods be officially recognised by the State of Palestine through such means as a Presidential decree.
► Judges, general attorneys and health officers in places of detention will have better understanding of no-touch torture methods and how to identify signs of psychological torture in detainees.
► Civil society actors, including human rights NGOs and university students, will be better equipped to monitor and expose psychological torture.

The Philippines:
Watch: Torture, Red-Tagging, and the Fight for Truth and Justice

The fight against Communist rebel groups, a so-called War on Drugs, Red-tagging political opponents as terrorists, the return to power of the family of former dictator Ferdinand Marcos. Working to prevent torture and fighting for healing and justice for survivors is uniquely challenging in the Philippines. As the State was reviewed by the UPR in Geneva, IRCT’s two long-established torture rehabilitation centres in the country gave their insights into the current human rights situation.

The Universal Periodic Review (UPR) is a unique process of human rights review conducted by the Human Rights Council (HRC). UPR recommendations are developed and discussed by the country’s peers, including human rights NGOs. This process is designed to promote and strengthen the implementation of the international human rights obligations of States. Since its establishment, the UPR process has reviewed all States in the world, including all United Nations member States.

Trends in supported recommendations

IRCT’s Insights series profiled our members in the Philippines documenting and treating torture.

Darwin Mendiola

Meet Our Member: TRC, Palestine

The Treatment and Rehabilitation Centre for Victims of Torture (TRC) was established in Ramallah, the administrative capital of Palestine, in the West Bank in 1997. The West Bank and East Jerusalem areas of Palestine have been occupied by the Israeli armed forces since 1967. Since its establishment, TRC Palestine has treated over 26,000 survivors of torture and ill-treatment. 90 percent of its cases are Palestinians detained by Israeli security forces.
Progress towards a global ban on conversion therapy

Since 2020, the IRCT has been actively participating in the global efforts to ban conversion therapy through use of our IFEG expert statement and global report documenting how conversion therapy can cause severe pain and suffering in its victims and therefore constitutes torture. During 2022, the Senate of Mexico voted in favour of banning conversion therapy. This followed a strong civil society campaign where the IRCT through several interventions presented our expertise on how conversion therapy constitutes torture. This was one of the main arguments in the campaign. In addition, bans were also introduced in France and New Zealand and Israel’s Health Ministry banned conversion therapy by health professionals.

More States banned gender-sexuality ‘conversion therapy’ in 2022, which IRCT experts found can cause severe pain and suffering. Credit: Shutterstock

6.2.3 UN: Equality in Practice

History was made in 2022 when the Human Rights Council appointed for the first time since the role was established in 1985 a female Special Rapporteur on Torture, Dr Alice Edwards, an Australian international law scholar and formerly on the Torture Journal’s Advisory Board, becomes the 7th holder of what is the most important and high profile role in the global fight against torture. IRCT interventions started with identifying and supporting strong female candidates from our membership. When the HRC published a shortlist proposing a male candidate, the IRCT and the GQUAL campaign collaborated to successfully lobby the HRC to change the list and appoint the female candidate highest on the short list. As IRCT’s Global Impact Data has consistently shown, around half of the 60,000 torture survivors IRCT members treat each year are women. Having a gender balance in key UN human rights positions is not only practicing what those bodies preach, but is also essential to gaining new perspectives on old problems. IRCT support was also successful in the election of Dr Uju Agomoh, the founder of IRCT member in Nigeria, PRAWA, to membership of the UN Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture (SPT). Our support consisted of technical and strategic advice and support with producing campaigning materials. Getting IRCT member staff into UN expert mechanisms such as the SPT is essential for our long-term promotion of rehabilitation and health-based perspectives to the fight against torture.

Dr Alice Edwards became the first woman to be appointed UN Special Rapporteur on Torture

‘I want to champion not just a whole of government approach, but a whole of society approach to prevention of torture.’

— DR UJU AGOMOH, UN Subcommittee against Torture

Watch: Preventing Torture: Bringing Frontline Experience from Nigeria to the UN Expert Committee

Dr Uju Agomoh, founder of PRAWA, discusses her pioneering work with prisoners and police in Nigeria, her background in psychology and law, and how working to change hearts and minds of officials in Africa’s most populous country gives her insights into how in her new role on the UN’s Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture, more Member States can be persuaded to comply with the Convention Against Torture.
6.2.4 Advancing the Right to Rehabilitation and Reparation

The IRCT works broadly with UN human rights mechanisms to ensure that the right to rehabilitation, reparations and related victims’ rights and interests are effectively included in the work of these mechanisms. In 2022, we made two important impacts in this area:

**HRC Inquiry Includes Reparations:**
Based on IRCT advocacy, through the renewal of the UN’s Belarus investigation mandate, the UN Human Rights Council for the first time ever provided one of its Commissions of Inquiry (country focused investigation by independent experts) with a mandate to examine the issue of reparations for victims, in addition to its common mandate to establish whether international crimes and human rights violations have taken place. This is an important step in achieving accountability and rights for victims because it means that investigations must become victim-centred. Victims will no longer be treated only as witnesses and informants to crime, but as rights holders and relevant stakeholders to all aspects of the investigation. The IRCT is now working directly with the HRC Belarus investigation to support its implementation of its reparations mandate, while also working to establish reparations mandates in other UN investigations.

**Right to Rehabilitation Briefing to UNCAT:**
The IRCT developed a set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that can be used to measure the global state of implementation of the right to rehabilitation, country by country. UNCAT received an IRCT briefing on the KPIs to ensure they contribute to a more systematic monitoring in individual country reviews of this central right for survivors.

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### 2022 Advocacy in Numbers:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Criminal or human rights investigations commenced based on or utilising IRCT forensic evidence or expert opinions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>States which received recommendations to improve their action against torture in relation to IRCT’s specific national policy priorities from UN and regional human rights monitoring mechanisms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Times international standards and practice by UN and regional human rights mechanisms were strengthened through IRCT input and advocacy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Number of IRCT forensic evidence interventions in 2022 referenced by key national stakeholders and media outlets.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>States which took concrete steps to improve national laws, policies and practice on issues addressed by IRCT international, regional and national advocacy.</td>
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### 6.3 Tools and Training

Neither exposing torture nor strengthening anti-torture laws would be possible without an active and healthy civil society. Although every member offers professional medical services, IRCT members are also civil society organisations (CSOs) and human rights defenders occupying a public space. Strengthening the capacity of CSOs through tools and training strengthens the ability of people to have their voices heard by those in power, a crucial means of advocacy to achieve the goal of increased State accountability and justice for survivors of torture.

