

CONVENTION AGAINST TORTURE INITIATIVE
CTI2024.ORG

“The Convention against Torture Initiative: A Global Picture”

Breakfast meeting, UNGA70

29 September 2015

Report of proceedings

“There are many utilitarian reasons to ratify the Convention against Torture but the most important reason is that it is the right thing to do.”

Mr. Claudio Grossman, Chair of the UN Committee against Torture

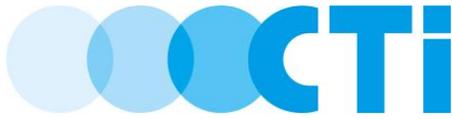
On Tuesday 29 September 2015, during the opening week of the 70th session of the UN General Assembly, more than 60 states representatives participated in a one-hour breakfast meeting hosted by the Convention against Torture Initiative. The objective of the meeting was for the five spearheading states behind the initiative – Chile, Denmark, Ghana, Indonesia and Morocco – to provide a global overview of the status quo of the CTI.

Assistant Secretary of State, Mr. Tom Malinowski, marked the US’ support for the CTI and commitment to combatting torture by stressing that:



“We are grateful for the opportunity to join the Group of Friends. The CTI is a unique forum for likeminded states to work together against torture. I am pleased to announce the United States’ intent to join the CTI’s Group of Friends and support for this valuable initiative.

We share CTI’s goal of achieving universal ratification of the Convention Against Torture. We have urged a number of countries in recent years to accede to the Convention and will continue to do so. At the same time, simply ratifying a treaty is not enough, and we are committed to working with our partners to develop preventive tools and policies that make a real difference on the ground.



CONVENTION AGAINST TORTURE INITIATIVE
CTI2024.ORG

We have other ideas that we are eager to explore with this group, like exporting police cameras and making our security and justice programming more effective in preventing torture; more robust support for civil society organizations advocating for torture prevention around the world; exploring ways to enhance oversight within the first 48 hours of detention, when research shows most incidents of torture take place; working for greater public outreach to raise awareness of torture and praise anti-torture efforts, and encouraging states to contribute more generously to the UN Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture; educating partners and security actors on the ineffectiveness of torture; and exchanging best practices and promoting further research on the causes and indicators of torture, and the best methods for prevention.”

Alongside the US, also Spain and Montenegro joined the CTI Group of Friends at the meeting. UK



Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, Baroness Joyce Anelay was likewise present and expressed the UK’s support for the Initiative:

“Reporting torture is vital as the voices of brave civil society groups around the world make clear that torture is an everyday reality in dozens of countries. Yet torture is absolutely banned under the United Nations Convention against Torture. And the pathway towards a culture of torture prevention is clearly laid out in the Optional

Protocol to the Convention. Where torture remains commonplace it is surely because governments lack the political will to end it.

I am proud that the UK has the will to speak out against torture. As the Prime Minister said, torture is always wrong. Obstacles to ratification must be overcome. The UK, with our partners, stand ready to support those states who wish to strengthen national protection mechanisms and give our full backing to this Initiative.”

Danish Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Kristian Jensen, stressed the importance of securing the CTI’s goal of universal ratification and better implementation of UNCAT by 2024 and noted that Denmark in this regard supported strong global cooperation to reach this goal:

“I am a firm believer in the right of every person to decide his or her own life and future. Torture is one of the most degrading attacks on exactly that right. Denmark remains fully committed to the global fight against torture and wish for a strong cooperation with Governments from all corners of the world sharing this commitment”.

Minister Jensen stressed that there was a continued need to assist States wishing to ratify the Convention and that regional and cross-regional sharing of experiences in that regard was of utmost importance.

Director of Global Affairs of Morocco, Mr. Amine Belhaj, also expressed Morocco’s continued support for the regional approach by the CTI by highlighting that obstacles and challenges to ratification and implementation are often regionally specific. Mr. Belhaj referred on this note to the event to take place in Marrakech in December which was tailored to the MENA region and he stressed in this regard that such meetings are important *“both in influencing change on the ground and as a stepping stone to greater engagement between States and with the CTI more generally.”*



Human Rights Director of Chile, Mr. Hernán Quezada, focused on the Latin American region where there were still a number of outstanding ratifications, in particular in the Caribbean which could be due to capacity issues or a need to know more about benefits of ratifying the Convention. These issues would be addressed at a meeting for the Caribbean states to take place at the end of October in Costa Rica.

Ambassador of Ghana, Ms. Martha Pobe and Deputy Permanent Representative of Indonesia, Mr. Muhammad Anshor, both focused on positive developments from their respective regions welcoming Viet Nam as the newest South East Asian UNCAT State party and Rwanda as the newest African OPCAT State party.

CTI Group of Friends members France, Germany, Honduras and Norway also expressed their continued full support for the CTI’s goal and ambitions.
