



CONVENTION AGAINST TORTURE INITIATIVE
CTI2024.ORG

A photograph of several hands of different skin tones stacked together in a circle, symbolizing unity and support. The hands are positioned in the center of the page, with blue callout boxes on the left side.

**COVID-19 and
UNCAT**

**Policing and
Law Enforcement**

**Anti-Torture Legislative
and Regulatory
Frameworks**

**CTI's Brand New
Website**



Foreword from the CTI Core States

Funders & Partners

CTI wishes to acknowledge our major funder in 2020: the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as well as the Moroccan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as well as our partners and collaborators, including ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights, Association for the Prevention of Torture, Commonwealth Secretariat, Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative, DIGNITY-Danish Institute Against Torture, European Union, International Rehabilitation Council for Victims of Torture, Norwegian Centre for Human Rights, UN Office on Drugs and Crime, UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, UN Office of Legal Affairs, the REDRESS Trust, Sidley Austin LLP, and World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT).

As Core States leading the Convention against Torture Initiative (CTI), we have the pleasure of presenting the 7th Annual Report since the Initiative was launched in March 2014.

Looking back over this extraordinary year of the Covid-19 pandemic, we are pleased to report on a number of activities and achievements in spite of the difficulties of 2020. Modern means of communication made it possible to continue international cooperation, peer-to-peer dialogue and experience sharing. CTI proactively advised States on the applicability of the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (UNCAT) during Covid-19, as well as on new remote procedures for ratifying UNCAT.

Justice systems were clearly under strain this year yet alternative online platforms allowed proceedings to continue in some countries, or permitted monitoring inside places where persons are deprived of their liberty to take place virtually. The enforcement of widespread lockdowns, quarantine measures and curfews drew attention to the benefits of empathetic community-oriented policing, as trust between police and citizens became paramount. As prisons, correctional facilities and other similar places became hotspots for Covid-19 contagion and spread, many States actively responded by decongesting prisons and correctional facilities, organizing remote-virtual visits, and enhancing the use of mobile technology. At times, enforcement of Covid-19 measures became heated and heavy-handed, though this appeared to be the exception rather than the rule. We publicly remind all States that the prohibition against torture remains absolute and non-derogable, including during this public emergency.

An increased focus on policing and law enforcement globally was also evident in 2020, arising not only from the enforcement of Covid-19 measures but also in relation to policing of assemblies and political protests and a number of serious incidents of excessive and lethal uses of force. As part of CTI's participation in an urgent debate on racism and policing of the UN Human Rights Council, we called on all governments to pledge to review and improve their policies, practices and training curricula. Police and law enforcement have an essential role to play in ensuring that the human rights of the communities they serve are respected. We continue to leverage CTI's expertise in this area to fortify and improve national capacities. We would like to thank Dr Alice Edwards and her team in the CTI Secretariat for their ongoing work in underpinning our Initiative with technical specialisation and guidance to governments around the world.

We are especially proud to announce that UNCAT was the most ratified human rights treaty in 2020, accounting for one-third of all human rights treaty ratifications. We congratulate Oman and St Kitts and Nevis as the Convention's newest States parties, pushing the total to 171 State parties by the end of 2020.

Finally, CTI bids farewell to His Excellency Hasan Kleib, Permanent Representative of Indonesia to the UN in Geneva, and thank him for his robust contributions to CTI.

H.E. Frank Tressler, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Chile to the UN in Geneva

H.E. Morten Jespersen, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Denmark to the UN in Geneva

H.E. Nazhat Shameem Khan, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Fiji to the UN in Geneva

H.E. Ramses Joseph Cleland, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Ghana to the UN in Geneva

H.E. Hasan Kleib, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Indonesia to the UN in Geneva

H.E. Omar Zniber, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Morocco to the UN in Geneva

CTI: 2020 In Review





Alice Edwards, Head of Secretariat

As the Covid-19 health crisis spread feverishly around the world in 2020, the absolute prohibition against torture and ill-treatment became increasingly relevant as the crisis progressed and as governments imposed unprecedented measures to curb its spread. Special advice was issued by the CTI Secretariat on the applicability of UNCAT during the pandemic.