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**6.3.1 Istanbul Protocol 2022**

First published in 1999, the Istanbul Protocol is the internationally agreed set of best-practice standards that States must follow in investigating torture and by which health and legal professionals should evaluate allegations of torture, document the cases of survivors and produce quality evidence. Simply put, the IP - as it is known to practitioners - tells you everything you need to know about the legal foundations for the absolute prohibition of torture, the relevant professional ethical codes for working with survivors, the practical steps required to be taken by States, and by doctors, psychologists and lawyers when interviewing torture survivors, and the different considerations when documenting the physical and psychological evidence of torture. As such, the Istanbul Protocol is one of the bedrocks on which the IRCT’s global network operates.

As part of the Istanbul Protocol Update Editorial Committee, the IRCT led work on updates and revisions to the IP in coordination with the OHCHR. With contributions from some 200 experts across 51 countries, the updated IP, published in June 2022, incorporates 20 years of advances in torture documentation as well as lessons learned, and includes...
new sections on medico-legal evaluations of children, LGBTQ+ people, and asylum seekers.

Launched in Geneva at an event with Physicians for Human Rights (PHR), Redress, the Human Rights Foundation of Turkey (HRFT) and the Geneva Academy and moderated by the IRCT, with 70 in-person participants and 1,000 participants online, the publishing of IP 2022 means both State institutions and civil society now have a fully updated tool to guide and support their investigation into cases of torture and ill-treatment and to ensure that their collection of evidence in these cases is effective and their advocacy is based on updated international standards to better achieve accountability and justice.

In order to train as many stakeholders as possible on its contents in an accessible and resource-efficient manner, the IRCT is designing an online curriculum to teach the IP 2022, with the first modules to be launched in 2023.

IRCT Communications also ran a campaign on Understanding and Using Istanbul Protocol, published ahead of the IP 2022 launch, and a series of videos explaining the updates. Find them all on our dedicated webpage: www.IRCT.org/Istanbul-Protocol

6.3.2 Training on Torture Documentation

In Mexico, IRCT and member CCTI enhanced the capacity of 130 staff of the National Human Rights Commission to document and investigate torture and ill-treatment and monitor whether State investigations comply with the international standards in the Istanbul Protocol. Participants rated the training 4.8/5 on its utility for them to improve their work with the Istanbul Protocol. A further online training in torture documentation was held with 40 representatives from eight different State level Human Rights Commissions in Mexico. Across the Pacific, IRCT worked with the Asia Alliance Against Torture (A3T) and Philippines member MAG to deliver an online workshop on forensic documentation as part of A3T’s webinar series, and presented a class on human rights and torture for A3T’s summer classroom. And back in Europe, IRCT presented on the prevalence of torture among refugees at an EU Asylum Agency event for 90 representatives of asylum authorities from 20 countries. In Geneva, IRCT provided training and mentoring to eight members (TRC Palestine, CSVR South Africa, IMLU Kenya, Jiyan Foundation Iraq, HRFT Turkey, RESTART Lebanon and MAG and Balay from the Philippines) to improve their capacity to engage effectively with UN human rights mechanisms. In Copenhagen, IRCT provided the key component of a training on the UPR host by Globalt Fokus for Global South partners to Danish civil society organisations.

“Spreading the Word”

Following the launch of IP 2022, IRCT was busy promoting global recognition of the Protocol, including presentations to:

- UN OHCHR’s Methodology and Training Unit (which supports all UN missions and investigative mechanisms)
- The European Union Agency for Asylum (including representatives from 20 countries)
- The Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)
- The UN Committee Against Torture (UNCAT) and Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture (SPT)
- 50 participants from National Preventative Mechanisms and CSOs from 26 countries
- The six Swedish Red Cross IRCT members
- Webinar panel hosted by Physicians for Human Rights with over 300 attendees

In Mexico, IRCT and member CCTI trained 130 staff of the National Human Rights Commission to document and investigate torture
6.3.3 Tools Against Torture

In 2022, IRCT produced two key tools we hope will contribute to the global fight to eradicate torture.

Our Guide to Implementing the Right to Rehabilitation for Torture Survivors is aimed at States. Produced in collaboration with the International Centre for Health and Human Rights (ICHHR) the step-by-step Guide aims to assist States on what they must do to implement the right to rehabilitation. Drawing on a decade of research and over 30 years of practical experience working in all regions of the world to promote implementation of the right to rehabilitation, the Guide represents an authoritative statement of best practice. It can also be used by national human rights institutions, civil society organisations and other actors to engage States in dialogue on how to create rehabilitation programmes for torture survivors.

Find the Guide here: www.irct.org/implementing-the-right-to-rehabilitation

Our Protest Toolkit is aimed at empowering protesters, activists, and human rights defenders to collect high quality evidence of unlawful violence by security forces. Created in collaboration with the Human Rights Centre, University of California Berkeley Law, the easy-to-use Toolkit consists of an Illustrated Guide with eye-catching images and a Documentation Form which are available in six languages: English, French, Spanish, Arabic, Russian and Ukrainian.

Find our Protest Toolkit here: https://irct.org/protesttoolkit/

Looking forward ...

Five advocacy priorities for 2023:

1. Encouraging a reparations mandate and victim-centred approach for UN investigative mechanisms
2. Holding perpetrators liable for torture when identity of abusers is purposely hidden
3. Dispelling the ‘bad apples’ myth of torture
4. Promoting the right of victims to tell their own story to whomever they choose and freely present evidence
5. Advancing more trauma-informed legal and judicial proceedings
7. UNITY

The IRCT operates in an environment where civil society organisations who challenge States to live up to their human rights obligations are under pressure from all sides. There is less democratic space, less funding for human rights work, increasing threats and harassment of local activists and a growing political opposition to the very idea of universal human rights. In this context it is essential that the IRCT as an organisation is strong, robust and actively collaborating with as many relevant stakeholders as possible, to build unity in the face of divisive forces. This means being accountable to its staff, members, governance and donors; ensuring diversity and inclusion across the organisation; and being a reliable and credible partner to other civil society organisations, States and international and regional organisations.

