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The Year in Summary

2015 was a year of progress and consolidation for the Convention against Torture Initiative. A further two States – South Sudan and Viet Nam – ratified the UNCAT, bringing the total number of States parties to an impressive 158. Brunei Darussalam signed the Convention, signaling strong commitment to continue efforts to fight torture. San Marino lodged a declaration recognizing the competence of the Committee against Torture to receive and consider communications from both States and individuals in accordance with Articles 21 and 22 of the Convention. Four States – Belize, Mongolia, Rwanda and South Sudan – ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture in 2015, bringing the number of States parties to 80.

The CTI welcomed the ongoing processes being undertaken by the Governments of Fiji, Myanmar and Oman to implement UPR recommendations to ratify the UNCAT. In furtherance of these efforts, Fiji and Myanmar joined the CTI Group of Friends and we look forward to cooperating and supporting them in their continued endeavors through the CTI platform. Grenada, the Marshall Islands and Sao Tome and Principe accepted recommendations made during the Universal Periodic Reviews to intensify efforts to ratify the Convention, while Andorra, Belgium, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Lesotho, Libya and Malawi accepted recommendations to intensify efforts to ratify the Optional Protocol.

To aid States, the CTI released a Ratification Tool for the Convention against Torture, prepared in collaboration with the Association for the Prevention of Torture (APT). The tool offers information on the ratification and accessions process for government ministers and advisers on how and when to ratify the treaty. The tool is available free of charge on the CTI website, www.cti2024.org.

Also in 2015, implementing legislation has been adopted or improved in a number of States, practical measures have been put in place to minimize the risks of torture or ill-treatment by law enforcement.
officials and other State authorities, national preventive mechanisms have been designated or established, and an increasing number of States are meeting their reporting obligations while some require further assistance.

As part of its key plank of its strategy to share experiences between States and to facilitate Government-to-Government dialogue, the CTI continued to arrange regional meetings on thematic issues relevant to the specific region. In 2015, four major meetings were held in Costa Rica, Indonesia, Morocco and Poland on various themes - from ratification through to rehabilitation and on prevention of torture in police custody. These events shared good State practices, and saw the participation of more than 40 States. The CTI also held events in Geneva and New York.

A significant boost to the CTI’s capacity was the establishment of a full-time Secretariat, which began its work in April 2015, greatly enhancing the capacity of the CTI to respond to State requests for assistance and to facilitate the work of the CTI.

The CTI established a significant online presence through social media and a bespoke website – www.cti2024.org – to keep States, partners and followers up to date with the latest activities. The CTI is also now on Twitter @cti2024 and Facebook.

While recognizing that the achievements highlighted here do not by themselves guarantee that torture will be eradicated, the CTI firmly believes that they are important steps towards a better global implementation of the Convention and its Optional Protocol.

The CTI would also like to recognize and extend our thanks to the 32 UN Member States who have already signed up to join the CTI’s Group of Friends of the Convention against Torture Initiative. 12 new States joined in 2015. We are grateful for the support provided already by many of these States.

The CTI would also like to recognize the range of NGOs and leading UN experts that have joined the Friends’ group. In order to widen the platform for the exchange of knowledge, experience and ideas on how to achieve universal ratification and implementation of the Convention against Torture, we reiterate our invitation to all UN Member States to join the Group of Friends of the CTI.

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### Timeline of CTI events 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 2015</td>
<td>• Adoption of the CTI Catalogue of Activities for 2015</td>
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<tr>
<td>25 February 2015</td>
<td>• First meeting of the CTI Group of Friends, Geneva</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 March 2015</td>
<td>• High Level Event at the 28th session of the Human Rights Council,</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Geneva</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 April 2015</td>
<td>• The CTI Secretariat is officially opened, Geneva</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 to 8 May 2015</td>
<td>• Study visit of a delegation from Myanmar to Geneva</td>
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<tr>
<td>12 May 2015</td>
<td>• UNCAT Ratification Seminar, New York</td>
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<tr>
<td>7 August 2015</td>
<td>• Briefing by the CTI to the UN Committee against Torture at their</td>
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<td></td>
<td>55th session, Geneva</td>
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<tr>
<td>10 to 11 August</td>
<td>• Meeting for ASEAN Member States on the preventive approach, Bali,</td>
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<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Indonesia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 September 2015</td>
<td>• OSCE HDIM side event on rehabilitation, Warsaw, Poland</td>
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<tr>
<td>29 September 2015</td>
<td>• High Level breakfast meeting during the opening week of UNGA70,</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>New York</td>
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<tr>
<td>7 October 2015</td>
<td>• Launch of the CTI website and the UNCAT Ratification Tool, Geneva</td>
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<tr>
<td>20 October 2015</td>
<td>• UNGA70 side event with the three UN torture mandate holders, New</td>
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<td>York</td>
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<tr>
<td>29 to 30 October</td>
<td>• Meeting for Caribbean States on UNCAT ratification, San José,</td>
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<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Costa Rica</td>
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<tr>
<td>13 to 15 December</td>
<td>• Meeting for MENA States on policing practices in places of detention, Marrakech, Morocco</td>
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<tr>
<td>15 December 2015</td>
<td>• Second Annual CTI Forum, Marrakech, Morocco</td>
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CTI Catalogue of Activities

In the beginning of 2015, the CTI adopted an ambitious catalogue of activities to be implemented throughout the year. The catalogue focused on five main areas:

1. Outreach and support to non-States parties
2. Sharing experiences
3. Tools
4. Highlighting good practices
5. Monitoring and strategy

Click here for the full catalogue of activities for 2015.