Covid-19 significantly disrupted CTI's capacity building and technical advice work. Restrictions on international travel impacted our ability to hold in-person seminars and to conduct country visits, and so we turned to online platforms and upgraded our technological communication systems. Through these changes, we continued our bilateral and multilateral discussions with a wide number of countries and partners. Impressively two States ratified the Convention (Oman and St Kitts and Nevis) using the UN's remote accession and ratification procedure.

Online activities even had some positive unintended outcomes. They allowed for wider participation, and even facilitated our contributions at multiple events in different regions in a single day! Of note this year, CTI held its first online regional seminar for 9 Caribbean States and 40 participants, hosted remotely by the Governments of Chile and Grenada, and we further participated in three additional seminars in collaboration with partners.

Not all CTI activities are suitable for online alternatives however, and there were challenges for some participants from developing countries in terms of connectivity speed and access. We are taking all of these factors into account for our 2021 work plan, and also look forward to resuming our in-person events as soon as possible.

CTI's work to support and promote professionalism in **police and law enforcement** services became very relevant.

This year saw police violence take a turn for the worse in some countries, exacerbated by racism and xenophobia against minorities, and which prompted an urgent debate in the UN Human Rights Council.

The CTI Secretariat authored a submission to the High Commissioner for Human Rights' forthcoming report on **racism and police violence**, drawing on a wide range of positive examples from around the world, and embarked on preparing a new series of 'resource notes' to guide professional human rights-oriented policing, with the first entries to be released in 2021.

The pandemic further interrupted the important work of the main **UN anti-torture mandate holders and mechanisms**. For our part, we held another successful annual high level side event with ministerial level participation from Denmark, Indonesia and Morocco during the March Human Rights Council session, and otherwise took to online briefings allowing us to meet with the Committee against Torture (CAT), the Sub-Committee on the Prevention of Torture, and a joint meeting of CTI's Geneva and New York Ambassadors together with the four torture-related UN mechanisms (including the UN Victims Fund and the Special Rapporteur on Torture) for the first time to discuss the global torture situation.

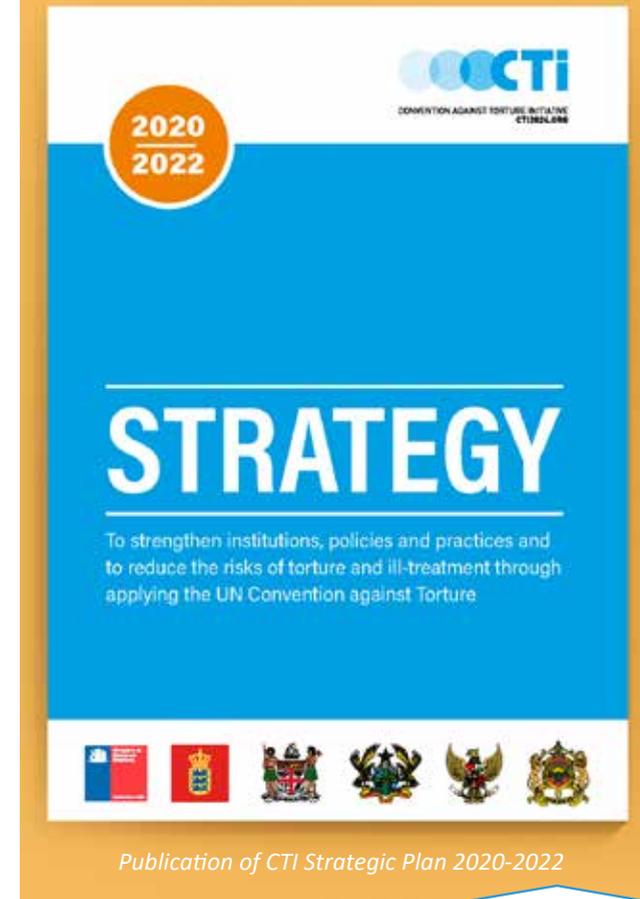
CTI Core States encouraged CAT and OHCHR to modify their working practices and procedures to allow the important reviews of State party reports to continue via remote means.

