<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contents</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The Inextinguishable Light of Hope</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Highlights</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Global Impact Data</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Global Movement</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Healing</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Justice</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Stronger Together</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Finances</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Our Donors</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Democratic Structure</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Members List</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Support the IRCT</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Inextinguishable Light of Hope

“I was taken to a room of which I never knew the colour of the walls.” Manuel Rojas Boyan is a survivor of one of the darkest chapters in modern history. Confined underground in the pitch-black and tortured for his support of revolution against the military dictatorship of Bolivia in the 1970s, Manuel refused to give up the names of friends, and very nearly paid with his life. Tormented by the death of his mother as he knelt, hands bound behind his back, eating scraps off the filthy floor of his cell, Manuel came close to total despair. “You don’t know where you are, what you are. You lose all notion.” Yet one question, “The sun shines?” and a single word reply from his jailer (possibly only imagined), “Yes”, was enough to restore the light of hope in Manuel. “It was a way of showing myself that I was alive. The sun shines. To feel the brightness of the sun, the warmth of the sun, that brings me back to life.”

That light carried Manuel through a physical and mental ordeal which culminated in his eventual escape to Denmark. Here in Copenhagen, 50 years ago, Manuel was one of the first torture survivors to be supported through rehabilitation by Dr Inge Genefke, the founder of the IRCT, who showed empathy and tried to alleviate his pain. “The Sun Shines: Manuel’s Story” was published in early 2024 as a five-part documentary by the IRCT to mark half a century since Danish doctors joined Amnesty International to diagnose and treat torture survivors, in the birth of what is now the IRCT’s 164-member global anti-torture movement.

Manuel’s incredible and candid interview was a fitting tribute to Dr Inge’s pioneering work, and the resilience and inspiration survivors of torture demonstrate. So, too, in Manuel’s unforgettable image of the ray of hope, the light amid seemingly overwhelming darkness, stands a fitting and powerful symbol for the IRCT’s place in the world that was 2023.

The dark stains that blackened our common humanity this past year need little elaboration: From the torture dungeons of Russia’s occupation of Ukraine, to the appalling mass murder by Hamas and Israel’s genocidal assault on the Palestinians of Gaza, through the escalating human rights abuses in countries like Ethiopia, Sudan and Myanmar, to the brazen betrayals of the rules-based order by its former architects the US, UK, and EU.

And yet: From the floor of ‘Fragmentos’ - the counter monument to Colombia’s violent recent past where visitors walk on the melted weapons of the Civil War – a troupe of young performers rises up, members of ‘Movimiento en Resistencia Contra las Agresiones Oculares del Escuadrón Móvil Antidisturbios’ (MOCAO), rapping, dancing, continuing to protest the torture by police that left them blind in one eye, but with a collective vision for healing and justice in their country that is crystal clear.

“I would like to invite other people who are victims of human rights abuses, of eye injuries, to make their complaint. Don’t keep quiet on the issue for fear of a State that could repress, that could silence.” In 2023, MOCAO member Daniel Jaimes was one of 45 torture survivors from across Latin America to meet face-to-face with the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture in a first-of-its-kind ‘Hearing for Healing’ organised between the IRCT, our member Centro de Atencion Psicosocial Colombia, and the World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT).

And so: From a group of 32 women who survived sexual and other torture during the 1998 Kosovo War, and in 2023 came together in IRCT’s Survivor Engagement project at the Kosovo Rehabilitation Centre for Torture Victims (KRCT). It decided to testify about their experiences to the investigative unit of Kosovo’s police,
2023 Highlights

Global Impact Data

- **71,931** Total torture survivors treated
- **2%** LGBTI+ survivors treated
- **17,743** Legal supports, about 341 per week.
- **2,658** Partner organisations, about 16 partners for each member
- **47%** Survivors living in poverty
- **one in seven** Survivors report sexual or gender-based violence

---

Healing Highlights

GSR Regional Trainings

In 2023, for the first time in many years, regional meetings were held gathering together IRCT members from Asia and Latin America for three days of face-to-face discussions on best practices and challenges in their centres, and how to strengthen implementation of the Global Standards on Rehabilitation (GSR). Page 16

A Little Goes a Long Way

A new motorbike battery. A secure shelter for the goats. A tea shop where a widow can reconnect with her neighbours. In the far west of Nepal, where civil war left communities scarred and traumatised, TPO knows small supports for survivors' livelihoods can go a long way to better rehabilitation. Page 28

Survivors Heard

“...it is a great achievement to stand in front of the Rapporteur and be able to present your case,” said Osvaldo Rodriguez, one of 15 torture survivors from across Latin America who met with the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture, in Bogota, Colombia in November, the first of IRCT’s ground-breaking ‘Hearings for Healing’ aimed at ensuring survivors’ voices are central to the work of UN human rights mechanisms. Page 35
Justice Highlights

Philippines: ‘A Landmark Legal Victory’
Beaten, suffocated, drowned, sexually assaulted and set on fire by the Philippine Army’s Special Operation Task Force-Basilan, Abdul-Khan Ajid, a baker, was saved from despair by the support of Balay, while evidence of his torture was documented by MAG. Together, IRCT’s two members in the Philippines worked for 12 years to support Ajid, whose case resulted, in August 2023, in only the second-ever criminal conviction under the country’s Anti-Torture Act. Page 39

Reports to Recommendations
After a busy year of reporting and advocacy in Geneva and Brussels, 12 States received UN recommendations to improve their action against torture based on IRCT members’ specific national policy priorities. And in Uganda, ACTV showed just how powerful an advocacy tool those recommendations can be, training hundreds of members of Uganda’s army and police on the Torture Prohibition Act, the Committee Against Torture’s recommendations and investigating torture using the Istanbul Protocol. Page 45

Peru: Protect the Protest
In Peru, social protests in 2022 led by rural poor, indigenous Quechua-speakers were met with torture and extrajudicial killings. In 2023, IRCT trained 300 newly appointed human rights prosecutors from across the country and worked with the UN and the national investigation to evaluate evidence of the mass human rights violations. Page 53

Unity Highlights

United Against Torture
Launched on 26 June UN International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, and in a first of its kind, the IRCT joined with five of the world’s leading anti-torture organisations to create the United Against Torture Consortium (UATC) to strengthen and expand the anti-torture movement by pooling expertise in torture prevention, protection, rehabilitation and strategic litigation. Page 59

Israel/OPT: Solidarity and Support
Quick to condemn the appalling Hamas-led killings that devastated Israel on October 7, and offer solidarity for our member in Israel, IRCT then focused on providing emergency grants and raising the public and private profiles of our two members in Gaza and the West Bank, as they drew on decades of experience living through Israel’s wars and occupation to continue to provide life-saving rehabilitation for survivors of torture and other serious trauma, expertise that will be needed for generations to come, if and when the bombs at last fall silent. Page 62

Strong Organisation, Inside and Out
Our General Assembly elected not only new Council members, a President and ExCom, but also approved the IRCT’s first Survivor Advisory Board, to ensure our global movement utilises the experiences of torture survivors in all that we do. Authentic, engaging content, driven by the voices of survivors and the specialists who support them, was at the heart of IRCT Communication’s growing public audience. Page 66
**Global Impact Data 2023**

### Torture Survivors Treated

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Survivors Treated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>North America</td>
<td>5,099</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>7,804</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin America</td>
<td>1,380</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>12,104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-Saharan Africa</td>
<td>8,997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle East and North Africa</td>
<td>11,299</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific</td>
<td>25,248</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total: 71,931

2022: 61,823
2021: 60,181
2020: 53,379
2019: 57,603

### Poverty Rate

**2022:** 25,665, 42%  
**2021:** 26,663, 44%  
**2020:** 27,829, 52%

33,807 47% of the torture survivors live in poverty according to national standards

### Sex

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2022</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2021</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### LGBTI+

1,841 Survivors treated in 2023 self-identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex or non-binary.

- **2022:** 1,531 / **2021:** 1,841;  
- **2020:** 1,186 / **2019:** 2,104

### Sexual or Gender-Based Violence

10,710

- **2022:** 8,744 / **2021:** 9,442;  
- **2020:** 9,427 / **2019:** 10,935

### Legal Support

17,743 Supported to trial, or other psychosocial support, administrative or legal support or medico-legal evaluation.

- **2022:** 12,751 / **2021:** 11,487;  
- **2020:** 11,420 / **2019:** 13,686

### Advocacy Activities

19,858 Cases, meetings, conferences, and trainings.

- **2022:** 5,850 / **2021:** 7,213;  
- **2020:** 11,905 / **2019:** 11,015

### Response Rate

**65%**

- **2022:** 75% / **2021:** 82%;  
- **2020:** 88% / **2019:** 90%

### Survivor Engagement

61 Members (59%) said they have survivors in decision-making roles such as managerial roles, advisory boards, hiring panels, or executive committees.

- **2022:** 58, 45% 

### Partnerships

2,658 Organisations members worked with in 2023 in relation to anti-torture work, including both State and civil society organisations.

- **2022:** 3,521 / **2021:** 3,456;  
- **2020:** 2,993 / **2019:** 3,546
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 164 organisations in 76 countries, with over 4,000 staff, backed by a Secretariat in Copenhagen and an office in Brussels. Each year, we collectively support more than 70,000 torture survivors to rebuild their lives and engage in over 12,000 advocacy interventions to promote justice and reparations for victims, and to try to end torture.

Who We Are

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, they deserve and are entitled to.

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.

164 organisations in 76 countries

More than 70,000 survivors treated in 2023
5. Healing

5.1 Improved Rehabilitation Capacity

All 164 IRCT members around the world work to fulfil the human right of torture 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 rehabilitation programmes. Yet systemic underfunding and the continuation of torture practices mean current needs far outstrip the human and financial resources available to our members. Despite these limits, 2023 was a pivotal year in overcoming some of these limits to improved rehabilitation by upgrading standards and expertise within our existing capacity: Well over half IRCT members are now certified in our best-practice rehabilitation standards, and two regional trainings brought together over 50 participants from 22 member centres to exchange experiences in improving rehabilitation capacity.

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 for ensuring survivors of torture can receive the best possible rehabilitation wherever they live. Developed 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.

To train members on the GSR, and thereby improve rehabilitation capacity, IRCT developed an online curriculum, a series of multiple-choice problem questions that test users’ understanding of the 17 best practice standards and some of the ethical dilemmas they may face when implementing them. Once users have successfully answered all questions, they are issued with a GSR certificate.

In 2023, we exceeded our overall target for GSR certification, with 174 participants from 89 IRCT members having now completed the e-course. Even more satisfying, an average of 88% of respondents found the GSR e-course to be useful or very useful to their daily practice, again exceeding our target, and the huge majority (85%) said they were now confident about knowledge and understanding of the Global Standards on Rehabilitation.

There was good participation across all six of IRCT’s regions: About half of members in Europe, North America and Sub Sharan Africa completed the course; nearly all members from Latin America; and about a third of members in Asia, Middle East and North Africa, and the Pacific.

Feedback on GSR E-Course

39% reported feeling very confident with the GSR after completing the e-course
46% reported feeling confident
64% reported the e-course as being very useful for reflecting on the practice of the GSR in their centres
23% found the e-course useful
To support implementation of the GSR, in 2023 the IRCT Health Advisory Board published a GSR Practice Guide in four languages. The Guide contains indicators for work methodologies that should be in place to support implementation of each of the GSR standards. Recognising that IRCT members operate in different contexts, the Guide does not demand all centres take the same actions. Rather, the indicators provide a framework for centres to develop actions to implement the GSR according to their specific needs, context and existing funding.

“The goal is to support member centres with the continuous improvement of the quality and effectiveness of their services.”

— Merissa Van Der Linden, CEO, ASeTTS, Australia, and member of the Health Advisory Board.

5.1.2 Regional Trainings on GSR

In 2023, for the first time in many years, regional meetings were held gathering together IRCT members from Asia and Latin America for three days of face-to-face discussions on best practices and challenges in their centres and how to strengthen implementation of the Global Standards on Rehabilitation (GSR).

