



Joint Statement to the OSCE Implementation Meeting on Human Dimension Issues Warsaw – October 2000

**Association for the Prevention of Torture (APT) - International
Federation of Action by Christians for the Abolition of Torture
(Fi.ACAT) - International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights (IHF)
– International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims (IRCT) -
World Organisation against Torture (OMCT) – The Redress Trust
(REDRESS)**

The APT, together with five other organisations, would like to make an intervention on the following six points:

- Ratification of the United Nations Convention against Torture;
- The status of the European Convention for the Prevention of Torture;
- The Council of Europe's Human rights week;
- The ODIHR Experts Panel on the Prevention of Torture;
- ODIHR Supplementary human dimension meeting on human rights and inhuman treatment or punishment;
- Field personnel and the prevention of torture.

Ratification of the United Nations Convention against Torture

We encourage universal and speedy ratification of the Convention against torture. As to date, little progress has been made. Therefore,

- We urge Andorra, Ireland and San Marino to ratify in extenso (including Article 22) and as rapidly as possible the United Nations Convention against Torture;
- We welcome the ratification, including of Article 22, of the UN Convention against Torture by Belgium;
- We welcome as well the ratification of the UN Convention against Torture by Turkmenistan but regret that it did not accept the individual complaints mechanism under Article 22;
- We strongly encourage the following States to recognise the competence of the Committee against Torture to examine individual complaints (Art.22):
Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Estonia, Georgia, Germany, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Romania, Tajikistan, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Ukraine and Uzbekistan;
- We Congratulate Belarus for the withdrawal of its reservation on Article 20 which gives competence to the Committee against Torture to make confidential inquiries and visits;
- We invite the OSCE member States to manifest their commitment to preventing torture by promoting a rapid and successful conclusion of the negotiations on an Optional Protocol to the UN Convention against Torture;
- We urge individual OSCE States party to the United Nations Convention against Torture to:
 - enact legislation implementing their obligations under treaties which prohibit or address torture and ill-treatment and non-treaty standards which contain prohibitions of torture or spell out necessary preventive steps.
 - take all steps necessary to prevent torture or ill-treatment through effective training of all law enforcement officials.
 - conduct prompt, thorough, independent and impartial investigation of all complaints and reports of torture and ill-treatment.
 - bring to justice those responsible for torture or ill-treatment in their own countries or found on their territory or jurisdiction or extradite them to a state able and willing to do so in a fair trial or to surrender them to an international criminal tribunal or court with jurisdiction over the crime.
- We urge all OSCE member States to co-operate fully with the United Nations Special Rapporteur on torture by promptly providing all information requested and by implementing all his recommendations;

Status of the European Convention for the Prevention of Torture

The European Convention for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment creates a unique preventive mechanism. To date, all 41 Members of the Council of Europe are party to this Convention.

- We welcome the ratification of the European Convention for the Prevention of Torture by Georgia and Lithuania.
- We are pleased about the fact that all 41 members of the Council of Europe are now part of the Convention;
- We welcome Armenia and Azerbaijan's applications for full membership of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe as 42nd and 43rd member States and we are pleased about the approval of the Parliamentary Assembly in that respect. Therefore, we encourage Armenia and Azerbaijan to ratify as soon as they can the European Convention for the Prevention of Torture;
- We invite the States Parties to the Convention to ratify Protocol I, which opens the Convention to countries that are not members of the Council of Europe and Protocol II that provides for a more rational and efficient system for the election and renewal of the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture members (CPT);
- We congratulate the vast majority of States for publishing the reports established by the CPT;
- We especially welcome the authorisation by Turkey of the publication of the CPT report on the visit made in 1997, thereby contributing to transparency and national scrutiny which are paramount to an effective policy of preventing torture and ill-treatment;
- We furthermore encourage the Turkish authorities to authorise the publication of previous and future CPT reports in the same spirit of transparency.

Council of Europe' s Police and Human Rights Week

- As the Council of Europe's Human Rights Week is taking place from 28 October to 4 November 2000, we ask the OSCE/ODIHR to seize this opportunity to raise awareness and encourage activities by the police as well as other authorities and civil society in OSCE countries.

ODIHR Expert Panel for the Prevention of Torture

- We encourage the Panel of Experts to support the campaign for the full and complete ratification of the above-mentioned conventions;
- We invite the Panel to co-operate and co-ordinate with international human rights mechanisms such as the Council of Europe's Commissioner for human rights, entered into office in January 2000, and other institutions like the United Nations High Commissioner for human rights;
- We invite the Panel of Experts to focus more on co-operation with NGOs, especially national ones and to further collaboration with anti-torture NGOs, for example through thematic hearings;
- We encourage the setting up of a reporting procedure to the Human Dimension implementation meeting, thereby rendering the panel's work more transparent, and enabling outside experts such as NGOs to receive information and to provide input on specific topics.

Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting on Human rights and inhuman treatment or punishment

- We welcome the list of recommendations adopted at the end of the meeting and encourage OSCE States to apply them fully;
- In that respect, we especially encourage OSCE countries to support the setting up of national monitoring and investigative mechanisms such as the ombudsman and national NGOs.

Field personnel and torture prevention

- We encourage the OSCE/ODIHR to continue developing and implementing a strategy for the eradication of torture in the OSCE region;
- We welcome the OSCE/ODIHR handbook on preventing torture addressed to OSCE field staff, and we encourage the implementation of the handbook through training seminars for field personnel;
- We urge field personnel to raise awareness on torture prevention and to carry out a pro-active preventive role by doing oversight of places of detention.

Thank you very much.