Finally, **our new website** developed during 2020 went live in January 2021. It has many new features including an 'Advice Hub' and resource database, where governments can find tools and guides, and seek one-on-one confidential expert advice on UNCAT-related questions and challenges. I am confident it will serve to improve the accessibility of our resources and technical advice, and we look forward to responding to new queries from governments and national institutions.

14 Virtual and in-person meetings with non-States-parties

4 Virtual briefings of UN torture mechanisms

2 Virtual and in-person briefings with regional groupings



[Click here for full document](#)

FOCUS ON: COVID 19 AND UNCAT



Mindful of the impact that the Covid-19 pandemic has had on the protection and fulfilment of human rights, and particularly risks of torture and ill-treatment, CTI released an advisory note on the applicability of the UN Convention against Torture in Covid-19 times.

The note compiles key guidance and good State practices during Covid-19 in preventing and responding to torture and ill-treatment in places of deprivation of liberty or confinement, in relation to humane enforcement of lockdown, quarantine and other restrictive measures, ensuring special care of victims of torture, and guaranteeing remote independent oversight and monitoring of places of deprivation of liberty.

Covid-19 has also affected States' ability to sign treaties and deposit original instruments of accession or ratification in-person at the Treaty Section of the Office of Legal Affairs in New York (OLA). CTI released, in conjunction with OLA, advice on new procedures for acceding or ratifying during the Covid-19 period, by sending scanned copies of instruments via e-mail. We encouraged States to make use of such means to pursue ratification and accession to UNCAT.



[Click here for full document](#)

Publication of advisory note: Covid 19 and The UN Convention Against Torture

2 UNCAT ratifications using remote procedure 2 Covid-19 related advice notes published



UNCAT DURING COVID-19





“Police and other law enforcement actors in all our societies play an incredibly important role so that ordinary citizens can go about their daily lives without fear. Integrity is fundamental for them to be able to perform their functions safely and effectively, and without it, the social contract is fractured.”

H.E. HASAN KLEIB,

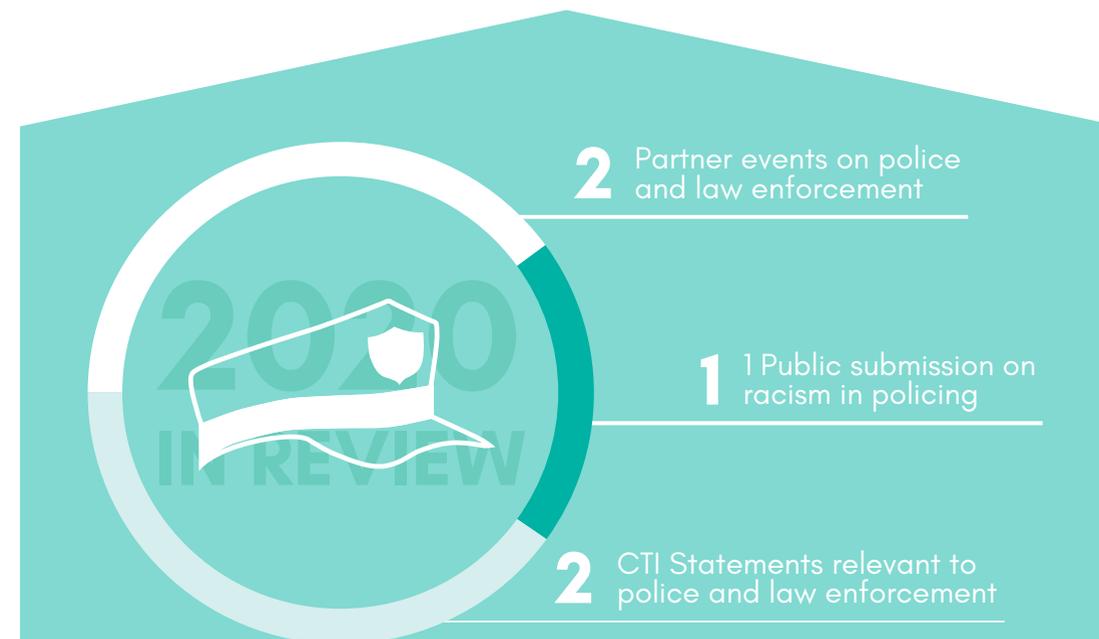
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Indonesia, on behalf of the CTI Core States during an Urgent Debate on “current racially inspired human rights violations, systemic racism, police brutality and the violence against peaceful protest” at HRC43