In May, members of the IRCT Secretariat flew to Manila, Philippines to meet their colleagues from Medical Action Group (MAG) and Balay, co-hosts of the Asia regional meeting. Thanks to generous donor funding, principally from USAID, channelled to the Secretariat by IRCT member CVT in America, nine of IRCT’s 20 Asia members were supported to travel from Pakistan, India, Nepal, South Korea, Indonesia, Hong Kong, Malaysia, and Sri Lanka, plus a member of IRCT’s Health Advisory Board from Australia.

It was agreed with members beforehand to focus on those of the 17 GSR found to be most significant and challenging. Some members presented their own experience with the standard, prompting a wider discussion among peers.

“The course has been of great use to us because it fills our knowledge gaps and also opens new horizons for us.”

— VAINQUEUR KALAFULA, President, Remak, DR Congo

Members in Manila

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

Balay Rehabilitation Centre (BALAY) Philippines

Family Rehabilitation Centre (FRC) Sri Lanka

Health Equity Initiatives (HEI), Malaysia

Human Development Organisation (HDO) Pakistan

Jan Mitra Nyas/People’s Vigilance Committee on Human Rights (PVCHR) India

Justice Centre Hong Kong China

Kim Keun-Tae Memorial Healing Centre (KMHC) Republic of Korea

Medical Action Group (MAG) Philippines

Struggle for Change (SACH) Pakistan

Vasavaya Rehabilitation Centre for Torture Victims (VRCT), India

GSR 9: VICTIMS’ PARTICIPATION

Joseline Pasana, Balay, Philippines

“We supported a group of former political detainees tortured during their incarceration. We provided psychosocial support while they were still in jail. Then after they were released, we were able to organise them. We asked them what they wanted to do after their release. They wanted to have this group wherein they could share their thoughts and emotions with those who share the same sentiments with them. It has paved the way to strengthen or improve camaraderie, strengthen their support system and help them in their healing process.”

GSR 13: KNOWLEDGE SHARING

Lenin Raghuvanshi, PVCHR, India

“One of the most important things: Life is art, not a science. Society is so divided in our part of India. So you need to understand everybody has their own art. Our organisation is very diverse. It’s established by upper caste, but with more than 90% non-upper caste staff, and in the management 98%. So in that way we also create some tools for how to understand each other, how to have diverse understanding.”
“My staff development plan is so long and complicated and every month it’s reviewed and changed because somebody’s moved or there’s somebody new. And each one of us, I’m sure, has got something similar going on. How do we make that a priority compared to something else? So I think part of the message is how do we do some of this together? Obviously we have to take context into account, but how do we start pooling our resources and our knowledge and skills? Because there’s a lot of skills in the IRCT.”

“Some friends often ask me why I still work in my centre because it’s small compared with other institutions. I can now tell them I work there for three reasons: For my victims, for my society, and now from this seminar for all the good people there are here under the same umbrella of IRCT. So with these good people and activists I can imagine the world free from torture.”

"What we do at VMM depends on the different indicators we use. One is qualitative and one is quantitative. Suppose we do livelihoods with regard to the survivor’s resilience, confidence level and crisis management in their life. Then they become a person who can tell their own story to others to motivate them or make others also talk about all those things. Or, regarding the economic aspect, as we say about quality of life, we look at improvement in their finances. If they had a lot of debt, have they been able to clear it, are they able to send the children to school and to build a house? These things may seem materialistic, but these are basic conditions for a human being, as a right of our constitution. So we measure both quantitative and qualitative.”

During the regional training in Manila, Balay and MAG organised an event to endorse the implementation of the Philippines Anti-Torture Law and a comprehensive rehabilitation program for survivors. Meeting with government officials, UN human rights monitors and other stakeholders at the National Commission on Human Rights, IRCT Secretary General Lisa Henry presented the GSR as a model for the development of the national rehabilitation plan.

Later in the year, IRCT co-hosted with our member CAPS Colombia a training in Bogota for Latin American members, totalling 24 participants from all 11 members in the region. The content was similar to Manila, building on learnings to improve the overall effectiveness of the training. Participants decided they wanted more of a plenary format in which they could openly discuss each one of the topics, as opposed to some members preparing presentations. As with training in the Philippines, the sessions were filmed and from which a series of videos on key GSR experiences and insights will be developed and published in 2024.

**Members in Bogota**

- Argentine Team of Psychosocial Work and Research (EATIP), Argentina
- Institute of Therapy and Research about Sequelae of Torture and State Violence (ITEU), Bolivia
- Centre for Mental Health and Human Rights (CINTRAS), Chile
- Centre for Psychological Assistance Corporation (CAPS), Colombia
- Foundation for Integral Rehabilitation of Violence (PRIVA), Ecuador

**AND NON-MEMBER**

- Human Rights Office of the Archbishop of Guatemala (ODHAG), Guatemala
- Prevention, Treatment and Rehabilitation Centre for Survivors of Torture and Relatives (CPTRT), Honduras
- Mexican Commission for the Defence and Promotion of Human Rights (CMDPDH), Mexico
- Collective Against Torture and Impunity (CCTI)
- Centro de Atencion Psicosocial (CAPS), Peru

**AND NON-MEMBER**

- Red para la Infancia y la familia (REDINFA), Peru
In post-training surveys over 82% of participants (a total of 22 members) rated the different GSR sessions being very useful or quite useful to their daily work. They all shared three things they would take with them and discuss with colleagues. At least 85% reported they would share the lessons learned with their centres through staff meetings or through staff training on the GSR.

**Looking forward ...**

In April 2024, IRCT will host with CVT Nairobi a training in Kenya on the GSR for Sub Sharan Africa members. A further training for Middle East and North Africa members is planned but not yet scheduled.

**“Based on the GSR course, our organisation is considering enhancing survivor involvement in rehabilitation decision-making.”**

Feedback from respondent 145 to completing the GSR E-course
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 164 members in 76 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 a 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 2023, we aimed to provide more members than ever with tools, expertise and knowledge exchange spaces to improve their provision of rehabilitation.

2023 was another busy year for sharing knowledge through IRCT webinars

5.2.1 Webinars

The principle means for gathering members together to share knowledge was through our demand-driven thematic webinars. In 2023, IRCT hosted 11 webinars (see sidebar) drawing a total audience of well over 1,500 participants, including a total of 115 member centres. This was a significant increase on 2022 figures.

There was particularly strong member engagement in webinars dealing with treating torture and trauma in children and families, and with how forensic documentation supports strategic litigation. On average, over 85% of participants reported the webinars as being useful for their daily work and that they had learned something new. IRCT’s Strategy goal is that by the end of 2024, well over half our 164 members are actively contributing to knowledge sharing through webinars.
Resilience in torture survivors: Reflections, Learnings and Ways Forward

By Dr Pau Pérez-Sales

for 2023 goes around resilience in torture survival.

5.2.2 Torture Journal

Substitutive trauma and Putin’s invasion of Ukraine. Questioning agency in torture recovery and whether survivors should be screened before becoming public advocates. The role of dentists as frontline human rights defenders. Now in its fourth decade of publication, IRCT’s Torture Journal continues to provoke debate in its examination of peer-reviewed research 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 is the world’s leading academic source on torture prevention and rehabilitation reaching a global audience of medical and legal professionals, academics and interested members of the public. In 2023, Torture Journal published a total of 35 articles, including a special section on Survivor Engagement, including experiences from IRCT members in Zimbabwe, Spain, Kenya, Lebanon, the UK, Iraq, Ireland, the US, and New Zealand.

“Resilience in torture survivors is a neglected field. We know a lot about the negative consequences of torture, about pathology and rehabilitation, but not much about resilience. So the editorial speaks to that and tries to catch up with what we do know.”

— PAU PEREZ SALES, Torture Journal Editor-in-Chief

In 2023, we were pleased to honour the pioneering human rights work of Palestinian doctor Mahmud Sehwail as the 2023 winner of the Convention Against Torture Initiative’s Prize for the best article in Torture Journal. His reflections on a lifetime fighting for healing and justice for survivors under Israel’s regime of torture and apartheid, visiting thousands of detainees in Israeli jails since the early 1980s and establishing Palestine’s first dedicated torture rehabilitation centre, while mourning the death of his teenage brother in a hail of bullets following a protest in the occupied West Bank, received most votes from Journal readers and IRCT members. His career exemplifies the professional dedication to helping others and inspiring personal resilience that are the backbone of the IRCT movement. Dr Mahmud donated the $1,000 prize money to the centre he founded to treat torture survivors, TRC Palestine.

Read Dr Mahmud prize-winning article
Watch Meet Our Member: TRC, Palestine

Torture Journal’s Year in Numbers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issues Published</th>
<th>Downloads</th>
<th>Abstracts Viewed</th>
<th>Total Submissions (12 from members)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>35,485</td>
<td>42,796</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 2023, we were pleased to honour the pioneering human rights work of Palestinian doctor Mahmud Sehwail as the 2023 winner of the Convention Against Torture Initiative’s Prize for the best article in Torture Journal. His reflections on a lifetime fighting for healing and justice for survivors under Israel’s regime of torture and apartheid, visiting thousands of detainees in Israeli jails since the early 1980s and establishing Palestine’s first dedicated torture rehabilitation centre, while mourning the death of his teenage brother in a hail of bullets following a protest in the occupied West Bank, received most votes from Journal readers and IRCT members. His career exemplifies the professional dedication to helping others and inspiring personal resilience that are the backbone of the IRCT movement. Dr Mahmud donated the $1,000 prize money to the centre he founded to treat torture survivors, TRC Palestine.
5.3 Supporting Livelihoods

Poverty is a 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. IRCT’s Global Impact Data since 2020 consistently shows that between 40% to 50% of all torture survivors treated around the world, Global North and South, live in poverty, according to their national standard. In such a context, the ability of members to deliver as full rehabilitation as possible to survivors of torture is severely constrained in cases where the survivor is struggling to meet basic needs for themselves and their family. In 2023, IRCT’s five-member Livelihoods Steering Committee were joined by another six members now implementing livelihoods supporting projects, with all reporting significant positive impacts on the rehabilitation of survivors in their care.

5.3.1 Uganda:
“The this milling machine has changed my life.”

“I come from a very painful past,” said Arach Santa Mulare, a survivor of Uganda’s brutal civil war who lives in a village in the remote north-west, close to Uganda’s borders with South Sudan and DR Congo. Stabbed and then left for dead by the rebel Lord’s Resistance Army, Mulare later witnessed the murder of her family by Ugandan government troops, and then endured domestic violence. “Any time I tried to tell my story I would find myself breaking down as I remembered the past,” says Mulare. “Now I am okay because of the counselling ACTV offered me.”

IRCT member the African Centre for Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture Survivors (ACTV) supports rural communities left severely traumatised by Uganda’s civil war. As part of torture rehabilitation, survivors are encouraged to work together in a group, and some have received cattle, crops or a milling machine in order to secure basic food needs for their families, and to generate some income.

ACTV is a member of IRCT’s Livelihoods Steering Committee. During the first phase of its livelihoods project ACTV supported 44 torture survivors to gain new income generating skills. At its headquarters in Kampala ACTV runs tailoring workshops and has provided 17 survivors with their own sewing machines to become self-reliant. Others have received business start-up support for poultry, soft drinks, and grocery businesses. From its office in Gulu, in the north, ACTV runs projects with rural groups of women displaced by the civil war. In the current phase of the project, ACTV has supported 60 survivors, the majority women, who were provided with oxen, ploughs and improved seeds to help them grow more food for their families, and to sell. The survivors, many of whom were living isolated and destitute, were trained in working in Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLA), one of which, so far, has received its own milling machine.
5.3.2 Nepal: A Little Goes a Long Way

In the far west of Nepal – Banke, Bardiye, Kailali and Dang – where the worst of Nepal’s ten-year civil war between government forces and Maoist insurgents left communities scarred and traumatised, Transcultural Psychosocial Organization Nepal (TPO Nepal) know that simple fixes go a long way. A new battery to get a motorbike taxi business up and running again. A secure shelter for goats to stop them being stolen and provide a secure place to breed. A tea shop where a widow can reconnect with people and make a small income. More earthworms for better compost.