7.1 Ukraine Response

Russia’s invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 created the largest refugee crisis in Europe since the end of the Second World War, and posed a huge challenge to IRCT members in the region, many of whom were already operating at full capacity under tight resources. With generous funding from the Sigrid Rausing Trust, the IRCT in 2022 was able to distribute over 200,000 Euros to member centres helping Ukrainians impacted by Russia’s war, bringing their expertise in torture, trauma and PTSD care to assist the refugees.

Around 90% of the eight million Ukrainians who fled into Europe were women and children. As refugees, Ukrainians experience a range of physical and psychological harm. Chronic and acute diseases require medical treatment. Many suffer traumas from separation or the loss of loved ones, their homes, and uncertainty about the future.

In Ukraine itself, IRC Kyiv, was able to re-open its services after using the grant to purchase a generator, essential for providing medical care to its survivors, many very elderly, amid the power cuts from ongoing missile attacks on the capital. IRC was established in 1994 to treat survivors of Soviet Russian torture, and Nazi concentration camps. In 2021, the centre provided rehabilitation to 373 clients, most from Ukraine, but including survivors of torture and severe trauma from Belarus, Russia, Syria, Afghanistan, Somalia and Yemen, among others. Today, the centre - whose full name is the International Medical Rehabilitation Centre for the Victims of War and Totalitarian Regimes - has lost a third of its staff, as women with children fled the country, and men were conscripted. One of the team’s psychologists remains seriously injured after surviving a missile attack.

We are shocked. We see Russia’s goal is to cause a humanitarian catastrophe in Ukraine. The Russian military continues to fire on Ukrainian hospitals and ambulances, and does not allow hospital staff to deliver food and medicines. Their assurances that strikes are inflicted only on military targets are a complete lie.”

– IHOR RISHKO, Director, IRC Kyiv, writing one week into the invasion.
In neighbouring Moldova, just 50km from Odessa, some 700,000 Ukrainians crossed into the tiny country, itself occupied in part by Russian troops. **RCTV Memoria**, assisted over 3,500 Ukrainian refugees. Support ranged from humanitarian aid, such as medicines, food, and hygiene products, to individual psychological counselling, cash assistance and group excursions. RCTV was one of the only organisations in 2022 in Moldova providing essential prescription medicines to Ukrainians.

In Romania, also bordering Ukraine, **ICAR** offered psycho-social support to some 4,250 refugees, including psychological first aid and information on accessing medical and legal services. Working at three of the border crossing points, ICAR also distributed food and medicine to cover gaps in Romania’s relief effort. Later, ICAR undertook 200 visits to 16 refugee hosting centres to provide counselling, and individual psychotherapy to those most in need. Over 3.25 million Ukrainians crossed into Romania since Russia’s war began, with 250,000 now registered as refugees or with temporary protection. For a country under Communist rule for four decades after WWII, the threat from Russia’s war on Ukraine is felt sharply.

In Croatia, psychologists from **RCT Zagreb** provided counselling and solution-focused therapy to help some 100 traumatised families cope. Grant money was spent employing two Ukrainians, a psychologist and a children’s teacher. Drawing on their experience treating survivors of torture from the civil war in neighbouring Bosnia and Herzegovina, RCT used group activities like card games, as well as recreation and food, to help treat symptoms of trauma.

Further along the refugee journey, in Spain **Sir[a]** worked remotely with **Forpost** a trauma centre in Ukraine. Sir[a] medical professionals supported their counterparts in Ukraine with best practice documentation of torture survivors and with coping with the stress and potential burnout. Sir[a] also provided clinical care to Ukrainians in Spain impacted by the war.

At the **Cyprus Refugee Council** staff worked with the Asylum Services on the Mediterranean island to assist 52 Ukrainians to obtain temporary protection status. They also provided psycho-social counselling and helped refugees prepare for job interviews. Some 20,000 Ukrainians now live on Cyprus, many sharing the island’s majority Greek Orthodox religion.

Grant money also allowed IRCT to build a professional support network for staff on the frontline of the Ukraine response. In June, young staff members from GRCT and Cordelia were invited to **Berlin** to receive clinical supervision – Care4Caregivers. With no end in sight to Russia’s war on Ukraine, the ability of caregivers to manage their own stress, and avoid burnout, will be essential to the continued provision of expert support to Ukrainians in need.

**“Support for Ukrainians must continue. They are fighting for our future too. Today our border is with Ukraine. We don’t want it to be with Russia tomorrow.”**

— ICAR, Romania

**“If you need any help, you can turn to us, we are prepared. And if people are coming with serious psychological wounds and losses, we are also here. We support them with all our tools and facilities, arms and brain and heart; what we can offer.”**

— DR LILLA HARDI, Medical Director, Cordelia Foundation, Hungary

Watch: **Ukraine: IRCT Members in Action**
7.2 June 26: Many Voices, One Purpose

“For 20 years, Medico Contro la Tortura has offered support and care to victims of torture, providing medical, legal and social assistance. We know that every treatment plan is individual and needs a specific evaluation.” **Doctors Against Torture, Italy**

“We are organising a forum for university students on the rights and needs of women who survived sexual violence during the war. Also a peaceful street march through the streets of Tuzla and a night for survivors.” **Vive Zene, Bosnia Herzegovina**

“2022 was a difficult year for the care of torture victims ... armed conflict, Covid 19, jihadists. The remedy? Determination to stay with victims, to fight daily.” **Amis des Victimes des Violations des Droits Humains, DR Congo**

“Torture is used by ruling elites to create a culture of silence and impunity and so by our psych-social support and active listening we are working at the grass roots level of democracy to eliminate this discrimination.” **People’s Vigilance Committee on Human Rights, India**

“In our fight against impunity we give the government specific indicators on rehabilitation of torture survivors. In this way we try to ensure the Mexican State complies with the recommendations of the Committee Against Torture, as well as the new General Law Against Torture.” **Collective Against Torture and Impunity, Mexico**