2020 saw several serious incidents of [racially motivated excessive use of force and violence in policing worldwide](#), prompting the United Nations Human Rights Council to take action and hold an Urgent Debate on “Current racially inspired human rights violations, systemic racism, police brutality and the violence against peaceful protest” in June 2020. Addressing the Council, CTI underscored the essential roles and responsibilities of police and law enforcement in maintaining law and order, sustaining peaceful communities and ensuring that the human rights of the communities they serve are respected, including the right to be free from torture and ill-treatment. During the Human Rights Council’s General Debate on Item 3 held in March 2020, CTI had previously highlighted the important role of police and law enforcement as being on “on the frontlines of justice” and that they should be engaged as champions against torture.

[As part of CTI’s ongoing capacity building work](#) supporting States to prevent torture and ill-treatment in the first hours of police custody through the implementation of

safeguards and non-coercive interviewing, Head of Secretariat Dr. Alice Edwards participated in a number of activities on professionalising police and law enforcement, speaking at a professional training on human rights-oriented policing for Asian and European participants organised by the Norwegian Human Rights Centre in October 2020, and at a consultation of the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights on the implementation of Article 14 of the ASEAN Human Rights Declaration in December 2020.

[Additionally](#), the CTI Secretariat submitted a public contribution towards the High Commissioner for Human Rights’ report on systemic racism in policing, to be presented at the Human Rights Council’s 47th session in June 2021. CTI’s submission identified [10 elements of professional and rights-compliant policing](#) and law enforcement and captured 35 good State practices from 27 countries across regions. Head of Secretariat also advised the NGO consortium promoting [International Principles on investigative interviewing](#).



LAW ENFORCEMENT AND POLICING

FOCUS ON:

FOCUS ON: ANTI-TORTURE LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORKS

CTI has continued offering remote technical support and advice to States wishing to undertake reviews of their legislative and regulatory frameworks to ensure compliance with the UN Convention against Torture, in preparation for UNCAT ratification/ accession and as part of ongoing domestic implementation efforts.

[CTI entered into a new partnership with law firm Sidley Austin LLP's pro bono service](#) to bolster the CTI Secretariat's capacity to undertake comprehensive legal research and provide confidential, tailored advice to developing countries.

In December 2020, in partnership with REDRESS and the Commonwealth Secretariat, CTI organised an [online regional workshop for Commonwealth Caribbean countries](#), where government participants practiced legislative drafting skills and writing Cabinet submissions for UNCAT treaty ratification, and exchanged on experiences in criminalising, prosecuting and preventing acts of torture and ill-treatment. Nine (9) Caribbean States participated, with 40 participants overall.

Also in partnership with REDRESS, [CTI published its eighth tool](#) guiding States on implementing the Convention, which explored procedures and practices on excluding torture-tainted evidence from court proceedings. It showcased 22 examples.

"UNCAT is not inflexible in how the obligations should be achieved. This is deliberate, and encourages States to develop laws, policies, practices and mechanisms that conform to their own unique context and character while complying with the obligations of the Convention."