“We have seen that along with mental health programmes, livelihoods programmes play an important role in promoting psychosocial well-being,” said Suraj Koirala, Technical Advisor at TPO, former IRCT Council member and in October 2023 elected IRCT’s new president. “The programme has greatly benefited those with serious problems for whom it is very difficult to earn a living on a daily basis. We hope to continue the programme over the long term to avoid the possibility of beneficiaries going back to the old situation.”

Working since 2020 with people affected by torture during the armed conflict in western Nepal, TPO’s livelihoods projects benefit more than 1,000 people. Most are women whose husbands and sons were tortured, sometimes killed, by both sides of Nepal’s civil war, which ended in 2006.

“With such stress I just felt like dying, like I was done with life,” said one woman supported by TPO. “After that one week of psychosocial counselling I learned I had to live and do something. Driving this tempo (motorbike taxi) helps me earn 500 to 1,500 rupees a day [EUR 3.5 to EUR 10]. It has brought money, it has also brought education for my children, and it has brought the reunion of me and my husband. It has brought happiness to my family.”

A Nepalese woman supported by TPO to find a new livelihood

5.3.3 DR Congo: Women Leading Livelihoods

The east of DR Congo, at the border with Rwanda and Burundi, has suffered decades of ongoing conflict by men with guns. IRCT has five members in the region, most of them established by women to support survivors of the conflict and promote female leadership. In 2023, two members, Féderation des Femmes pour le Développement Intégral au Congo (FEDICONGO) and Regroupement des Mamans de Kamituga (REMAK) received grants to implement livelihoods projects.

“Since I received help from FEDICONGO, things seem to be going better,” said Elisabeth Fatuma Lokoka, from Uvira, in South Kivu, who was left widowed with seven children after rebels killed her husband. “We’d like to thank this organisation for thinking of women who have been widowed, tortured or sexu-ally abused, because it wasn’t easy. We didn’t know where to start.” Elisabeth now sells doughnuts and other prepared food, which allows her to make a small but regular profit of about 5,000 Congolese Francs (EUR1.67) in order to feed her children. But like everyone in the country, one of the poorest in the world, Elisabeth is struggling to make ends meet amid rising prices for staples, such as the flour and sugar she uses to make her doughnuts. “I will carry on my business despite the rise in prices, but the difficulties are enormous,” said Bijoux Kisimba, the wife of a torture survivor supported by FEDICONGO, who saves enough to feed her children but not enough to pay for their schooling: “Education in public schools in Congo is very mediocre.”

TPO’s 2023 Livelihoods Project Mental Health Support

89 persons received psychosocial counselling
104 received psychiatric consultations
22 received other health support such as medication and hospital visits

Watch: A Little Goes A Long Way: Livelihoods Support in Nepal

Members of REMAK’s livelihoods project harvest fields of casava in the Mwenga territory of South Kivu, DR Congo.
A total of 40 survivors are currently being supported by FEDICONGO: 30 were given money and training to improve management of their small businesses selling snacks, rice, beans, maize flour, cassava flour, and fish; 10 survivors have been trained on sewing skills.

Before the intervention, FEDICONGO says the majority of the survivors were living in misery; some unable to meet basic needs, including healthcare, schooling for their children, and enough to eat. “We also focus on the notion of empowerment, to support people in need and combat poverty among these survivors of torture and sexual violence,” said Abia Mastajabu Nicole, Project Coordinator at FEDICONGO.

**Watch Support the Poor: Why Livelihoods is Integral to Torture Rehabilitation**

Some 400 kilometres south, down the massive Lake Tanganyika, in the Mwenga territory of South Kivu, REMAK’s livelihoods programme has also had a positive impact on the lives of torture survivors. Before the agriculture project, the 40 survivors (33 women and 7 men) had no access to tools, and therefore depended on buying food at markets, with often unaffordable prices. Now the group have fields full of cassava, soybeans, peas, and maize. Before, many reported going days without food. Now they have enough to feed their families, and extra to sell. As part of the REMAK project, survivors (mainly men) are being trained in skills of tannery to make shoes and belts, and in metal working. “The revenues help me pay my rent, pay for my medical care, and buy clothes,” said Shabani Kisanga, a torture survivor and beneficiary of the tannery project. The focus on working together and training as a community group has benefited survivors’ mental health as well as giving them access to microcredits from the group to manage urgent needs. “The income they have helps them develop their lives a little, helps them take care of themselves,” said Vainqueur Kalafula, President of REMAK, while stressing that businesses remain fragile: Recent extreme weather destroyed a crop of maize planted by survivors. But the impact of livelihoods support on rehabilitation is clear: From 15 survivors also receiving psychological support from REMAK over the year, 14 now report a decrease in trauma, sufficient to be discharged from medical treatment.
5.4 Survivor Engagement

Torture stigmatises and silences its victims, destroys trust, and scars the social fabric of communities. Powerlessness is a key reason why torture has such a high impact on the mental health of survivors. For this reason, helping survivors take back the agency that was undermined by torture 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 2023, nine members had received grants and were implementing Survivor Engagement Projects, the Survivor Engagement Assessment Tool was completed, and more survivors than ever were speaking out to decision makers and the public as advocates for healing and justice.

5.4.1 Survivor Engagement Projects

Counselling Service Unit (CSU), Zimbabwe

Established in Harare in 2003, CSU aims to provide the best possible medical and psychological care for victims of organised violence and torture, and to work for the complete elimination of torture in Zimbabwe. For its survivor engagement project CSU gathered 10 survivors who received basic psychological first aid, and safeguarding training. They then held discussions on how to incorporate survivor engagement into their organisations, which will culminate in production of a booklet to be distributed amongst human rights organisations in Zimbabwe and beyond. The CSU Survivor Engagement guide will be presented at an IRCT webinar in Spring 2024. In feedback, survivors said talking about their experiences with others who had undergone a similar ordeal was healing, and they felt inspired to be contributing to a worthy cause in the production of the CSU Guide.

Association Jeunesse pour la Paix et la Non-Violence (AJPNV), Chad

Amid a violent crackdown on dissent, AJPNV is one of a handful of civil society organisations working to promote human rights in Chad. Joining the survivor engagement sub-grantee group late in 2023, AJPNV was quick to organise a three-day training for torture survivors with a legal background and involved in civil society to learn how to investigate and gather evidence in torture cases and prepare complaint petitions to the public prosecutor. From 125 applications (88 men, 37 women) AJPNV selected 10 women and 10 men. After assessing their skills, AJPNV planned to recruit 10 of the best trainees as AJPNV focal points and legal advisors in their communities.

Secondary survivors seeking asylum in Hong Kong were supported by JCHK to be activists in their community, including organising food distributions.

AJPNV, Chad trained 20 civil society lawyers on how to gather evidence in torture cases and petition the public prosecutor.

Justice Centre Hong Kong (JCHK), China

Since 2007, Justice Centre has worked to support forced migrants access protection and basic services in Hong Kong SAR, in support of the vision of Hong Kong SAR as a welcoming and inclusive society. A group of 12 young, secondary survivors (aged 15 - 25 years) from Philippines, Somalia, Nigeria, Congo, India, Egypt, Yemen and Indonesia underwent a 10-week leadership programme including workshops on law and policy; speaking out safely; influencing without authority; strategic thinking; and public speaking skills. A core group known as Humanity Seekers formed to act as community leaders, creating its own ToR and organising a winter clothes drive. Many of the Humanity Seekers members have previously completed Justice Centre’s advocacy empowerment programme, Voices for Protection. They are now connecting with a Canadian firm training employers about asylum seekers, and will be active again around World Refugee Day.

Watch IRCT Webinar: TASSC’s Model for Survivor Engagement in Advocacy

Kosovo Rehabilitation Centre for Torture Victims (KRCT), Kosovo

Founded in 1999 to respond to the needs of survivors of torture following the Kosovo War, KRCT’s project supports survivors to engage in advocacy and rehabilitation services to increase their sense of agency in their journey to rehabilitation, reparation, and justice. Following a series of workshops with 32 female survivors, including guest facilitator Shyhere Tahiri Sylejmani (featured in IRCT’s 2022 Annual Report), 31 of the group felt strong enough to testify about their torture to the investigative unit of Kosovo’s police, having previously not done so. In feedback, many of the women said the participation of a ‘survivor champion’ and her account of her journey...
was very motivating and encouraged them to be more active and empowered to speak and to access justice. Four of the survivor group went on to participate in advocacy meetings with Kosovo’s Deputy Minister of Justice and Kosovo’s President Vjosa Osmani, who has spoken about how the war shaped her own life, including having the barrel of a Serb soldier’s AK47 shoved into her mouth as a teenager.

“We are always together in a war that continues. It is a struggle to rise above a pain that is difficult to describe with words. It is a war to heal one of the deepest wounds that this society has.”
— VJOŠA OSMANI, President of Kosovo

Vivé Zene, Bosnia and Herzegovina
Working with persons tortured during and after the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Vive Zene’s project focuses on a group of 38 survivors (31 women and seven men). After meeting to assess the survivors’ needs, staff at Vive Zene have been delivering training on leadership skills, and the group held their first press conference at the end of the year.

“The Special Rapporteur wrote that those powerful events in which survivors play a part are processes of healing, of finding yourself as a person and a citizen. I think that for those of us from the other side of torture, for people who are not survivors, the work that survivors do is very powerful and inspiring.”

— OSVALDO RODRIGUEZ, Torture survivor, Mexico

5.4.2 Survivor Engagement Assessment Tool

In IRCT’s 2022 Global Impact Data, just under half of members surveyed reported having survivors in decision-making roles such as managerial roles, advisory boards, hiring panels, or executive committees. To build on such encouraging feedback, a Survivor Engagement Assessment Tool was completed and launched on Fabo. The Tool allows member centres to self-assess their survivor engagement practices, or lack thereof, with the purpose of allowing them to reflect on how they include survivors in their activities and policies, and what members want to do, if anything, to further include survivors in areas such as health advocacy. The Tool consists of 25 questions for which there are six options to answer. Each option reflects a certain level of survivor engagement, ranging from their role in Therapy itself (such as giving consent, having therapy in a language they understand) to information Provision, Consultation, Partnership (such as portions of the service delivery controlled by survivors) to Delegated Power (such as community outreach through survivor networks) up to Survivor Led (such as services designed and implemented by survivors).

Take the Survivor Engagement Assessment here
www.fabo.org/irct/SE

5.4.3 Survivors Speak Out

In November 2023, for the first time ever, torture survivors from 13 countries in Latin America met face-to-face with the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture (SRT) to share their experiences of torture and views on improving access to justice and reparation. Organised between the IRCT, our member Centro de Atención Psicosocial (CAPS) Colombia, and World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT) the three-day hearing in Bogota, Colombia focused on helping survivors heal, on informing the work of Dr Alice Edwards, the UN SRT, and on promoting stronger engagement with torture survivors from UN human rights mechanisms.

“It is a great achievement to stand in front of the Rapporteur and be able to present your case to her,” said Osvaldo Rodriguez, who was tortured and imprisoned in Mexico's War on Drugs for 15 years for a crime he did not commit. “We are confident that we are on the right track. We are standing in a good place. All we ask of authorities is that they value the evidence we have.”

Watch Survivors Speak Out: Osvaldo Rodriguez, Mexico

Members from Latin America meeting in Bogota watch ‘Manuel’s Story’, an IRCT documentary about a survivor of CIA-backed torture in Bolivia.
The regional hearing brought together survivors from a broad spectrum of torture experiences, including torture during protests; sexual and gender-based violence; torture based on discrimination; torture by police during investigations; conflicts over land rights and protection of the environment; and torture during dictatorships.

