

Why ratify the UN Convention against Torture?



CONVENTION AGAINST TORTURE INITIATIVE
CTI2024.ORG

There are many good reasons why 165 States have ratified the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (Convention, or UNCAT):

1. The Convention commits and guides States, through an incremental process of improvement, on effective torture prohibition, prevention, punishment and redress for victims.
2. Ratification sends a powerful message that the ratifying State and the international community are united in their conviction that torture can never be tolerated under any circumstances.
3. Almost uniquely amongst human rights treaties, UNCAT contains a practical list of steps to prevent torture and ill-treatment or punishment, while giving States adequate flexibility to tailor them to their own national context.
4. The Convention strengthens the rule of law and the administration of justice, facilitates effective law enforcement and produces safer and well-managed prisons. This promotes stability, economic investment and the Sustainable Development Goals (especially SDG16).
5. Ratification also provides a unique opportunity to redefine the relationship between the State and its citizens. It gives space for governments to correct historic or more recent incidents of violence or discriminatory policies, to abolish harmful practices, and to give voice to victims of torture to speak their truth. In so doing, relevant sectors raise awareness of appropriate standards of conduct.
6. Ratification processes generally involve consultations with a number of stakeholders, with the effect of improving

transparency and increasing public trust in State institutions and authorities.

7. Becoming party to UNCAT can support States to put in place safeguards to prevent torture and ill-treatment and to provide remedies for victims. It provides an opportunity to review, improve or update existing laws, regulations, policies and procedures.

8. Ratification also provides an impetus for enhanced training of law enforcement and other actors, and allows for exchanges between States on good practices and challenges.

9. Ratification of UNCAT builds mutual confidence between States, relevant in such matters as *non-refoulement* and extradition.

10. Ratification can lead to greater international support for needed domestic reforms in relevant sectors.

About the Convention against Torture Initiative (CTI)

In 2014, the Governments of Chile, Denmark, Fiji,* Ghana, Indonesia and Morocco launched a ten-year global initiative for the universal ratification and implementation of the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (UNCAT or the Convention).

The immediate objectives of the CTI are: to identify challenges to ratification and implementation of the UNCAT; to address these obstacles through inter-State cooperation; to become a hub for sharing knowledge and good practices between governments; to build a global platform of States, the UN, NGOs and experts to work jointly towards CTI's goal.

* Fiji joined the CTI Core Group in February 2019.