“We appreciate the dedication of our staff and volunteers without who we would not have been able to expand our services. We stand with the resilience of the survivors and admire their capacity to share their experiences to inspire others. We invite you to support these brave people and stand against torture.” **Trauma Centre, Cameroon**

“We treat mainly survivors from torture by police officers, and we offer medical, psychosocial and legal services. We would like to thank the IRTC for its support to our 26 years of campaigning against torture.” **Mwatikho Torture Survivors Foundation, Kenya**

“We do a clients day to celebrate their resilience through healing activities that allow clients to express themselves to promote a sense of community to know they are not alone. Also an ice cream social for the community here in San Diego.” **Survivors of Torture International, US**

“Now with the Ukraine crisis we are visiting many shelters and meeting mothers fleeing with their children. They show us photos of the bombings, of their hiding places. They ask about changes concerning their child. We meet children here without their parents, and these show signs of trauma, but also signs of strength.” **Cordelia Foundation, Hungary**

“We are having a discussion with survivors about advocating for their rights and dignity and well-being. We take the day as an opportunity to express solidarity with survivors and their families and to reaffirm the need for a global commitment to rehabilitate all victims of such abuse.” **Transcultural Psychosocial Organisation, Nepal**
7.3 #TogetherWeCanEndTorture

Under a hash tag promoting unity among divergent actors, IRCT Communications produced products and strategies towards achieving the goal of making IRCT a strong organisation in which members see themselves represented, their work showcased for international audiences, and have opportunities to learn about each other’s work and grow in solidarity. Externally, Communications aimed at making IRCT a preferred partner to other organisations and donors in the anti-torture ecosystem.

All New Website: At the forefront of Communications in 2022 was the development of a completely re-written, re-designed website to reflect IRCT’s 2022-2025 Strategy and support the achievement of its Goals. Thus, the new website not only outlines the two key Goals of Healing and Justice at the heart of the Strategy, but also the thematic projects IRCT members and Secretariat are working on and the key resources IRCT and others have produced to support the fight against torture. Crucially, the website includes content from partner organisations in the anti-torture ecosystem, such as APT’s Mendez Principles for Effective Interviewing and links to OMCT’s country pages. This is done in pursuit of increasing the reach and impact of the work done by all key players in the anti-torture sector, rather than competing over resources and audiences.

Videos Series: Launched in 2021 order to strengthen the IRCT’s sense of collective membership, and to introduce members to each other and our key stakeholders, the video series Meet Our Members continued to showcase the people behind the acronyms, highlighting the very different contexts in which our members work. In 2022, members in Palestine, Chad, Mexico, Ukraine and Canada told the story of their centres. Similarly, in order to promote the experiences and best-practice of our members to each other, and to our current and potential partners, the IRCT Insights series continued, with six new films through 2022.

“Torture is increasing in Chad every day, but it is a country forgotten by the international community,” says Nodjigoto Charbonnel, winner of Norway’s prestigious Rafto Prize 2022 for human rights, and founder of IRCT member Association Jeunesse pour la Paix et la Non-Violence (AJPNV). Poor and arid, but rich in oil and gold, the vast central African nation of Chad has been plagued by civil wars and military coups since independence from France in 1960. In late October 2022, human rights groups reported security forces loyal to military coup leader General Mahamat Deby killed and tortured protesters demanding a return to civilian rule. Amid a violent crackdown on dissent, AJPNV is one of a handful of civil society organisations working to promote human rights in Chad. Charbonnel, whose own father was tortured by former military dictator Hissene Habre and who has been to prison himself three times for his human rights work, believes youth hold the key to a brighter future for Chad. “The mission of our organisation is to use youth for building peace, because the politicians in charge are using youth to fight, they are using youth to destroy, they are using youth to kill, as child soldiers. And we at the AJPNV, we think that we can use youth to promote peace, to promote democracy, to promote human rights and to promote non-violence.”
SoMe Advocacy: For good or ill (and often it’s both), social media has become the essential public marketplace for ideas and influence. As such, the global fight against torture cannot afford not to be pushing forward its agenda. But amid a public discourse increasingly characterised by emotive opinions, IRCT’s SoMe Communications adopts a few key practices: We speak (or Tweet) when our members, partners or experts have something to say; we share first-hand evidence or expert contributions on issues we have thematic expertise; we maintain professional best-practice journalism standards in all written and audio-visual communications; and we share information that invites our audiences to think, and enables them to act.

Credibility, consistency and great story-telling are the pillars of IRCT’s Communication strategy. A selection of SoMe interventions in 2022 included: supporting IRCT advocacy priorities through public statements, inviting our audiences to think, and enabling them to act.

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Online Audience:
Efforts were made, within time and resource constraints, to grow IRCT’s online audience, in order to promote the relevance of our members’ work to donors, partners and to as wide a public audience as possible. There were some significant increases. Followers on LinkedIn, the leading social media platform for professionals and thus an important forum for IRCT’s content, grew from 2,295 in January to 4,009 by end year with an average of 1,000 page views per month. Twitter followers grew from 3,467 to 3,752 by end year, with a total of 51,537 visits to our Twitter page over the year, or just under 4,300 per month. IRCT’s Facebook page has 25,000 followers and a page reach of 25,000 followers, and a page reach of 51,537 visits to our Twitter page over the year, or just under 4,300 per month. IRCT’s Facebook page has 25,000 followers and a page reach of 25,000 followers, and a page reach of 25,000 followers.

Looking forward...
The anti-torture sector is significantly underfunded, which has long driven competition between actors for the attention of donors. Substantive intentional collaboration, instead of competition, between IRCT and its five key anti-torture partners (APT, Redress, FIACAT, OMCT and Omega Foundation) resulted in an invitation to a negotiated procedure with the EU on a global anti-torture grant. The IRCT also actively collaborates with its members in Denmark (Dignity, RCT Jutland, Oasis) through regular visits, meetings, sharing of Communications content, planning of monitoring visits to shared foreign partners and coordination on 26 June activities, as well as in the International Accountability Platform for Belarus (IAPB).