“The rights of victims and survivors, as well as their families, is central to my mandate as Special Rapporteur on Torture. This includes their right to speak and to be heard, but also to participate in the decisions that affect them,” said Edwards in a post following the event. “I am also prioritizing access to rehabilitation and to remedy for all survivors … What I heard will greatly inform a future report on victims and survivors as well as many other aspects of my work.”

Among the immediate results of the hearing were the establishment of a regional torture survivor network and the publication of the Bogota Declaration, which sets out an agenda for survivor powered change in the fight against torture in the region.

Nancy Paola, 31, a Maya Kaqchikel, one of the indigenous Maya people of Guatemala, was assaulted by police during protests against economic policies in 2020 in Guatemala City, and charged with damage to cultural property, which she denies. Nancy was not able to join the meeting in Colombia due to visa restrictions, but sent a recorded message.

“Solidarity has been another of the beautiful learnings that have given me a lot of strength to live through these two years of judicial processes, two years full of uncertainty. Solidarity in different forms from individuals and like-minded organisations ... That has allowed me to recognise that the struggle for the defence of our individual rights and collective rights is a very just struggle, that we are not alone. There are people fighting in other territories for land, for housing, for living wages. This has allowed me to not feel lonely.”

– AMONY BETTY

Natasha Nzazi, a survivor of torture of Congolese origin, now working on survivor empowerment at Freedom From Torture, UK, on speaking at a US State Department event to promote funding for the UN Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture.

“In case you are so worried and you feel so heartbroken you share with group members so that you are supported, so it helps to set us free. The group share experiences of overcoming problems so hope can be restored. If you are alone life can be meaningless. But in the group you can become happy again.”

– AMONY BETTY

Natasha Nzazi, a survivor of torture of Congolese origin, now working on survivor empowerment at Freedom From Torture, UK, on speaking at a US State Department event to promote funding for the UN Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture.
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). In 2023, IRCT evidence helped bring justice in a country of near total impunity for torture, contributed to several high profile public reports on torture, and was going into evidence in two strategic litigations at human rights bodies.

6.1.1 Philippines: “A Landmark Legal Victory”

On July 23rd, 2011, Abdul-Khan Ajid, a baker living in the Muslim-majority island of Basilan in the far south of the Philippines was arrested by the 4th Scout Ranger Battalion on charges of kidnapping. He was turned over to the Special Operation Task Force Basilan, headed by Captain Sherwin Guidangen. For four days, soldiers under Guidangen’s command beat, suffocated, drowned, sexually assaulted and eventually set fire to Ajid in an attempt to get him to confess to being someone he was not: Kanneh Malikil, an alleged member of outlawed armed Islamist group Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG), for whom they had an arrest warrant.

Following his torture, Ajid received medical treatment for burns and other injuries at a hospital in Basilan before being transferred to high-security detention in Taguig City prison, south east of Metro Manila, the capital of the Philippines. Through six years of wrongful imprisonment, IRCT member Balay Rehabilitation Centre provided psycho-social support to Ajid, and to his family back in Basilan. Dr Benito Molino, a founder of IRCT’s other member in the Philippines, the Medical Action Group (MAG), used his long experience of documenting torture according to the international standards of the Istanbul Protocol to produce a medico-legal report on Ajid’s physical and psychological injuries.

Released in 2017, Ajid returned to his family in Basilan while continuing to receive rehabilitation from Balay. Three years later, in August 2020, he stood in front of the Regional Trial Court branch 70 in Taguig and identified Captain Guidangen as his torturer. Ajid’s testimony was the prosecution’s main evidence, supported by the expert evidence of Dr Molino’s report.

On 7 August 2023, the Court found Captain Guidangen guilty beyond reasonable doubt of the crime of violation of Section 4 of the Philippines’ Anti-Torture Act 2009 – a law that both MAG and Balay had spent years advocating towards – and sentenced him to up to four years and two months imprisonment. The case, currently being appealed, was only the second ever conviction under the Anti-Torture Act.
6.1.2 Evidencing Torture for Human Rights Watch

In August, IRCT evidence was used to expose a “shoot to kill” practice by Saudi Arabia border guards against Ethiopian migrants crossing the border between Saudi Arabia and Yemen. An IFEG expert opinion was sent to Human Rights Watch from an analysis of videos and photos of injuries which found “clear patterns” consistent with explosion munitions and gunshot wounds.

The HRW report was one of the organisation’s most referenced to date, being the top story on France24, BBC News, and the Guardian, and on the home page of the New York Times. The report also led to HRW briefings with the EU, UN, and US State Department. IFEG’s evidence was led by Dr Maximo Alberto Duque Piedrahita, Specialist in Forensic Medicine at the National University of Colombia.

6.1.3 Turning the Justice Wheels

In October, the IRCT conducted a field mission in N’Djamena, Chad to assess the impact of the non-implementation of the 2015 court ordered reparations for victims of the former Chadian dictator Hissene Habré. During the mission, IRCT, supported by a psychologist member of IFEG, participated in a national conference with 250 survivors of the Habré regime and conducted assessments of 45 plaintiffs (28 women and 17 men, direct victims of torture and family members of deceased victims) to assess the concrete impacts of the non-implementation on the physical and psychological health, and socio-economic situation, of the plaintiffs, their families, and communities.

Strengthening IRCT’s long-standing partnership with Human Rights Watch in Latin America, IRCT/IFEG reviewed autopsies from killings by police in São Paulo, Brazil during August’s ‘Operation Shield’, finding that they failed to comply with international standards on investigating extrajudicial killings and torture. The expert opinion was used as a key source in the HRW report “‘They Promised to Kill 30’: Police Killings in Baixada Santista, São Paulo State, Brazil”, which was launched on 7 November. The report received very good coverage in national media, including in the most important Brazilian print outlets Folha de São Paulo, and O Globo. All articles mentioned the expert opinion and as a result, the National Secretary on Access to Justice invited HRW to Brasília to present the report findings to the Ministry of Justice.

“IRCT’s input was instrumental in what we could say in our findings.”
— Human Rights Watch


Victims of Chadian dictator Hissène Habré have fought for justice for over a quarter of a century. Credit: Human Rights Watch

As we celebrate this landmark achievement, it is essential to remain vigilant in upholding the principles of justice and human rights for all. This victory also underscores the collaborative efforts of various stakeholders, including non-government organisations, legal experts, and the Commission on Human Rights. These collective endeavours have not only led to a successful conviction but have also demonstrated the essential role of psychosocial support for victims and their families throughout the ordeal.”
— MEDICAL ACTION GROUP (MAG) on the successful conviction for torture in Ajid’s case.
Together with REDRESS, we submitted our opinion to support a case before the African Commission on Human and People’s rights.

“Habré’s victims are heroes who fought to bring him to justice, were awarded millions of dollars, but haven’t seen one cent in reparations.”
— JACQUELINE MOUDEINA, lead counsel for Habré’s victims.

**Evidence for the Court of Public Opinion**

Public advocacy against torture is always essential. In countries like Russia and Syria, where national courts are an extension of the regime’s oppression, diplomats are immune to criticism, and State censorship is absolute, exposing torture practices to the wider court of public opinion can often be the only way for survivors to have their experiences acknowledged. In 2023, IRCT worked with its member in Russia, Crew Against Torture, to translate and condense some of their incredible film making exposing the everyday nature of torture in Russia, to bring it to English-language audiences online.

**Regime of Abuse: Police Torture in Putin’s Russia**

On 24 December 2015, a day after his 21st birthday, Artem Ponomarchuk did not come home from work. Artem had been arrested by the notorious police of Anapa, a Russian resort city on the Black Sea. A month earlier, some cigarettes had been stolen in an armed robbery. Unable to catch the criminals, Anapa police decided to pin the blame on Artem and three of his friends from the warehouse.

**Criminal Justice: Torturing with Impunity in Russia**

One of the oldest rules of law is the absolute rejection by courts of confessions obtained through torture. In Russia, such confessions can provide the only evidence needed to convict the innocent.

**After Life: Recovering From Torture in Russia**

Tortured then sentenced to house arrest for a crime they could not have committed, four Russian men and their families from Anapa struggle to rebuild their lives. “My day is like that: I wake up and I stay at home all day long. I’ve got no life, my years are passing and I can neither work nor earn a decent living for my family,” says Aram Arustamyan, one of the survivors.

**Compelling Evidence**

IRCT Insights produced a series of Q&A videos on how forensic documentation of torture supports strategic litigation.

- **What is Forensic Assessment of Torture?**
- **What is Forensic Evidence of Torture?**
- **What is a Strategic Litigation?**
- **What is IFEG?**
- **How does IFEG work?**
- **How Is Torture Documentation Important to Court Procedure?**
- **What Are Examples of the Positive Impact of Forensic Documentation?**
- **How Does Torture Documentation Impact Advocacy Outside Court?**

**6.2 Better Laws, Improved Policies**

An important aspect of increasing State accountability and creating lasting change in the fight against torture is ensuring that national laws and government policy provide a strong response to torture in compliance with international standards. This change can be catalysed through international or regional work, but ultimately needs to be implemented at the national level, where IRCT and its members are leading advocates for change. By working with its members during reviews of their States by the UN Committee Against Torture (UN CAT), the body that monitors implementation of the Convention Against Torture, and the Human Rights Council’s Universal Periodic Review (UPR), both located in Geneva, IRCT advocates for strengthening national anti-torture laws and policies. We also advocate directly with UN and regional human rights mechanisms to develop strong international anti-torture standards that reflect the perspectives and experiences of survivors.
6.2.1 UN State Reviews

In 2023, the IRCT supported members SAPGL Burundi, CAPS Colombia, El Nadeem Centre Egypt, and Sir[a] Spain, and joined a Danish coalition, to submit reports to and engage with the UNCAT during its reviews of their respective countries. In all instances, our interventions resulted in recommendations to the five countries that closely follow the specific priorities established by our members in advance.

As an example, the joint report by the IRCT and SAPGL highlights significant deficiencies within the Burundian judicial system, specifically access to justice, the safeguarding of witnesses and victims, and the rehabilitation of torture victims. Recommendations on access to justice and rehabilitation were incorporated by the Committee in its final observations.

During 2023’s comprehensive review of States’ human rights record under the UPR process, IRCT worked with our member Trauma Centre Cameroon and partner Women in Alternative Action (WAA) to propose to diplomats making the review that they recommend:

- Strengthening juvenile justice systems by promoting offender accountability through restorative justice, community service, and educative talks on the negative effects of juvenile delinquency and social cohesion.
- Ensuring civil society organisations have full access to places of detention and prisons to provide urgent direct assistance, medical, psychosocial, and legal support to detained youths.

Finally, in Geneva we hosted Honest Offor, Senior Programme Manager at PRAWA Nigeria who lobbied diplomats ahead of Nigeria’s fourth UPR with key recommendations on arbitrary arrests, torture, detention and electoral violence.

We also worked with member AJPNV in Chad and four other NGOs to produce a joint report highlighting the imperative for the Chadian Penal Code to comply with the Convention against Torture. The report urged a reform to ensure strict adherence and proportional penalties for acts of torture including disproportional use of force by law enforcement officers. It also recommended nullifying outdated ordinances and instating laws fostering the freedom of assembly.

Report to Recommendations

To: Colombia
From: UPR HRC
IRCT Member: CAPS Colombia
Recommendations on:
OPCAT ratification and establishment of National Preventive Mechanism
Human rights education for police
Prevention of unlawful use of force
Investigation of killings and use of force in protests
Justice and reparations

To: Cameroon
From: UPR HRC
IRCT Member: Trauma Centre Cameroon
Recommendations on:
OPCAT ratification and establishment of National Preventive Mechanism
Detention conditions
Investigation of torture and ill-treatment
Amendment of anti-terrorism laws

To: Spain
From: UNCAT
IRCT Member: Sir[a]
Recommendations on:
Non-refoulement
Improving investigations of torture allegations
Protecting protesters against police violence.
2023 Advocacy in Numbers:

- **2** States which took concrete steps to improve national laws, policies and practice on issues addressed by IRCT international, regional and national advocacy.
- **8** Criminal or human rights investigations commenced based on or utilising IRCT forensic evidence or expert opinions.
- **12** 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.
- **20** IRCT expert assessments used for publicly exposing torture, strategic litigation or public advocacy.
- **8,602** Times where IRCT evidence was referenced or promoted by key national stakeholders and media outlets.