MS. JEWEL MAJOR,

Chief Counsel in the Office of the Attorney-General and Ministry of Legal Affairs of the Bahamas, during CTI's online workshop for Commonwealth Caribbean countries violations, systemic racism, police brutality and the violence against peaceful protest" at HRC43



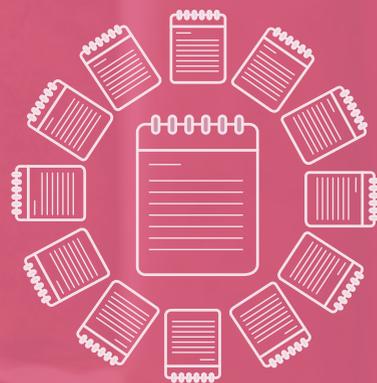
UNCAT Implementation Tool 8/2020 "Non-admission of evidence obtained by torture and ill-treatment: Procedures and practices":

40 PARTICIPANTS



in Caribbean regional workshop

notes on laws shared with governments



13 ADVISORY NOTES

1 Virtual regional workshop on anti-torture legislation



9 States participated in anti-torture legislation workshop

FOCUS ON: NEARING GLOBAL RATIFICATION OF UNCAT



[Click here for full document](#)

The United Nations Convention against Torture (UNCAT) was the most ratified UN human rights treaty in 2020.

1/3 of all human rights treaty ratifications were to UNCAT!

Despite the global pandemic, two States joined UNCAT, making it the most ratified of the core UN human rights treaties in 2020! In fact, one-third of all human rights ratifications in 2020 were to UNCAT.

CTI had encouraged and supported both new States parties – [St Kitts & Nevis](#) and [Oman](#) – by providing advice and sharing information on the many positive benefits of becoming party to the Convention. [Congratulations!](#)

CTI also profiled three UNCAT States parties in our blog series. The Governments of [The Gambia](#), [Ghana](#) and [Grenada](#) shared their reasons for ratifying the Convention, and the positive changes the Convention has brought to their societies.



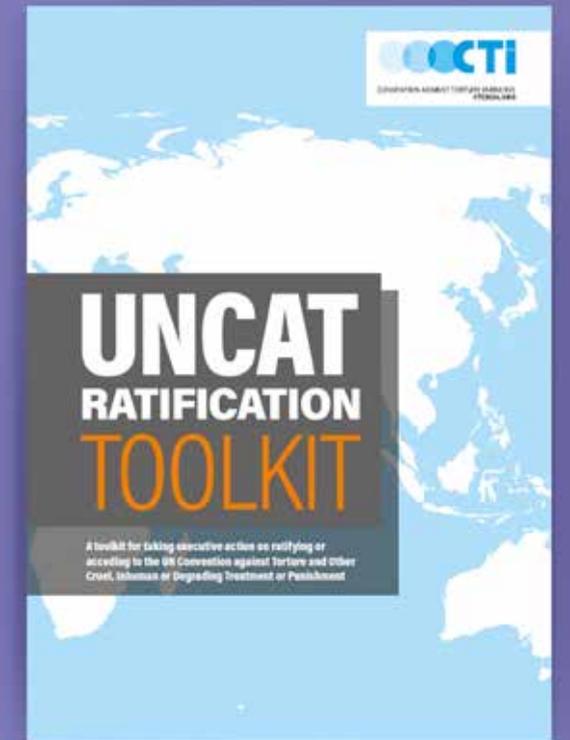
Blog Series - States Parties in Focus: The Gambia, Ghana, Grenada

“ An important facet of Grenada’s ratification process was the support of CTI, which is the collaboration between States for States, focusing on making the UNCAT universally ratified and better implemented by 2024.