Turkey: #FreeSebnem Campaign
Our largest social media campaign in 2022, was co-leading a campaign to free Sebnem Fincanci, an IRCT Council member, head of the Turkish Medical Association and torture survivor who was on trial for bogus charges of supporting terrorism after calling for an investigation into allegations of Turkey using chemical weapons against the Kurdish population. IRCT support consisted of a combination of public statements, letter writing and trial observation missions. All statements can be found at www.irct.org/Turkey and through the Twitter tag #FreeSebnem. IRCT participated in trial observation mission on 23 December 2022 in Istanbul and in the press conferences held at the Istanbul branch of the Turkish Medical Association on 22-23 December 2022. Dr Fincanci was finally released on 14 January 2023.

Partnering for Progress
A key goal of IRCT’s current Strategy is to increase the number of organisations and institutions involved in the fight against torture at the international level with whom the IRCT actively collaborates. We aimed to get to 40 by end of 2024, but with 37 partners in 2022 we can hope to get well past the target. Highlights this year included IRCT participation in the Nordic Mental Health Conference at the invitation of Danish Red Cross and Save the Children due to global interest in our Global Standards on Rehabilitation. We also participated in the Council of the Danish Institute for Human Rights (DIHR) to make our expertise available to the work of the DIHR. IRCT continued its strong collaboration with Human Rights Watch in more than 10 countries on substantiating allegations of torture through the forensic expertise of IFEG. And our partnerships with Amnesty and Omega Foundation grew stronger through work on a joint statement calling for a ban on trade in inherently abusive police equipment that results in torture and ill treatment, most often during protests.
8. Finances

For the period 1 January to 31 December 2022, the IRCT had a positive result of 4.6t EUR. Income totals 2,213t EUR, covering expenditure of 2,209t EUR. With this surplus, IRCT was able to grow the reserve to 371t EUR.

The main variances to the results of 2021 are due to the increase of sub-granting to members and the support due to the war in Ukraine. At the same time, IRCT continued to have a high level of online support and engagement with the membership. A series of successful webinars was held with high global participation. The shift to digital methodologies continued and kept the travelling costs relatively low, whilst still maintaining trainings, strategic meetings and interventions with partner countries and other stakeholders in a mix of virtual and physical events.

Common costs decreased partly due to the lower renting costs after the move of the IRCT Secretariat in Copenhagen. The new office and hybrid working modality set-up have resulted in reduced related costs in 2022. Other costs related to administration have increased slightly mainly due to the high inflation.

IRCT was successful in getting one additional donor and diversifying the IRCT funding base again in 2022. Via member CVT, IRCT became part of a USAID grant which supports IRCT’s work on webinars and E-learning around the Global Standards for Rehabilitation. The grant is for two years and is expected to be extended for another two years. Furthermore, Sigrid Rausing Trust and Be Thou My Vision have continued their great core support in their current granting cycles.

IRCT maintained a focus on supporting the membership with subgrants during and after the COVID-19 period but is now focusing on the goals of the Strategy 2022-2025. Several subgrants were issued thanks to the support from donors. IRCT also received a generous grant from the Sigrid Rausing Trust to help centers that were and still are affected by the war in Ukraine.

The collaboration with the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs continued for one project in 2022. Furthermore, the grant from Novo Nordisk Foundation that was issued to support mental health and psychosocial support work in Lebanon finished during the year. A number of other foundations also contributed to the work of IRCT during the year.

IRCT members continued providing funding to the organisation through membership contributions. More than 70% of the members contributed a total of almost 60t EUR. The funds were allocated to the new emergency grant scheme for members in crisis situations and for the Torture Journal.

Also, during 2022 outreach for individual donations was maintained, securing the required threshold of one hundred individual donations to maintain charity status in Denmark.

### IRCT Financial Results 2022

#### Income statement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2022 (EUR)</th>
<th>2021 (EUR)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unrestricted grants</td>
<td>446,868</td>
<td>1,369,378</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restricted grants</td>
<td>1,766,428</td>
<td>353,614</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultancies income</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other income</td>
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<td><strong>Total Income</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Total Expenses</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Profit/loss for the year</strong></td>
<td><strong>4,647</strong></td>
<td><strong>55,950</strong></td>
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</table>

#### Equity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Core capital</th>
<th>Restricted funds</th>
<th>Retained earnings</th>
<th>In total (EUR)</th>
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<td>6,487</td>
<td>371,487</td>
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### Income

**UNRESTRICTED GRANTS:**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>2022 (EUR)</th>
<th>2021 (EUR)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National governments</td>
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<tr>
<td>Denmark: Ministry of Foreign Affairs</td>
<td>79,159</td>
<td>1,115,709</td>
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<tr>
<td>Denmark: Ministry of Foreign Affairs &quot;Strategy&quot;</td>
<td>1,130,844</td>
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<td>Denmark: Ministry of Foreign Affairs &quot;Digital Resilience&quot;</td>
<td>58,902</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Denmark: Ministry of Foreign Affairs &quot;Subgrants&quot;</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>104,379</td>
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<tr>
<td>Denmark: Ministry of Culture</td>
<td>8,343</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Swiss: Ministry of Foreign Affairs &quot;Global Indicator&quot;</td>
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<td>37,860</td>
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<tr>
<td>Swiss: Ministry of Foreign Affairs &quot;Belarus&quot;</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13,807</td>
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<td>Multilateral institutions</td>
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<tr>
<td>European Commission</td>
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<td>5,704</td>
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<tr>
<td>CBSS: “Country Based Support Scheme”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other (Organisations and Individuals)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sigrid Rausing Trust: &quot;Ukraine Response&quot; &amp; &quot;COVID-19&quot;</td>
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<td>19,992</td>
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<tr>
<td>USAID: &quot;eLearning&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Be Thou My Vision Foundation: &quot;Livelihood&quot;</td>
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<td>Novo Nordisk Fonden: &quot;Humanitarian Support&quot;</td>
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<td>21,009</td>
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<td>8,589</td>
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<tr>
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<td>20,000</td>
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<td>Membership contributions: &quot;Global Indicator&quot;</td>
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<td>20,552</td>
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<tr>
<td>Convention Against Torture Initiative</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anti-Torture Support Foundation</td>
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<td><strong>353,614</strong></td>
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### Expenditure 2022