**Some of the Issues on the Table:**

- **Georgia:** Shrinking civil society space, LGBT+ rights, gender equality, Russia's occupation.
- **Iraq:** Accountability, rehabilitation, implementation of the Yazidi Survivor Law.
- **Mexico:** Documenting torture, rehabilitation programmes, current and future Common European Asylum System.

The Committee for the Prevention of Torture in Africa (CPTA) was established by the African Commission for Human and Peoples’ Rights (ACHPR) in 2009 to promote the absolute prohibition of torture and ill-treatment as enshrined in the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights and set out in the *Robben Island Guidelines*, named after the island near Cape Town where Nelson Mandela was imprisoned for 18 of his 27 year sentence. Since 2021, the IRCT has been engaged in development of a standard operating procedure for African CSOs and individual victims to file complaints or warnings to the CPTA. In October 2023, IRCT participated in the ACHPR NGO Forum to build connections with regional actors and promote stronger documentation of torture and better processing of cases through the CPTA.

### 6.2.2 Regional Mechanisms

In November 2020 the EU Council adopted its third **EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy**, setting out priorities up to 2024. Priority 1 ‘Protecting and Empowering Individuals’ contains a commitment by the EU and its Member States to “strive to eradicate torture”. Under the EU’s foreign policy, the bloc holds regular Human Rights Dialogues, currently with some 30 non-EU countries. The issues to be discussed are decided jointly with the partner country, and the EU invites civil society organisations from the third-party country to contribute. As such, the Dialogues represent an important space for IRCT members to advocate for better laws and improved policies against torture. In 2023, IRCT supported member CAPS Colombia, IFH Jordan, Jiyan Foundation Iraq, and GCRT Georgia to engage with the process, as well as intervening directly during the Mexico-EU Dialogue. Only the public statements from the Colombia and Jordan dialogues failed to mention torture.

### Busy in Geneva

Beyond supporting members to advocate in Geneva at the Committee or UPR reviews of their States, IRCT strives to ensure that key decision makers and those with greatest influence in the fight against torture regularly reflect the priorities of our members through their work. To that end, IRCT contributed to the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture’s *report* on documentation and investigation of torture, published in February 2023, which reinforced key IRCT policy objectives including promotion of the updated Istanbul Protocol and trauma-informed approaches to interviewing and investigations. For the SRT’s second annual report of 2023 to the UN General Assembly, IRCT offered strong support to her work on a legally binding instrument regulating the trade of goods that have no other purpose than torture and ill-treatment and those that could be misused for these practices. We highlighted that this category is also the most difficult to define and the one that is most challenged in political discussions about if and how to regulate tools for torture and ill-treatment. We proposed an evaluation of the risk of misuse of goods on the control list should be based on the standard “reasonable grounds for believing”. The report was published in August.

Through our membership of the United Against Torture Consortium (UATC) IRCT contributed in November to the SRT’s thematic *report* on *prison management* (published in 2024) including: Measures to reduce prison overcrowding; laws, policies, special measures and management innovations for vulnerable groups in prisons; the importance of independent oversight and the role of National Preventive Mechanisms (NPMs); the regulation of the use of pre-trial detention; the discriminatory effects of imprisonment on the poor and marginalised sections of the population; the situation of persons sentenced to death; and the right to consular assistance as best practice in preventing torture in detention.

Another key actor in Geneva is the UN Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture (UNVFT). Held in Geneva on the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, June 26, 2023, the IRCT helped bring together the United States of America, Denmark, Peru, Switzerland, and the Center for Victims of Torture to an event calling for action to end torture and support survivors, including through increased support for the Fund. In 2023, the Fund awarded 190 grants, worth a total of $9,146,000, to civil society organizations in 90 countries to support survivors through rehabilitation, repair, empowerment, and access to remedies. This funding has allowed grantees to implement projects that—in 2023 alone—are providing direct assistance to 3,000 torture survivors. But this pales in comparison to the large need. The Fund received a 17% increase in requests for grants in 2023, so if funding levels remain constant, the gap will grow.
Speakers shared the individual and society-wide impact of the Fund’s work to fill healing and justice gaps, especially given Fund grantees’ focus on providing evidence-based support and engaging torture survivors at every step. Ambassadors representing the United States, Denmark, and Peru—event co-sponsors and Fund supporters—reiterated their support for the Fund. In addition, Montenegro and Austria announced new and increased support for the Fund respectively.

No less important to the foundations of the IRCT’s work on law and policy is promotion of the right of all survivors of torture to as full rehabilitation as possible. In 2023, we were particularly pleased that the World Medical Association (WMA), the world’s largest body of medical professionals, incorporated key IRCT advocacy positions into its updated statement on the right to rehabilitation for victims of torture. The Declaration now includes references to the updated Istanbul Protocol, the IRCT’s Global Standards on Rehabilitation; the IRCT’s Global Indicators on the Right to Rehabilitation, and the importance of livelihood support and survivor engagement as integral to rehabilitation.

6.2.3 National Implementation

During 2023, ACTV Uganda took important steps toward persuading the Ugandan Government to implement the recommendations issued to it by the UN Committee against Torture in December 2022. It was only the second time Uganda had reported to the Committee, and was 12 years late in doing so. Supported by IRCT, ACTV had made 20 recommendations to the Committee in its alternative report, and 19 of them were adopted by the Committee. Based on that background and in line with ACTV’s mandate to advocate for the prevention of torture, ACTV implemented an eight-month project to popularize the UNCAT recommendations and also advocate for their implementation by the State. Hundreds of members of the Uganda People’s Defence Forces (UPDF), the Uganda Police Force (UPF), and Uganda Prisons Service (UPS) were trained by ACTV staff on application of Uganda’s Prevention and Prohibition of Torture Act, 2012, and investigating torture using the Istanbul Protocol.

To improve the collection of evidence of torture for prosecution, ACTV and the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions and the Criminal Investigations Department of Police (CID) co-developed a checklist on investigation and documentation of torture cases. The Ministry of Health also worked with ACTV to develop an action plan which will be followed in the development of a National Rehabilitation Policy for survivors of torture in the country. In addition, the Ministry drafted two key indicators about torture that would be included in the National Health Information Management system to track information about survivors of torture that receive treatment in Government hospitals. Finally, for the first time, 83 officers of the Police Criminal Investigations Directorate were trained on their role in implementing the Uganda Prevention and Protection against Torture Act and its regulations.

“Today we recognise the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture and hear from survivors, experts, and those familiar with the Fund’s work; we should all be thinking about what more we can do to support victims of torture.”

— AMBASSADOR MICHÈLE TAYLOR
(U.S. Permanent Representative to the UN Human Rights Council)
Across the other side of the globe, IRCT conducted an advocacy mission to Colombia to work with local partner CAPS to promote implementation of the May 2023 UNCAT recommendations, with a particular focus on those relating to justice and reparations for victims of protest related torture in recent years. Prior to the review, IRCT worked with external partners the Colombian Coalition Against Torture and OMCT to produce a comprehensive report which served as the basis for lobbying diplomats in Geneva. In Bogota, activities included meetings with Government officials and with local groups of activists and survivors to help them better integrate the recommendations in their advocacy towards the Government, with a particular focus on those relating to justice and reparations for victims of protest related torture in recent years.

Second, acts of torture and cruel and inhumane treatment were committed as a mechanism to prevent the exercise of the right to protest during the social demonstrations that took place in the country and that were disproportionately repressed by State agents.

Third, non-compliance with the Final Peace Agreement and territorial disputes between different actors in the armed conflict have led to an increase in human rights violations. This situation has meant that the patterns of torture identified in the previous report continue to occur, especially against women and girls who are victims of sexual violence."

— COLOMBIAN COALITION AGAINST TORTURE

Alternative Report on the Sixth Periodic Report before the United Nations Committee against Torture

Palestine: The IRCT supported TRC Palestine to engage with the Sub-Committee on Prevention of Torture to help it plan its visit to Palestine. This primarily consisted of helping the SPT determine what places of detention to visit and what issues are the most problematic.

Iraq: National advocacy campaign on continuing UN investigation. IRCT joined Iraqi and international civil society organisations in advocacy towards the Iraqi government and the UN to ensure that the mandate of the UNITAD was not ended as requested by the Iraqi Government.

South Africa: Support to CSVR with reporting and engaging with SPT before and during first visit. SPT called for South Africa to fully establish a national preventive mechanism, according to the commitment made when ratifying CAT Optional Protocol in 2019.
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.

6.3.1 Istanbul Protocol: Collaboration in Training

First published in 1999, and updated in 2022, 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.

In 2023, IRCT built on this bedrock, both taking forward training from a decades-long engagement, and breaking ground with new partners.

In the Philippines, IRCT has collaborated for nearly two decades with our members in Manila, Medical Action Group (MAG) and Balay Rehabilitation Centre, who are themselves among the longest-established torture rehabilitation organisations in Asia. Fighting to protect human rights in the Philippines is uniquely challenging (see below) and torture has been increasing over the past decade, largely driven by the ongoing ‘War on Drugs’ in which prosecutors at the International Criminal Court (ICC) estimate 12,000 to 30,000 people have been killed by security forces, and tens of thousands more tortured.

Watch: Meet Our Members: MAG, Philippines

A joint programme on human rights signed between the United Nations (UN) and the Government of the Philippines set out to build the capacity of national institutions to investigate crimes committed during the War on Drugs, but for several years made little to no progress. However, with the election of a new Government, MAG and Balay saw some Government institutions opening up to more constructive engagement on human rights issues. In 2023, the IRCT conducted a three-day online training on documentation and investigation of torture with 100 participants from the Departments of Justice, Social Welfare, and Health, as well as the Commission on Human Rights and CSOs. We are now planning an in-person follow-up training for 2024.

In Peru, police brutality has fuelled mass protests led by rural poor, indigenous Quechua-speakers, demanding human rights from a State which has for decades discriminated against them. IRCT member in Peru, Centro de Atención Psico Social (CAPS) originated in response to massive human rights violations by the regime of former Peruvian President Alberto Fujimori, in which Quechua-speakers were the huge majority of those killed, disappeared and tortured. In 2023, IRCT trained 300 newly appointed human rights prosecutors from across the country, and the Special Investigation Team working with the UN Human Rights Office, to better document and investigate the torture and extrajudicial killings that occurred during the 2022 protests. Participants were trained on both the Istanbul Protocol and the Minnesota Protocol, used for best practice investigations of suspected unlawful death. As a result of those trainings, the IRCT is now working directly with the UN and the national investigation to provide our expert input in the evaluation of evidence of human rights violations during the protests.

Watch: Protect the Protest: Police Brutality in Peru

“Today we are reminded of the great repression of the Fujimori era.”

— Juana Lisa Lloret de Fernandez, Founder of CAPS Peru
Definition of Torture

“The State party should, as a matter of priority, bring the legal definition of torture contained in article 146 of the Criminal Code and other relevant pieces of legislation into line with article 1 of the Convention, namely by including the elements that distinguish the crime of torture from other forms of ill-treatment, and by adjusting the wording of the exclusion clause relating to “lawful sanctions” so as to minimize the possibility of it being misinterpreted. The State party should ensure that penalties for torture and ill-treatment are appropriate to the gravity of the crime, as set out in article 4 (2) of the Convention. It should also take legislative steps to exclude the possibility of plea bargaining and parole for crimes of torture and ill-treatment.”