Establishment of the CTI Secretariat

On 1 April 2015, the CTI Secretariat officially opened its doors. The CTI Secretariat oversees activity implementation, monitors progress and advises on CTI strategies.

The CTI Secretariat is hosted by the Association for the Prevention of Torture (APT) in Centre Jean-Jacques Gautier (CJJG) in Geneva.

Launch of the CTI website

The CTI website – www.cti2024.org – was launched at a reception which took place in the CJJG on 7 October 2015. The website was developed in a joint collaboration between the CTI Secretariat, the APT and web design company Graf Miville.

The website contains background information about the CTI, the goals and visions of the CTI, information on how the CTI can help, the CTI Group of Friends, past and coming activities as well as meeting reports, statements, annual reports and tools that are being developed either by or for the CTI.

The CTI also established an online social presence through Twitter @cti2024 and Facebook.

Events

First Meeting in the CTI Group of Friends

16 of the at the time 21 State members of the CTI Group of Friends joined the CTI core group for an informal discussion on CTI progress and developments on 25 February 2015 at the CJJG. The meeting provided an opportunity to take stock of current and future developments and to brainstorm new areas of cooperation.
High Level Event at the 28th session of the Human Rights Council

On 3 March 2015, the CTI held a high level event during the 28th session of the Human Rights Council focusing on how to reach universal ratification and implementation of the UNCAT by 2024.

The event discussed global and regional strategies on how to achieve these goals and celebrated and highlighted important progress by individual UN member States.

The event was attended by more than 100 participants from 35 States, and from international organisations and non-governmental organisations and civil society organizations.

Read the report of proceedings here.

Study visit by a delegation from Myanmar to Geneva

The CTI arranged a study visit for a delegation from Myanmar over the period 4-8 May 2015. The objectives of the visit were to:

- Encourage Myanmar towards a formal process of ratification, through high level meetings with CTI Ambassadors and senior UN officials;
- De-mystify the ratification and reporting processes through sessions on ratification, including introducing the Ratification Tool, kindly delivered by APT, and through attendance at sessions of the Committee against Torture;
- Allow for experiences to be shared both from CTI Core Group members and countries from the region, such as Viet Nam and Fiji.

Read more about the visit here and learn more about CTI study visits here.

UNCAT Ratification Seminar

On 12 May 2015, the CTI and the Permanent Missions of Chile, Denmark, Ghana, Indonesia and Morocco held a half day seminar on UNCAT ratification.

Non-States parties to the Convention as well as Government members of the CTI Group of Friends were invited to participate in the seminar in order to provide a forum to consider the benefits of UNCAT ratification, challenges to ratification and good practices on how to overcome them. Furthermore, participants were introduced to the – at the time – draft UNCAT Ratification Tool.

20 States participated in the seminar, including five non-States parties, 10 members of the Group of Friends and the five spearheading States of the CTI as well as APT and the CTI Secretariat.

Read the report of proceedings here.
Briefing for the UN Committee against Torture
On 7 August, the CTI was invited to brief the members of the UN Committee against Torture (CAT) at their 55th session in Geneva. The Committee was updated on the vision and goals of the CTI, as well as developments, progress and achievements of the CTI during the past year.

High Level Breakfast meeting during the 70th session of the UN General Assembly
On 29 September 2015, during the opening week of the 70th session of the UN General Assembly, more than 60 State representatives participated in a one-hour breakfast meeting hosted by the CTI. The objective of the meeting was for the five spearheading States behind the Initiative – Chile, Denmark, Ghana, Indonesia and Morocco – to provide a global overview of the CTI and to hear and learn about State experiences.

Read the report of proceedings here.

UNGA70 side event with the three torture mandate holders
Chair of the UN Committee against Torture, Claudio Grossman, Chair of the UN Sub-Committee on Prevention of Torture, Malcolm Evans, and Special Rapporteur on Torture, Juan Mendez, provided on 20 October their personal views on the benefits of UNCAT and OPCAT ratification at a CTI side event during the UN General Assembly's 70th session.

Read the press release from the meeting here.

Second Annual CTI Forum 2015
CTI’s second annual Forum took place immediately after the closing of the MENA regional event on 15 December in Marrakech. During the closed sessions, CTI State Group of Friends as well as invited experts discussed CTI ratification and implementation strategies for 2016 and in some cases beyond.