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Note 3: Healing</th>
<th>Members</th>
<th>Salary</th>
<th>Non-Salary</th>
<th>Support</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Global Rehabilitation Capacity</td>
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<td>97,742</td>
<td>216,427</td>
<td>75,988</td>
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<tr>
<td>Livelihoods</td>
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<td>43,422</td>
<td>18,189</td>
<td>11,763</td>
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<tr>
<td>Survivor Engagement</td>
<td>66,796</td>
<td>53,624</td>
<td>6,610</td>
<td>22,540</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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<td><strong>194,788</strong></td>
<td><strong>241,226</strong></td>
<td><strong>110,291</strong></td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Note 4: Justice</th>
<th>Members</th>
<th>Salary</th>
<th>Non-Salary</th>
<th>Support</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Torture Exposed</td>
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<td>61,269</td>
<td>159,736</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strengthening Laws and Policies</td>
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<td>34,407</td>
<td>122,324</td>
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<td>Impactful Advocacy</td>
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<td>50,698</td>
<td>24,420</td>
<td>26,648</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>104,541</strong></td>
<td><strong>146,374</strong></td>
<td><strong>306,480</strong></td>
<td><strong>120,380</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Note 5: Organisational Development</th>
<th>Members</th>
<th>Salary</th>
<th>Non-Salary</th>
<th>Support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strong Organisation</td>
<td>36,189</td>
<td>110,587</td>
<td>173,407</td>
<td>131,155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total from Notes 3, 4 and 5</strong></td>
<td><strong>674,063</strong></td>
<td><strong>451,749</strong></td>
<td><strong>721,113</strong></td>
<td><strong>361,826</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Direct Support Costs (by category)</th>
<th>Members</th>
<th>Salary</th>
<th>Non-Salary</th>
<th>Support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>674,063</strong></td>
<td><strong>613,381</strong></td>
<td><strong>921,307</strong></td>
<td><strong>0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
9. Our Donors

- Special thanks for the extraordinary contribution to Torture Journal from our members in Australia, STARTTS and OSSTT, in the Netherlands, PTC-ZN, and in the US CVT/USAID.
- Thank you to all our private supporters.
- Thank you to all IRCT members who have contributed financially in 2022.
- Thank you to everyone who contributed their work pro bono.

10. Democratic Structure

Governance

The democratic base of the IRCT’s governance is the General Assembly, which decides the policy and strategy of the organisation. Each member has one delegate and one voice at the General Assembly. It is the forum through which members facilitate and advance their joint global work in the fight against torture. The General Assembly meets every three years, online or in person (and more frequently if relevant) and elects the Council.

The Council provides regional and thematic input to IRCT’s Strategy. It holds annual online meetings to monitor and further the progress of IRCT’s work at the global level and in the regions. The Council comprises 19 members: 14 representatives from the member organisations, of which seven form the Executive Committee and seven act as regional representatives; in addition, five thematic advisors provide input in key areas such as communication, research and resources.

The Executive Committee is the board of the IRCT. It ensures the overall direction, compliance and accountability of the organisation and appoints the Secretary General. The Executive Committee comprises seven members, one from each region, including President and Vice-President, who are elected by and from among the Council members. The Executive Committee meets online a minimum of three times per year, but usually once per month.

Finally, the Secretariat, based in Copenhagen, Denmark, with a liaison office in Brussels, Belgium, coordinates and directs membership engagement for achieving our strategic goals and leads the organisation's global anti-torture advocacy efforts. This includes coordinating global actions and learning exchanges, providing legal and advocacy expertise to members, intervening in strategic cases and policy processes, and advocating to increase the resources and funding available to members, the Secretariat, and others in the sector.

Members

Every IRCT member provides rehabilitation to torture survivors and conducts advocacy against torture. Through the IRCT network, members exchange knowledge and experience and provide support to each other, especially in the face of political attack due to their human rights work. In particular, members develop and share new rehabilitation techniques; explore solutions to similar challenges with others from around the globe; and collect data and documentation to strengthen national and international reporting and advocacy efforts. Not least, they contribute with member fees to support the network.

Advisory Boards

The work of the IRCT Secretariat is supported by a network of esteemed health, legal and human rights experts who contribute their time pro bono to advise and support our approaches and activities. These experts sit on IRCT advisory boards and help to strengthen our work in the areas of communications, compliance, health, research, and resources.
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Ms Lela Tsiskarishvili
IRCT President Executive Director, GCRT, Georgia

Mr Cristian Urbalejo
IRCT Vice President Executive co-coordinator, CCTI, Mexico

Ms Kathi Anderson
Executive Committee Member

Mr Khader Rasras
Clinical Psychologist, TRC, Palestine

Ms Robyn Smythe
Director, STTARS, Australia

Mr Peter Kum Che Mebeng
Executive Director, The Trauma Centre, Cameroon

Ms Khalida Salimi OBE,
Founder, SACH - Struggle for Change

COUNCIL

Elected by the Asia Region:

Mr Suraj Koirala
Regional representative, Technical Advisor, TPO, Nepal

Ms Khalida Salimi
Pakistan ExCom Member, Founder, SACH - Struggle for Change

Elected by the Europe Region:

Mr Metin Bakkalci
Regional representative, Secretary General, HRFT, Turkey

Ms Lela Tsiskarishvili
Executive Committee

Elected by the Latin America and the Caribbean Region:

Ms Angelina Ospina
Regional Representative Director, CAPS, Colombia

Mr Cristian Urbalejo Luna
Executive Committee

Elected by the Middle East and North Africa Region:

Ms Suzanne Jabbour
Regional Representative Chief Executive Officer, RE-SART, Lebanon

Mr Khader Rasras
Executive Committee

Elected by the North America Region:

Ms Lina Piwowarczyk
Regional Representative Director, Boston Center For Refugee Health And Human Rights, United States

Ms Kathi Anderson
Executive Committee

Elected by the Pacific Region:

Mr Jorge Aroche
Regional Representative CEO, STARTTS, Australia

Ms Robyn Smythe
Executive Committee

Elected by the Sub-Saharan Africa Region:

Mr Taiga Wanyanja
Regional Representative Counsellor and Coordinator, Mwatikho Torture Survivors, Kenya

Mr Peter Kum Che Mebeng
Executive Committee

ADVISORY BOARD CONVENERS:

Ms Hana Hamzeh
Communications

Mr Pradeep Agrawal
Compliance

Mr Michael Brune
Health

Ms Sebnem Korur Fincanci
Research

Ms Mihiri Ferdinando
Resources and Sustainability

Members list

Asia (20)

Bangladesh
Centre for Rehabilitation of Torture Survivors (CRTS)

Cambodia
Transcultural Psychosocial Organisation (TPO)

China
Justice Centre Hong Kong

India
Jan Mitra Nyas/Peoples' Vigilance Committee on Human Rights (PVCHR)

Shubhodaya Center for Rehabilitation of Victims of Torture and Violence (SOSRAC)

Tibetan Torture Survivors Program (TTSP)

Vasavya Rehabilitation Centre for Torture Victims (VRCT)

Indonesia
Alliance of Democracy for Papua (ALDP)

Rehabilitation Action for Torture Victims in Aceh (RATA)

Pakistan
Human Development Organisation (HDO)

Struggle for Change (SACH)

Philippines
Balay Rehabilitation Centre (BALAY)

Medical Action Group (MAG)

Republic of Korea
Gwangju Trauma Centre

Kim Keun-Tae Memorial Healing Centre (KMHC)

Sri Lanka
Family Rehabilitation Centre (FRC)

Right to Life Human Rights (R2L)

Europe (54)

Albania
Albanian Rehabilitation Centre for Trauma and Torture Victims (ARCT)

Austria
Hemayat - Support centre for survivors of torture and war (HEMAYAT)

Intercultural Centre for Counselling and Psychotherapy (ZEBRA)

Malaysia
Health Equity Initiatives (HEI)

Nepal
Centre for Victims of Torture (CVICT)

Transcultural Psychosocial Organisation Nepal (TPO)
Bosnia and Herzegovina
The Association of Concentration Camp Detainees in Bosnia and Herzegovina (SLUBIH)
Vive Zene Centre for Therapy and Rehabilitation (VIVE ZENE)

Croatia
Rehabilitation Centre for Stress and Trauma Zagreb (RCT Zagreb)

Cyprus
Cyprus Refugee Council (CyRC)

Denmark
Dignity - The Danish Institute Against Torture (DIGNITY)
Oasis - Treatment and Counselling for Refugees (OASIS)
Rehabilitation Centre for Torture Victims – Jutland (RCT JUTLAND)

Finland
Centre for Psychotraumatology

France
Parcours d’Exil - Medical and Psychological Rehabilitation for Torture Victims (PARCOURS)

Georgia
Georgian Centre for Psychosocial and Medical Rehabilitation of Torture Victims (GCRT)

Germany
Medical Service for Refugees Bochum (MFH Bochum)
PSZ Düsseldorf (PSZ)
Zentrum Überleben

Hungary
Cordelia Foundation for the Rehabilitation of Torture Victims (CORDELIA)

Ireland
Spirasi The Centre for the Care of Survivors of Torture (SPIRASI)

Israel
Aid Organisation for Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Israel (ASSAF)

Italy
Doctors Against Torture Humanitarian Organisation (MCT)
NAGA-HAR Centre for Asylum Seekers, Refugees and Torture Victims (NAGA-HAR)

Kosovo
The Kosovo Rehabilitation Centre for Torture Victims (KRCT)

Kyrgyzstan
Golos Svobody Public Foundation

Moldova
Rehabilitation Centre for Torture Victims Memoria (RCTV Memoria)

Netherlands
Centrum 45
De Evenaar, Centrum voor Transculturele Psychiatrie Noord Nederland
Psychotrauma Centrum Zuid Nederland (PTC ZN)

Poland
The Centre for Victims of Political Persecution (CVPP)

Romania
ICAR Foundation - Medical Rehabilitation Centre for Torture Victims Bucharest (ICAR)
Medical Rehabilitation Centre Craiova Foundation (MRC)

Russia
Crew Against Torture (CAT)

Serbia
International Aid Network, IAN, Centre for Rehabilitation of Torture Victims (IAN CRTV)

Spain
Comisión Espanola de Ayuda al Refugiado (CEAR)
Sira

Sweden
RKC Göteborg
RKC Malmö
RKC Skövde
RKC Stockholm
RKC Uppsala

Switzerland
Consultation for Victims of Torture and War (CTG)
Outpatient Clinic for the Victims of Torture and War Zürich (AFK)
SRC Centre for Migration and Health/Out-patient Clinic for Victims of Torture and War (SRC)

Tajikistan
No Torture TJ

Turkey
Foundation for Social and Legal Studies (TOHAV)
Human Rights Foundation Turkey- Ankara (HRFT Ankara)
Human Rights Foundation Turkey- Diyarbakir (HRFT Diyarbakir)

Ukraine
International Medical Rehabilitation Centre for the Victims of Wars and Totalitarian Regimes (IRC)

United Kingdom
Freedom from Torture (FFT)
Room to Heal

Latin America (11)

Argentina
Argentine Team of Psychosocial Work and Research (EATIP)

Bolivia
Institute of Therapy and Research about Sequelae of Torture and State Violence (ITEI)

Chile
Centre for Mental Health and Human Rights (CINTRAS)

Colombia
Centre of Psychological Assistance Corporation (CAPS)

Ecuador
Foundation for Integral Rehabilitation of Violence (PRIVA)

Guatemala
Asociacion Equipo de Estudios Comunitarios y Accion Psicosocial (ECAP)
Human Rights Office of the Archbishop of Guatemala (ODHAG)
Honduras
Prevention, Treatment and Rehabilitation Centre for Survivors of Torture and Relatives (CPTRT)

Mexico
Collective Against Torture and Impunity (CCTI)
Mexican Commission for the Defence and Promotion of Human Rights (CMDPDH)

Peru
Centro de Atencion Psycosocial (CAPS)

Middle East and North Africa (15)

Egypt
El Nadeem Centre for Psychological Management and Rehabilitation of Victims of Violence

Iraq
Bahjat Al-Fuad Rehabilitation of Medical and Psychological Centre for Torture Victims (BFRCT)

Jordan
Jyian Foundation for Human Rights

Wihan Organisation for Victims of Human Rights Violations - Trauma Rehabilitation and Training Centre