Committee Against Torture,
Concluding Observations on the Fourth Periodic Report of Kazakhstan

Finally, in Kazakhstan, IRCT conducted a series of online trainings throughout 2023. By the end of the year we had conducted trainings on the Istanbul Protocol, the right to reparations, and on how to use the UN Committee Against Torture (UNCAT) to exert pressure on the State to implement its obligations. Each training was attended by approximately 30 persons from CSOs, the National Human Rights Institute of Kazakhstan and some Government institutions. The trainings aimed to support local actors on how to best implement the UNCAT recommendations issued to Kazakhstan in May 2023.

Balancing Act

The IRCT is recognised as the leading global organisation on capacity building on documentation and investigation of torture using the Istanbul Protocol, which we co-authored. This means we get significantly more requests for training on documentation and investigation than we can accommodate.

A key solution to this challenge is the creation of online training courses on documentation and investigation, due to be completed in 2024, which will make available for free to all relevant entities as long as they are not profiting financially from it.

A key criterion for our engagement in face-to-face capacity building is that there is a perspective for longer-term collaboration on documenting cases and changing State laws and policies. In this way, IRCT trainings become catalysts for more sustainable long-term change.

Training Days

The IRCT also conducted training for CSOs and others in the following countries:

**Austria:** Opened a session on documenting torture during conflict at the second Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and participated in the side event on trauma-informed interviewing.

**Eswatini:** Participated in a workshop of the Eswatini Lawyers Meeting organised by International Commission of Jurists and the South African Litigation Centre on the use of forensic expertise to support strategic litigation, in the wake of the 2021 Eswatini protests.

**Germany:** Keynote speech to annual BAfF Conference, ‘Justice Heals’, and workshops with member MFH Bochum.

**Libya:** Workshop on the documentation of crimes under international law, organised by the International Commission of Jurists in partnership with the ICC. IRCT provided training on documenting torture during protests and in detention facilities, and how to apply general concepts around photographic evidence and physical injuries to a specific crime.

**Poland:** Training some 60 border guards, Government officials, NGO staff, psychologists and medical doctors on torture documentation and refugees, with member from Hungary Cordelia Foundation and the Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights.

**Nigeria:** Joined with member PRAWA to train Nigerian health professionals in Abuja on the medico-legal evaluation of victims of torture by the now disbanded Special Anti-Robbery Squad.

Nigerian News Links

- globalsentinelng.com
- prnigeria.com
- thestreetjournal.org
- nannews.ng

**Nigeria:** Joined with member PRAWA to train Nigerian health professionals in Abuja on the medico-legal evaluation of victims of torture by the now disbanded Special Anti-Robbery Squad.
6.3.2 Tools to Protect the Protest

With the continued rise of authoritarianism and subsequent pro-democracy protests, countering torture by police during protest remains a key component of IRCT’s work. To that end, our Protest Toolkit was updated in 2023 to simplify parts of the Reporting Form and to include a new section documenting police or military equipment used against protesters, authored by our partners Omega Research Foundation, who are global experts on the use and trade in such equipment.

The updated Toolkit was translated for the first time into Bengali to support an online training of our new member in Bangladesh, Human Rights Development Centre. In a similar vein, staff and partners of IRCT member Rescue Alternatives Liberia (RAL) received training on the Protest Toolkit ahead of that country’s general elections in October. The IRCT also provided a subgrant to RAL to support deployment of local human rights monitors, collection of evidence, analysis of the evidence and public exposure of the results, with the aim of publishing a report in 2024.

With more voters than ever before heading to the polls in 2024 for elections in countries that represent half the world’s population, IRCT aims to engage as many members and partners as possible on use of its updated Protest Toolkit to ensure that where torture and ill-treatment are used by States to censor free speech and prevent freedom of assembly ‘Justice Starts With Truth’.

Watch: Justice Starts With Truth: Torture in Belarus

“We are developing a new generation of human rights cadre for the anti-torture movement.”

— M D MAHBUL HAQUE, Secretary General, HRDC, Bangladesh
7. Stronger Together

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. In 2023, IRCT helped create an unprecedented coalition of international anti-torture organisations, supported members in Palestine working through war and occupation, and continued to strengthen our organisation’s public profile as a reliable and credible partner to other civil society organisations, States and international and regional organisations.

7.1 United Against Torture

Launched on 26 June UN International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, and in a first of its kind, the IRCT joined with five of the world’s leading anti-torture organisations to create the United Against Torture Consortium (UATC) to strengthen and expand the anti-torture movement by pooling expertise in torture prevention, protection, rehabilitation and strategic litigation.

Funded by the European Union, UATC works in partnership with over 200 national civil society organisations and other partners in 100+ countries to build a global movement. The three-year, €8.5m project will provide grants to directly assist thousands of torture survivors, and strengthen local staff capacity to advocate with national actors responsible for torture prevention and rehabilitation.

Survivors’ experiences and, for those who wish, their direct participation, will be at the centre of the consortium’s torture prevention, rehabilitation and justice processes, both nationally and internationally. Thus through enabling the IRCT to make sub-grants to improve rehabilitation capacity and through provision of additional funding for survivor engagement projects, the UATC not only supports IRCT’s Strategy goal of strengthening the organisation through partnerships, but also two of the key pillars of our Strategy on Healing.

“Torture is a big problem and it needs a big response. Everyone needs to work together to fight for an end to torture and to support survivors like me. I think this new partnership could make a real difference.”

— Shyhrete Tahir-Sylejmani, a survivor of torture by Serbian soldiers in April 1999, who received rehabilitation at the Kosovo Rehabilitation Centre for Torture Victims (KRCT) and spoke at the launch of UATC in Brussels.

IRCT’s UATC Partners

**APT**: Fighting to prevent torture before it happens, Asociación por la Prevención de la Tortura, based in Geneva, has unique global expertise supporting national torture prevention measures, such as strengthening independent monitoring bodies and promoting implementation of the Méndez Principles on Effective Interviewing to replace coercive interrogations.

**FIACAT**: In Francophone Africa, International Federation of Action by Christians for the Abolition of Torture leads programmes together with national CSOs and State actors on the fight against abusive pre-trial detention, prevention of torture in prisons, improvement of the administration of justice, and the abolition of the death penalty.
OMCT: As the official coordinator for participation of civil society at the UN Committee Against Torture in Geneva, Organisation Mondiale Contre la Torture has an established track record of supporting advocacy by national anti-torture organisations to generate strong international treaty recommendations.

Omega: Recognising that an increasing amount of torture and ill-treatment today occurs in acts of police brutality against protesters or vulnerable individuals during arrest, Omega Research Foundation are experts in evidence-based research into the ‘tools of torture’, including inherently abusive equipment such as spiked batons, and are leading, with Amnesty International, a growing campaign for a ban on their trade.

REDRESS: With 60 active cases in 38 countries, REDRESS, based in London, is a global leader in achieving justice and reparation, particularly for torture related to discrimination and dissent, and provide skills building and mentoring to partners.

In its first six months, UATC coordinated an emergency response to the rise in torture in Bangladesh, released joint statements and worked to support members through the ongoing crisis in Israel and Palestine, and collaborated directly with the Committee Against Torture and UN Special Rapporteur on Torture, to advance key UATC priorities around policing and dissent and an international treaty to ban trade in inherently abusive police equipment, or ‘torture tools’.

Although collaborating with large organisations with multi-layered work processes certainly presented some challenges for the small but specialised team at IRCT, the benefits of building a movement that is more than the sum of its parts are both clear and necessary in a world where torture persists in at least 140 States.

7 Keys to Success: UATC’s Work Packages

1. Survivor Engagement: Fostering survivor engagement and access to effective and holistic rehabilitation services.

2. Movement Drivers: Mobilisation and empowerment of civil society anti-torture actors through financial support, joint work, and knowledge sharing.

3. Prohibition and Implementation: To strengthen legal protections and their implementation and promulgate progressive standards.


5. Awareness-Raising: To raise broader public awareness on torture issues and to contribute to narrative-building, story-telling, and public communications.

6. Crisis Response: To support a shared, stronger, faster first-response to emerging crisis situations among the main anti-torture organisations.

7. United Front: Establishment of a torture and policing and dissent working group.

Human Rights at 75: Our Pledge

December 2023 marked the 75th anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. To mark the occasion UATC issued a series of seven pledges. Click below to read:

Bangladesh Crisis Response

Many crises situations of torture and other ill-treatment are chronic, requiring a sustained response. Others are acute, or emerging. Rarely have international anti-torture organisations had the capacity to respond effectively to the latter. To address that need, the UATC adopted a Crisis Response procedure, tested out for the first time as Bangladesh approached its general election in January 2024, and the rise in torture went hand in hand with attacks on the rule of law. IRCT leading on drafting a series of statements (in English and Bengali) aimed at the government in Dhaka and its international partners, as well as providing emergency grants and training on torture documentation for our new member Human Rights Development Centre (HRDC) (see section 6.3.2). Omega undertook research into the type and origin of equipment used by Bangladeshi security forces to torture and ill-treat protesters, while OMCT led an advocacy campaign with UN and EU officials to press for no return to ‘business as usual’ following an election marred by torture, specifically addressing the EU’s important trade relationship with Dhaka. An evaluation of the UATC’s first crisis response will be undertaken in 2024 and lessons integrated into the next one.

Members of the UATC at the Committee Against Torture in Geneva.

#UnitedAgainstTorture

UATC’s first statement on the torture crisis in Bangladesh.
7.2 Israel/OPT: Solidarity and Support

The IRCT was quick to condemn the appalling violence that devasted Israel on October 7, when Hamas-led militants killed over 1,200 people, mainly civilians, and took around 250 hostages, offering public support to the staff and families of Aid Organisation for Refugees and Asylum Seekers (ASSAF), IRCT’s member in Israel. ASSAF advocates for the human rights of asylum seekers in Israel, the huge majority from sub-Saharan Africa - many of whom are torture survivors, and who are among the most marginalised people in Israeli society. In the wake of Hamas’ attacks, ASSAF shared images of Eritrean asylum seekers collecting donations for Israelis evacuated from conflict areas. Learn more about ASSAF’s work at www.assaf.org.il/en

As Israel’s retaliation against Hamas evolved rapidly into the siege of Gaza’s entire population, the indiscriminate destruction of the majority of all homes and businesses in the Strip, and the mass killing of tens of thousands of Palestinian civilians, the majority of them women and children, the IRCT focused on supporting our member, the Gaza Community Mental Health Pro-gramme (GCMHP). In “a war on children”, as the UN described Israel’s assault, GCMHP did, and will, play a pivotal role as the only organisation in Gaza offer-ing comprehensive psychiatric services to children. In 2022, GCMHP helped some 4,500 patients, a third of them children. Bombed out of their main office in Gaza City, forced to flee south, and living in school corridors or tents, initially staff at GCMHP could do little to maintain their support to existing patients, let alone meet the needs of the overwhelming number of seriously traumatised adults and children.

“Without a ceasefire there will be no prevention of attacks on the civilians”

— DR YASSER ABU JAMEI, Director General of GCMHP

Despite a significant international network and profile, Dr Yasser told the IRCT he was struggling to get the message out of Gaza that GCMHP was still functioning. To that end, IRCT Communications published a series of video interviews with Dr Yasser and showcased GCMHP’s work whenever possible, also connecting him to journalists and members of the UATC network. IRCT was also able to provide GCMHP with two emergency support grants in the first three months of the war.

Incredibly, by the end of the year, GCMHP had been able to regroup, new office space in Rafah and Deir al-Balah had been rented, and staff were back out working in the community, providing psychological support services to displaced children. “In addition to our clients, we have started receiving referrals from organisations working with orphans. People who ring us ask about medication,” said Dr Yasser, who had recently sourced a three-month supply from the World Health Organisation.