Regional meetings

ASEAN meeting in Bali, Indonesia
A two-day regional workshop took place on 10 and 11 August 2015 in Bali, Indonesia, for ASEAN Member States focusing on preserving human dignity by preventing torture and ill-treatment in ASEAN.

The workshop was jointly organized by the CTI, the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the ASEAN Inter-Governmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR) and APT. It aimed to promote constructive dialogue and strategic cooperation among ASEAN Member States on a preventive agenda, to improve the understanding among ASEAN Member States on the preventive approach in reducing the risk of torture and other forms of ill-treatment, and to promote cooperation amongst ASEAN Member States with international partners. The overall hope was to encourage the AICHR to consider including torture prevention as part of its priority program.

A list of recommendations on how to further engage on prevention of torture in the region included:
• To convene regional ‘mini-UPRs’ to help shape dialogue between ASEAN Member States and AICHR and peer-to-peer review between ASEAN Member States;
• To enable the submission of individual communications to ASEAN human rights bodies such as AICHR and the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children;
• To strengthen cooperation and resource sharing, such as by using the CTI Group of Friends as a platform of cooperation;
• To establish a network of practitioners specialized in torture prevention;
• To establish a sub-committee on torture prevention in ASEAN;
• To develop regional torture prevention guidelines similar to the Robben Island Guidelines.

Read the report of proceedings here.

OSCE meeting in Warsaw, Poland
The CTI held a side event on 25 September 2015 at the OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting. The event was co-sponsored by Denmark, Norway and Switzerland.

The objective of the event was to identify implementation challenges in the OSCE area within three areas:

• National Preventive Mechanisms;
• Independent investigative bodies; and
• Rehabilitation of torture victims.

Read the press release here.

Caribbean meeting in San José, Costa Rica
A CTI regional event to promote UNCAT ratification to non-States parties in the Caribbean region took place on 29 and 30 October in San José, Costa Rica. The meeting was an important first step in the wider campaign to achieve universal ratification of the Convention. The meeting was organized by the CTI with the support of the Inter-American Institute of Human Rights. Senior government officials working on police and justice issues from the Caribbean States of Dominica, Grenada, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia and Suriname participated in the event, with the support of high level speakers and experts.

The meeting discussed the steps that States need to take to ratify the Convention and to ensure its meaningful implementation. Good regional examples from States were shared. It was stressed that ratification should be followed by effective implementation of the Convention which would allow for the improvement of governance standards and increased legitimacy in implementing policies to fight crime.

The implementation of some Convention obligations, including for example the reporting obligation, was of concern to some States. However, States were reassured that through cooperation with
organizations, experts and peers, obstacles related to the implementation of obligations could be overcome.

Read the press release from the meeting here.

**MENA meeting in Marrakech, Morocco**

On 14 and 15 December 2015, the Kingdom of Morocco, Wilton Park and the CTI convened a regional workshop of MENA States and anti-torture experts in Marrakech to discuss how to prevent torture and ill-treatment in police custody. The workshop was attended by more than 70 participants signaling strong commitment to eradicate the practice of torture and to improve safeguards in the region.

Representatives from Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, State of Palestine, Tunisia, and the United Arab Emirates participated in the workshop alongside local, regional as well as international anti-torture experts.

The workshop provided a forum, on the basis of the provisions of the Convention against Torture, to:

- Explore options for viable solutions to prevent torture in police detention;
- Exchange good practices and lessons learned in the implementation of torture-prevention policies and programs;
- Strengthen informal dialogue between key actors in the MENA region.

Challenges were identified as pertaining to legislative, political, societal, cultural, and practical issues as well as proposed ways forward. In particular, discussions focused on how to implement appropriate safeguards, including reducing the heavy reliance on confessions in criminal investigations, as well how to elevate the status of law enforcement institutions, invest in training, ensure independence and accountability of police, establish independent monitoring and investigation bodies, and pledge zero tolerance to the use of torture at the highest level.

Read the press release from the workshop here.

**New Tools**

**UNCAT Ratification Tool**

The CTI commissioned the APT to develop an UNCAT Ratification Tool to assist officials understand the ratification process with a view to briefing their senior managers and ministers effectively on what steps need to be taken to ratify or accede to the Convention.

**Guidelines on anti-torture legislation**

The CTI also commissioned the APT to develop an online anti-torture law guide which will provide a valuable resource for State officials and legal advisers on the legislative amendments that may be
required to meet the Convention’s obligations. The guide was initiated at the end of 2015 and is expected to be finalized in March 2016.

**CTI Group of Friends**

A large number of new members joined the CTI Group of Friends in 2015, showing their strong commitment to the vision and objectives of the CTI. The membership stands at 32 States from all regions of the globe as well as 19 NGOs and UN experts.

See current members, what membership entails and how to join [here](#).

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**CTI Secretariat**  
**March 2016**