HIS EXCELLENCY HONOURABLE OLIVER JOSEPH

Speech by His Excellency Honourable Oliver Joseph, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Grenada at the opening session of CTI’s Online Technical Workshop – Commonwealth Caribbean “UNCAT: Sharing experiences of ratification, legislative reform and reporting” on 1 December 2020t” at HRC43

2 NEW
UNCAT States Parties
(Oman, and Saint Kitts and Nevis)



Revised edition of CTI’s Ratification Toolkit published

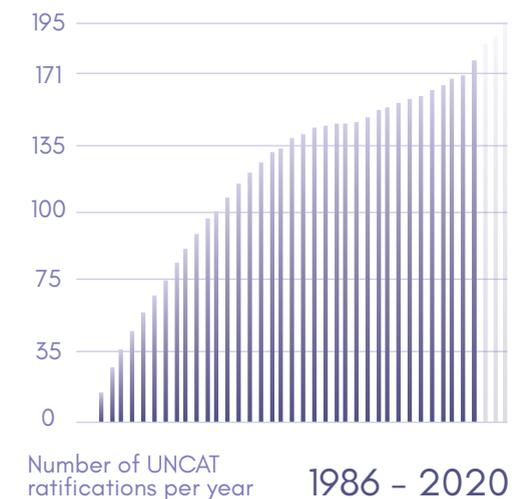
[Click here for full document](#)