As Israel’s war devastated Gaza, its occupation of the West Bank grew increasingly violent, with unprecedented numbers of Palestinians killed, arrested or forcibly evicted from their land. IRCT member Treatment and Rehabilitation Centre for Victims of Torture (TRC), based in Ramallah, has worked under that

“…an escalation of abuse by Israeli security forces against Palestinians amid mass detentions in Gaza and the West Bank. Credit: CNN

“There was a terrifying bombardment last night. The world should do better. The world is watching and not doing enough to protect people. Not exerting pressure to solve this. People on the ground are trying to live through this. When things are over, the implications will show up. Daily exposure to death, seeing blood splashes, hearing terrifying loud bomb blasts. It’s devastating.”

— DR YASSER ABU JAMEI, Director General of GCMHP

Learn more about IRCT’s work at www.irct.org
for 25 years, treating some 30,000 survivors of torture and ill-treatment, 90 percent of whom are Palestinians detained by Israel.

Learn more about TRCs work at www.english.trc-pal.org

In an example of the solidarity between members that is the greatest strength of IRCT’s network, TRC hired an additional staff member so that calls to GCMHP’s emergency hotline could be forwarded to TRC’s hotline, thus relieving staff in Gaza and offering continued support to Palestinians living through the most dire of circumstances. IRCT published a film about the collaboration, and shared it with TRC and some partners to showcase such essential professional expertise during a crisis, and to advocate for future support to a Care4Caregivers project in 2024. TRC also received two emergency grants from IRCT before the end of the year.

Watch: Time of Crisis: Mobilising to Meet Needs During War and Occupation

TRC employed additional staff so that GCMHP could forward calls from Gaza to TRC’s crisis hotline in the West Bank.

“These are extremely difficult times, however we must remain united in care and support for each other, and hope that tomorrow will be a brighter and safer day for all.”

— MIKA FOUX, Director of Resource Development at ASSAF, Israel.

Based in Ramallah, TRC’s free hotline, allows people impacted by traumatic events to speak directly to the centre’s psychologists.

Israel’s total siege of Gaza amounts to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. Civilians must always be protected.

IRCT signed the Ceasefire Now petition within a week of its release, and encouraged all members and partners to do the same.

Staff at GCMHP, the leading mental health charity offering psychological support to Gazan’s thousands of seriously traumatised children.

Reaching Out

As well as supporting our members in Israel and Palestine, IRCT worked with four members of the United Against Torture Consortium to publish a joint statement, on 19 October, expressing solidarity and deepest sympathies with all victims, calling on the international community to place human dignity at the centre of its actions, and identifying Israel’s total siege of Gaza as both a war crime and a form of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. We also endorsed work by the Public Committee Against Torture in Israel (PCATI), a member of OMCT and a long-time partner of IRCT, that documented 19 verified cases of “an unprecedented escalation in abuse of Palestinian detainees by Israel Prison Service (IPS) personnel” since 7 October, and met with PCATI to discuss renewed IRCT support for its torture documentation and accountability work through 2024.

Psychologically, my work has a huge impact. I can only listen. I wish I could offer more.”

— DOHA TAHA, Psychologist, TRC, West Bank, on answering calls from Gaza on TRC’s crisis hotline.
7.3 Strong Organisation, Inside and Out

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. In 2023, IRCT members participated in an online General Assembly to elect new gender-balanced governance bodies, had opportunities to bid for nearly 40 different sub-grants, and saw their work showcased for each other and for a growing international audience.

General Assembly 2023: Members and Survivors Driving the Change

From the Pacific West Coast of North America to the Yellow Sea of Korea, over 100 members of IRCT joined online on October 25th to elect new regional Council members, Advisory Board conveners, and a new Executive Committee (for details see section 10). Suraj Koirala of TPO Nepal, formerly a Council member for Asia, was elected as IRCT President for the next three years. The very real and urgent work the new ExCom will be overseeing was underscored by the participation of Dr Yasser Abu Jamei, Director General of the Gaza Community Mental Health Programme (see above) who was elected to the ExCom to represent IRCT’s Middle East and North Africa (MENA) members, even as Israeli bombardment continued around the tent encampment he now lives in with his family in Rafah. A new initiative, the IRCT Survivor Advisory Board (SAB), which had been developed by members centers, was approved during the Assembly.

The SAB will be a group formed by 10 survivors, one elected from each of IRCT’s seven regions, and up to three additional members. Its purpose will be to provide guidance and expertise to the IRCT Council and the IRCT secretariat to ensure that IRCT as a global anti-torture organisation utilises the experience and opinions of torture survivors to form policies, strategies, procedures, and activities in as empowering and respectful a manner as possible. Deadline for voting has been set for the end of May 2024.

Communicating the Movement

The overall goal of IRCT Communications is to produce content that underpins the successful implementation by IRCT members of the goals on Healing and Justice for torture survivors set out in our Strategy.

In doing so, the IRC’s diverse network is strengthened as members see themselves represented, have opportunities to learn about each other’s work, and grow in solidarity. For our external partners, the goal is to couple the credibility of IRCT’s content, resting on professional expertise and first-hand torture rehabilitation experience in a wide variety of contexts, with consistency in best practice standards of media production, to make the IRCT an indispensable partner in the development sector, and a reliable, engaging source of essential human rights information for interested members of the public, of all ages.

To those ends, in 2023 IRCT’s Insights highlighted the most important expertise shared by members and our partners in the fight against torture, introducing a new short single Q&A format designed to appeal to busy social media users, and to provide an easily searchable video archive of our collective work.

Meet Our Members introduced audiences to the people and places that make the IRCT what it is, launching new short format content aimed at a younger audience interacting with content through mobile phones. And because not everything meaningful happens online, for the 26 June International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, 50 of the most active IRCT members were asked to print and physically display posters communicating our movement’s new core message:

#UnitedAgainstTorture

“I think everyone on this call has an intimate knowledge of the complexity, brutality and beauty of being human. We witness sorrow, rage, hopelessness, injustice, on a daily basis, but also resilience, courage, nuance, diversity, kindness and compassion.”

— LELA TSISKARISHVILI, IRCT Outgoing President speaking to the 2023 General Assembly.
After decades of dictatorship and civil war, Uganda has been at peace since 2006. Economic progress has reduced poverty, and legal reforms, such as the 2012 Prevention and Prohibition of Torture Act, promise greater protection for human rights. Yet in practice, fundamental rights are routinely violated, and torture by Uganda’s police and army continues with little to no meaningful accountability. Founded in 1993 by a Ugandan doctor and torture survivor, the African Centre for Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture Victims (ACTV) is based in Kampala. With a staff of 40, and regional offices in Gulu and Karimoja in Northern Uganda, and Kasese in the West, ACTV has provided rehabilitation to over 20,000 torture survivors.

**MAG, Philippines**

Medical Action Group (MAG) was founded in the Philippines in 1982 by health care professionals in response to systematic violations of human rights and the poverty and marginalisation caused by the Marcos dictatorship.

**CCTI, Mexico**

The Colectivo Contra la Tortura y la Impunidad (CCTI) is based in Acapulco on Mexico’s Pacific coast. CCTI was born from the onslaught of police brutality faced by citizens during the past two decades of the State’s War on Drugs.

**Vive Zene, Bosnia Herzegovina:**

Vive Zene was founded in 1994 in order to provide reception, care and rehabilitation of women and children victims of war persecution.

**Restart, Lebanon**

In 1996, at the time when a blind eye was turned to torture and victims were marginalized, four spirited friends and human rights defenders decided to take the challenge of establishing a rehabilitation centre for victims of torture and trauma survivors in Lebanon.

**GCRT, Georgia**

“Since Georgia has had turmoil and violence right from the break-up of the Soviet Union, somehow the field of psychotraumatology evolved earlier. A lot of suffering caused development of the field,” says Lela Tsiskarishvili, Executive Director of the Georgian Centre for Rehabilitation of Torture Victims, GCRT.

**Meet Our Members**

**ACTV, Uganda**

After decades of dictatorship and civil war, Uganda has been at peace since 2006. Economic progress has reduced poverty, and legal reforms, such as the 2012 Prevention and Prohibition of Torture Act, promise greater protection for human rights. Yet in practice, fundamental rights are routinely violated, and torture by Uganda’s police and army continues with little to no meaningful accountability. Founded in 1993 by a Ugandan doctor and torture survivor, the African Centre for Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture Victims (ACTV) is based in Kampala. With a staff of 40, and regional offices in Gulu and Karimoja in Northern Uganda, and Kasese in the West, ACTV has provided rehabilitation to over 20,000 torture survivors.

**IRCT Shorts**

As part of an effort to reach younger audiences, IRCT launched a new series of eye-catching short videos, designed for users accessing social media on their phones, and built on simple, powerful messages about human rights aimed at inspiring curiosity and sharing the voices of survivors.

**IRCT Insights**

Insights and inspiration on the fight for healing and justice for today’s torture survivors from IRCT’s frontline human rights defenders around the world.

**Compelling Evidence:**

How Forensic Documentation of Torture Supports Strategic Litigation

**Protect the Protest:**

Police Brutality in Peru, with members CAPS

**Frontline Forensics in the Philippines:**

Insights from a Founder of MAG

**Ukraine One Year On:**

IRCT Members in Action

**Family Affair:**

Treating Intergenerational Trauma

**Support the Poor:**

Why Livelihoods is Integral to Torture Rehabilitation

**MHPSS in Humanitarian Response:**

IRCT Members’ Experiences

**Time of Crisis:**

Mobilising to Meet Needs During War and Occupation

**Watch MAG, Philippines**

MAG, Philippines

They pointed a gun to my head

**Watch Red-Tagging in the Philippines**

Red-Tagging in the Philippines

Hundreds of residents of a Bergen Centre have been killed.
Partnering for Progress

The IRCT signed a memorandum of understanding with Human Rights Watch Digital Investigations Lab to support them with evaluating evidence in torture and extrajudicial killing cases, and provided Doctors Without Borders, Italy with guidance on developing a torture rehabilitation programme in Palermo. We also co-delivered an event organised by the EUAA together with the Red Cross EU Office, the Council of Europe, the Deaconess Foundation (IRCT member, Finland) and the European Commission. By the end of 2023, IRCT counted a total of 46 non-member partners in the anti-torture ecosystem.

IRCT Comms

A Growing Audience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Website</th>
<th>unique Users, average per month (more than double 2022)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LinkedIn</td>
<td>followers (60% increase on 2022)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>followers (12% increase on 2022)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>followers (no change from 2022)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instagram</td>
<td>followers (new in 2023) and around 1,000 accounts reached</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

12,970
6,421
4,185
25,000
169

Accountability in Action

Under our Strategy 2022-25 IRCT has committed to addressing Safeguarding and Anti-Corruption at our workplaces and throughout our engagements with members and partners. In 2023 we received one complaint through our website about the behaviour of a trainer working on behalf of IRCT’s Secretariat.

In response we implemented a stricter procedure requiring all persons representing the IRCT to complete mandatory online courses on Safeguarding and Anti-Corruption before undertaking any work on our behalf, and a message was sent to all members and partners stressing the requirement for highest professional standards of behaviour in all work conducted as part of the IRCT.
8. Finances

For the period 1 January - 31 December 2023, the IRCT had a result of 7,0 tEUR. The income of the period totals 1.903 tEUR, covering expenditure of 1.896 t EUR. The total equity is 378 tEUR.

The main variances to the results of 2022 relate to the work done to support 22 IRCT members to attend regional trainings in Asia and Latin America. These trainings were held to upgrade technical torture rehabilitation skills by reinforcing learnings harvested on the IRCT e-learning platform fabo.org. These learnings were reinforced through long-awaited face-to-face interactions at the regional trainings. In addition, a total of 15 sub-grants were given to IRCT members working to integrate livelihood activities into the rehabilitation process, survivor engagement activities, emergency grants and advocacy grants.

Finally, a carefully designed ‘Hearing for Healing’ event with 15 survivors from 13 countries in Latin America was held with the Special Rapporteur on Torture, Dr. Alice Edwards. The objective of the three days was to allow a safe space for torture survivors to interact with the highest-ranking UN office holder on torture, the first woman to hold the post, to inform her statements and priorities during her mandate.

