

Covid-19: Depositing UNCAT instruments of ratification and accession continues

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the United Nations Office of Legal Affairs (OLA) in New York has adapted its methods in order to continue processing treaty notifications.

The Treaty Section of the Office of Legal Affairs in New York has advised the CTI Secretariat that, although the practice of the Secretary-General is to accept instruments of ratification or accession in deposit only on the basis of original instruments, States ready to deposit their instrument of ratification or accession in order to become party to the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (UNCAT), during the Covid-19 period, may do so by sending a scanned copy of the final signed instrument of ratification or accession to the Treaty Section of the OLA to the following email: treatysection@un.org

The instrument thus received will be deposited as at the date the emailed instrument is received, to avoid unnecessary delays. This exceptional procedure exists with the understanding that the original, properly executed instrument will be delivered to the OLA Treaty Section as per the normal procedure when the OLA in New York re-opens.

New signatures are not able to be handled remotely, but will restart once the office re-opens and when signature ceremonies can be held safely. CTI would encourage States that are not signatory to UNCAT to opt to accede during this time as far as their domestic procedures allow.

More detailed information on the general ratification/accession procedure for UNCAT can be found in [CTI Ratification Tool](#), where you will find templates in [Annex 2 on Templates on Ratification, Accession, Reservations and Declarations to UNCAT](#). States should also consult the [United Nations Treaty Handbook](#).

These temporary arrangements further apply to the deposit of declarations in relation to the inter-State or individual communications procedures and the withdrawal of reservations under UNCAT, as well as instruments of ratification or accession for other UN multilateral treaties.

For questions on the above-mentioned exceptional procedure, please do not hesitate to contact the Treaty Section of the Office of Legal Affairs directly at treatysection@un.org, or the CTI Secretariat at helpdesk@cti2024.org.

Background

[CTI](#), launched in 2014, is an inter-governmental initiative, promoting the universal ratification and implementation of the UN Convention against Torture. The CTI is being spearheaded by the Governments of Chile, Denmark, Fiji, Ghana, Indonesia and Morocco, and is supported by a full-time Secretariat based in Geneva. CTI fosters constructive dialogue and international cooperation between States, and offers technical and capacity building support to governments. CTI is encouraged by a Group of Friends, which is open to all UN Member States and serves as a platform for the exchange of knowledge, experience and ideas on how to overcome obstacles to ratification and implementation of UNCAT.