171 States parties overall end of 2020

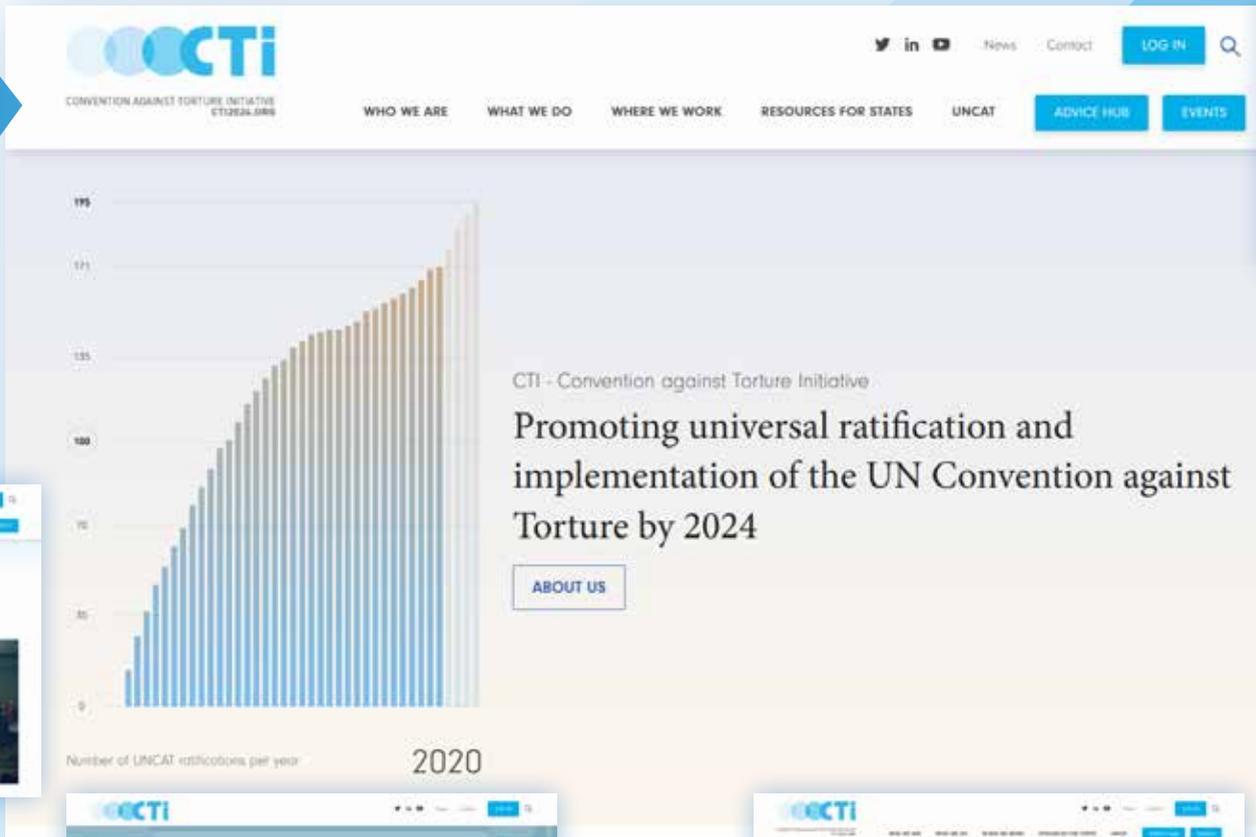
24 States left to ratify end of 2020

17 new States parties since 2014



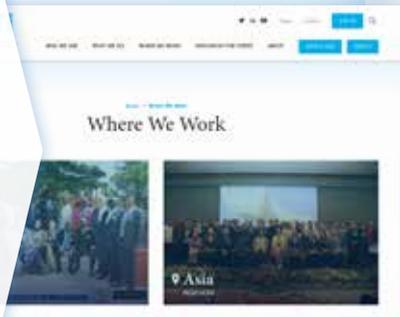
FOCUS ON: NEW WEBSITE - NEW RESOURCES, ADVICE HUB AND EVENTS PORTAL

In 2020, CTI developed a brand new website, with new features, greater searchability and user experience.



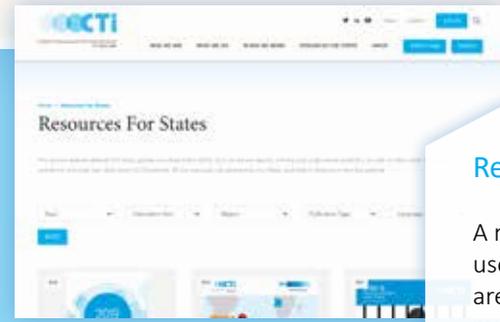
Regional Pages

New pages that explain and share CTI's engagement with countries and stakeholders in different regions.



UNCAT Pages

New pages with information on ratification, reporting and implementation.



Resources Database

A resources database for States and other users – searchable. All tools and guides are free to download and also available in multiple languages.

Advice Hub & FAQ

A comprehensive, interactive support platform for State authorities and national institutions and practitioners seeking information on the ratification and implementation of the UN Convention against Torture (UNCAT).



Events Portal

A one-stop-shop for information and documents on all CTI past and upcoming events, and a dedicated participant space.



SITE STATS 2020

8,137
Unique Website Users

32,990
Page Views

CTI Social Media Impact in 2020

1592
Twitter followers @CTI2024

296

LinkedIn account started in 2020 with 296 followers and counting

GOAL 1

Awareness among developing countries is enhanced on the benefits of UNCAT obligations and their capacity to implement the Convention

In 2020 CTI provided **15** Developing countries with technical advice on the UNCAT through bilateral meetings and briefings

GOAL 2

Strengthened institutional engagement on UNCAT

2 New ratifications: Oman and Saint Kitts & Nevis

40 Senior officials from developing countries participated in CTI events

40 Technical support to experts of LDC and/or SIDS on initial UNCAT-reporting



2020

RESULTS FRAMEWORK

GOAL 3

Increased awareness of good States' practices in implementing UNCAT

Output indicator: Number of CTI tools sharing technical advice and good State practices developed, translated and disseminated to relevant stakeholders

5

- Blogs on developing countries' experiences shared on The Gambia; Ghana; and Grenada
- Updated Ratification Tool
- New UNCAT Implementation Tool: Non-admission of evidence obtained by torture and ill-treatment: Procedures and practices

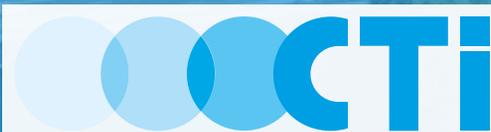
12

Additional translations of CTI's existing UNCAT Implementation Tools into relevant languages

✓

Improved CTI website, as platform for knowledge exchange, event management and communities of practice





CONVENTION AGAINST TORTURE INITIATIVE
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