During 2023, IRCT secured three new multi-year grants: Sigrid Rausing, EU #UnitedAgainstTorture, and Swiss government. These grants ensure a funding pipeline which allows IRCT to plan and be more cost-effective due to synergies. The Danish government continued to be the backbone of the IRCT funding structure, providing the ability for IRCT to credibly attract other donors.

The EU consortium #UnitedAgainstTorture grant fortified IRCT ability to support member centers to provide improved rehabilitation. A call for proposal process, including intensive concept and financial assessment in a 3-tiered process, resulted in the decision to fund 17 proposals from 15 countries to be paid out in 2024.

A significant number of IRCT members continued to be active, results-oriented, and responsive to the needs of each other. 74% of IRCT members (117 out of 164) paid their voluntary membership fee, allowing five emergency grants to be approved and sent back out to members in trouble. This type of solidarity is impressive in a funding environment where stakeholders are ever-more fragmented.

Outreach to individual donors and private foundations resulted in a significant increase in the number of individuals who directly support IRCT financially—healthily above the required threshold for charity status in Denmark—and also attend the annual IRCT June 26 event.

IRCT Financial Results 2023

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income statement</th>
<th>2023 (EUR)</th>
<th>2022 (EUR)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unrestricted grants</td>
<td>375,273</td>
<td>367,709</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restricted grants</td>
<td>1,498,934</td>
<td>1,845,587</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultancies income</td>
<td>28,688</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other income</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Income</td>
<td>1,902,795</td>
<td>2,213,398</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expenses</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healing</td>
<td>-860,876</td>
<td>-1,079,638</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justice</td>
<td>-770,846</td>
<td>-677,775</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong Organisation</td>
<td>-264,079</td>
<td>-451,338</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Expenses</td>
<td>-1,895,801</td>
<td>-2,208,751</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Profit/loss for the year</td>
<td>6,994</td>
<td>4,647</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Equity</th>
<th>2023 (EUR)</th>
<th>2022 (EUR)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Restricted reserves</td>
<td>365,000</td>
<td>365,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retained earnings</td>
<td>13,481</td>
<td>6,487</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total equity</td>
<td>378,481</td>
<td>371,487</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Income

UNRESTRICTED GRANTS:

Other (Organisations and Individuals)
- Sigrid Rausing Trust: 232,455
- Be Thou My Vision Foundation: 93,789
- Globalt Fokus: 1,959
- Danish trusts and foundations: 0
- Membership contributions: 38,181
- Individuals: Residents Denmark and EU: 5,033
- Individuals: Residents elsewhere: 3,856
- Total: 375,273

RESTRICTED GRANTS:

National governments
- Denmark: Ministry of Foreign Affairs "Strategy": 1,209,086
- Denmark: Ministry of Foreign Affairs "Digital Resilience": 29,667
- Swiss: Ministry of Foreign Affairs "Global Indicator": 0
- Swiss: Ministry of Foreign Affairs: 39,776
- Total: 1,268,538

Multilateral institutions:

European Commission
- EU: "United Against Torture": 108,058
- Total: 108,058

Other (Organisations and Individuals)
- Sigrid Rausing Trust: "Ukraine Response" & "COVID-19": 5,284
- USAID: "eLearning": 78,975
- Be Thou My Vision Foundation: "Livelihood": 0
- Novo Nordisk Fonden: "Humanitarian Support": 0
- Globalt Fokus: "eLearning" & "Tech4Democracy": 15,179
- Membership contributions: "Torture Journal": 11,221
- Membership contributions: "Global Indicator": 0
- Other: 1,588
- Total: 1,498,834

Expenditure 2023

Note 3: Healing
- Global Rehabilitation: 50,048
- Capacity: 105,535
- Livelihoods: 40,375
- Survivor Engagement: 195,958
- Total: 455,917

Note 4: Justice
- Torture Exposed: 10,320
- Strengthening Laws and Policies: 78,902
- Impactful Advocacy: 0
- Total: 99,222

Note 5: Organisational Development
- Strong Organisation: 0
- Total: 0

Total Income: 2023 (EUR) 1,498,834

Total Expenditure 2023: 2023 (EUR) 1,498,834

Note: All amounts are in EUR.
9. Our Donors

- Special thanks for the extraordinary contribution to Torture Journal from our members in Australia, STARTTS and OSSTT, and in the US CVT/USAID.
- Thank you to all our private supporters.
- Thank you to all IRCT members who have contributed financially in 2023.
- 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.
In October 2023, the IRCT virtual General Assembly elected the following persons to IRCT’s governance bodies:

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

- **Mr Suraj Koirala**
  IRCT President, Technical Advisor, TPO, Nepal
- **Ms Robyn Smythe**
  IRCT Vice President, Director, STTARS, Australia
- **Mr Kolbassia Haoussou**
  Coordinator, Survivors Speak Out Network, FFT, United Kingdom
- **Ms Angela Ospina**
  Director, CAPS, Colombia
- **Mr Yasser Abu Jamei**
  Executive Committee
- **Ms Dinali Fernando**
  Director, Libertas, United States
- **Mr Taiga Wanyanja**
  Executive Director, Mwatikho Torture Survivors Foundation, Kenya

**COUNCIL**

- **Elected by the **Asia Region**:**
  - **Ms Khalida Salimi**
    Regional representative, Founder, SACH, Pakistan
  - **Mr Suraj Koirala**
    Executive Committee

- **Elected by the **Europe Region**:**
  - **Ms Turkcan Baykal**
    Regional representative, Medical Doctor, HRFT, Turkey
  - **Mr Kolbassia Haoussou**
    Executive Committee

- **Elected by the **Latin America and the Caribbean Region**:**
  - **Mr Andrés Gautier Hirsch**
    Regional representative, Director, ITEI, Bolivia
  - **Ms Angelina Ospina**
    Executive Committee

- **Elected by the **Middle East and North Africa Region**:**
  - **Ms Ameera Abdulkareem Marran Marie**
    Regional Representative, BFRICT, Iraq
  - **Mr Yasser Abu Jamei**
    Executive Committee

- **Elected by the **North America Region**:**
  - **Mr Léonce Byimana**
    Regional Representative, Director of U.S. Clinical Programs, TASSC, United States
  - **Ms Dinali Fernando**
    Executive Committee

- **Elected by the **Pacific Region**:**
  - **Ms Merissa Van Der Linden**
    Regional Representative, CEO, ASeTTS, Australia
  - **Mr Robyn Smythe**
    Executive Committee

- **Elected by the **Sub-Saharan Africa Region**:**
  - **Ms Uju Agomoh**
    Regional Representative, Founder, PRAWA, Nigeria
  - **Mr Taiga Wanyanja**
    Executive Committee

**ADVISORY BOARD CONVENERS**

- **Ms Tina Tsomaia**
  Communications
- **Mr Khader Rasras**
  Health
- **Mr Martin Hill**
  Research
- **Ms Kathi Anderson**
  Resources and Sustainability
- **Ms Sana Hamzeh**
  Compliance

**Members list**

**Asia (21)**

- **Bangladesh**
  Centre for Rehabilitation of Torture Survivors (CRTS) Human Rights Development Centre (HRDC)
- **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)
  Vasavaya 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 (56)**

- **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)
- **Belgium**
  Transcultural Centre for Mental and Physical Health and Integration (OMEGA)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Organisation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bosnia and Herzegovina</td>
<td>The Association of Concentration Camp Detainees in Bosnia and Herzegovina (SLUBIH)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vive Zene Centre for Therapy and Rehabilitation (VIVE ZENE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Croatia</td>
<td>Rehabilitation Centre for Stress and Trauma Zagreb (RCT Zagreb)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyprus</td>
<td>Cyprus Refugee Council (CyRC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>Dignity - The Danish Institute Against Torture (DIGNITY)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Oasis - Treatment and Counseling for Refugees (OASIS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rehabilitation Centre for Torture Victims – Jutland (RCT JUTLAND)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>Centre for Psychotraumatology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>Parcours d’Exil - Medical and Psychological Rehabilitation for Torture Victims (PARCOURS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>Georgian Centre for Psychosocial and Medical Rehabilitation of Torture Victims (GCRT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>Medical Service for Refugees Bochum (MFH Bochum)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PSZ Düsseldorf (PSZ)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Zentrum Überleben</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Psychosoziales Zentrum für traumatisierte Geflüchtete Bielefeld (PSZ Bielefeld)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>Cordelia Foundation for the Rehabilitation of Torture Victims (CORDELIA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>Spirasi The Centre for the Care of Survivors of Torture (SPIRASI)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>Aid Organisation for Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Israel (ASSAF)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>Doctors Against Torture Humanitarian Organisation (MCT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NAGA-HAR Centre for Asylum Seekers, Refugees and Torture Victims (NAGA-HAR)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kosovo</td>
<td>The Kosovo Rehabilitation Centre for Torture Victims (KRCT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyrgyzstan</td>
<td>Golos Svobody Public Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moldova</td>
<td>Rehabilitation Centre for Torture Victims Memoria (RCTV Memoria)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>Centrum 45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>De Evenaar, Centrum voor Transculturele Psychiatrie Noord Nederland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Psychiatra Zentrum Zuid Nederland (PTC ZN)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>The Centre for Victims of Political Persecution (CVPP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>ICAR Foundation - Medical Rehabilitation Centre for Torture Victims Bucharest (ICAR)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Medical Rehabilitation Centre Craiova Foundation (MRC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>Crew Against Torture (CAT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serbia</td>
<td>International Aid Network, IAN, Centre for Rehabilitation of Torture Victims (IAN CRTV)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>Comisión Española de Ayuda al Refugiado (CEAR)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>RKC Göteborg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>RKC Malme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>RKC Skellefteå</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>RKC Skövde</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>RKC Stockholm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>RKC Uppsala</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>Consultation for Victims of Torture and War (CTG)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Outpatient Clinic for the Victims of Torture and War Zürich (AFK)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SRC Centre for Migration and Health/Out-patient Clinic for Victims of Torture and War (SRC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tajikistan</td>
<td>No Torture Tj</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>Foundation for Social and Legal Studies (TOHAV)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Human Rights Foundation Turkey- Ankara (HRFT Ankara)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Human Rights Foundation Turkey- Diyarbakir (HRFT Diyarbakir)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukraine</td>
<td>International Medical Rehabilitation Centre for the Victims of Wars and Totalitarian Regimes (IRC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>Freedom from Torture (FFT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Room to Heal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Helen Bamber Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin America</td>
<td>Argentine Team of Psychosocial Work and Research (EATIP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>Institute of Therapy and Research about Sequelae of Torture and State Violence (ITEI)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bolivia</td>
<td>Centre for Mental Health and Human Rights (CINTRAS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>Centre of Psychological Assistance Corporation (CAPS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecuador</td>
<td>Foundation for Integral Rehabilitation of Violence (PRIVA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guatemala</td>
<td>Asociacion Equipo de Estudios Comunitarios y Accion Psicosocial (ECAP)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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 Atención Psicosocial (CAPS)

Middle East and North Africa (15)

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

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

Jiyan Foundation for Human Rights

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

Jordan
Institute for Family Health - Noor Al Hussein Foundation (IFH)
The Center for Victims of Torture (CVT Jordan/Iraq)

Lebanon
Association Justice and Mercy (AJEM)
Khiam Rehabilitation Centre of the Victims of Torture (KRC)

Lebanese Centre for Human Rights (CLDH)

Restart Centre for Rehabilitation of Victims of Violence and Torture (RESTART)

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 (ACTRVT)

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 (BCRHRH)

Centre for Survivors of Torture, Dallas (CST)

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

De Novo Centre for Justice and Healing (DENNOVO)

Florida Centre for Survivors of Torture (FCST (JFCS)

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)

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)

Sub Saharan Africa (27)

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 (AJPNV)

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)
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)

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 DKK69 3000 3001 9571 71

U.S. Dollars (USD) Account
Registration No. 4183
Account No. 4310-005029
IBAN DKK18 3000 4310 0050 29