Lebanon
Association for Services to Torture and Trauma Survivors (ASETTS)

Syria
Dar Al Shifa Rehabilitation Centre (DARSHAFE)

Lebanese Centre for Human Rights (CLDH)

Morocco
Medical Association of Rehabilitation of Victims of Torture (AMRVT)

Palestine
Gaza Community Mental Health Programme (GCMHP)
Treatment and Rehabilitation Centre for Victims of Torture (TRC)

Sudan
Amel Centre for Treatment and Rehabilitation of Victims of Torture (ACTRVY)

Tunisia
The Tunisian Rehabilitation Institute for Survivors of Torture Survivors (NEBRAS)

North America (23)

Canada
Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture (CCVT)

Intervention Network for Persons Having Been Subjected to Organised Violence (RIVO)

Vancouver Association for Survivors of Torture (VAST)

United States
Access - Psychosocial Rehabilitation Centre for Victims of Torture (APRCVT)

Bellevue - NYU Programme for Survivors of Torture (PSOT)

Bilingual International Assistant Services (BIAS)

Boston Centre for Refugee Health and Human Rights (BCRHR)

Centre for Survivors of Torture, Dallas (CST)

Centre for Survivors of Torture, San José (AACHI/CST)

De Novo Centre for Justice and Healing (DENOVO)

Florida Centre for Survivors of Torture (FCST/JSF)

Heartland Alliance Marjorie Kovler Centre

Libertas Centre for Human Rights

Mount Sinai Human Rights Programme (MSHRP)

Programme for Survivors of Torture and Trauma at the Multicultural Centre of Northern Virginia Family Service (PSTT)

Program for Torture Victims of Los Angeles (PTVLA)

Survivors of Torture International

The Centre for Victims of Torture (CVT)

Torture Abolition and Survivors Support Coalition, International (TASSC)

Torture Treatment Centre of Oregon (TTCO)

UC San Francisco Trauma Recovery Centre (TRC - UCSF)

Utah Health and Human Rights (UHHR)

Western New York Centre for Survivors of Torture (WNYCST)

Sub Saharan Africa (26)

Burundi
Solidarité d’Action pour la Paix - Grand Lacs (SAP-GL)

Cameroon
African Development Association Rescue Mission Africa (ADAS)

Trauma Centre Cameroon (TCC)

Chad
Association Jeunesse Pour la Paix et la Non Violence (AJPNY)

Democratic Republic of Congo
Amis des Victimes des Violations des Droits Humains (AVVDH)

Fédération des Femmes pour le Développement Intégral au Congo (FEDICONGO)

Regroupement des Mamans de Kamituga (REMAK)

Phoenix Centre - Support Service for Survivors of Torture and Trauma

Queensland Program of Assistance to Survivors of Torture and Trauma (QPASTT)

Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors (STARTTS)

Survivors of Torture and Trauma Assistance and Rehabilitation Service (STTARS)

The Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture - Foundation House (VFST)

New Zealand
Refugee Trauma Recovery, New Zealand Red Cross (RTR)

Refugees as Survivors New Zealand (RASNZ)

Pacific (11)

Australia
Association for Services to Torture and Trauma Survivors (ASETTS)

Companion House Assisting Survivors of Torture and Trauma

Melaleuca Australia - Refugee Centre, Torture and Trauma Survivor Service

Overseas Services for Survivors of Torture and Trauma (OSSTT)

Phoenix Centre - Support Service for Survivors of Torture and Trauma

Queensland Program of Assistance to Survivors of Torture and Trauma (QPASTT)

Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors (STARTTS)

Survivors of Torture and Trauma Assistance and Rehabilitation Service (STTARS)

The Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture - Foundation House (VFST)

New Zealand
Refugee Trauma Recovery, New Zealand Red Cross (RTR)

Refugees as Survivors New Zealand (RASNZ)
12. Support the IRCT

When it comes to torture rehabilitation, sadly, demand always outstrips supply. IRCT members consistently report not having the financial resources necessary to treat all torture survivors who ask for help. By donating, even a small sum, you can assist us in the fight to eradicate torture and to provide the best possible rehabilitation to more survivors and their families.

**By Credit Card**
Please visit www.irct.org to make a donation using a credit card. All transactions are guaranteed safe and secure using the latest encryption to protect your personal information.

**By Mobile Pay**
(In Denmark)

![MobilePay QR Code](160865_IRCT)

**By Cheque**
Cheques made payable to International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims (IRCT) may be sent to:

International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims
Fælledvej 12,
Globalhagen House,
Building C, 2nd floor,
2200 Copenhagen N,
Denmark

**By Bank Transfer**

**Danske Bank**
Holmens Kanal Branch,
Holmens Kanal 2,
1090 Copenhagen K,
Denmark
SWIFT code: DABADKKK

**Danish Kroner (DKK) Account**
Registration No. 4183
Account No. 4310-821152
IBAN DKK0 3000 4310 8211 52

**Euro (EUR) Account**
Registration No. 4183
Account No. 3001-957171
IBAN DKK6 3000 3001 9571 71

**U.S. Dollars (USD) Account**
Registration No. 4183
Account No. 4310-005029
IBAN DKK8 3000 4310 0050 29

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**Solidarité avec des Victime et pour la Paix (SOVIP)**
Women and Children Protection (WCP)

**Ethiopia**
The Centre for Victims of Torture (CVT Ethiopia)

**Kenya**
Centre Against Torture Kenya Foundation (CAT)
Independent Medico Legal Unit (IMLU)

Mwatikho Torture Survivors Foundation (MATESOF)
The Centre for Victims of Torture (CVT Nairobi)

**Liberia**
Association of Psychosocial Services (LAPS)
Rescue Alternatives Liberia (RAL)

**Nigeria**
Prisoners’ Rehabilitation and Welfare Action (PRAWA)

**Rwanda**
Uyisenga Ni Imanzi (UNM)

**Senegal**
Centre Africain pour la Prévention et la Résolution des Conflits (CAPREC)

**Sierra Leone**
Community Association for Psychosocial Services (CAPS)

**South Africa**
Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR)
The Trauma Centre for Survivors of Violence and Torture (TCSVVT)