

Enhancing Freedom from Torture's use of clinical data on torture and its consequences for survivors to engage UN human rights mechanisms for accountability, protection and rehabilitation purposes

Project partner: Freedom from Torture

Project Overview:

[Freedom from Torture](#) (FFT, formerly the Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture) is a UK-based human rights organisation and one of the world's largest torture treatment centres. FFT takes a holistic approach to rehabilitation, catering to the unique needs of each survivor. This approach includes medical consultation, forensic documentation of torture, psychological therapies and support, as well as practical help with legal and social needs.

Specialist clinicians in Freedom from Torture's Medico-Legal Report Service use forensic methods to document physical and psychological evidence of torture according to standards set out in the UN Manual on the Effective Investigation and Documentation of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the 'Istanbul Protocol'. FFT's medico-legal reports (MLRs) are commissioned by solicitors and used in connection with survivors' claims for international protection in the UK. Through the Country Reporting Programme FFT also submits evidence drawn from MLRs to UN human rights mechanisms and to wider audiences, in order to contribute to international efforts to prevent torture and hold perpetrator states to account.

FFT also seeks to utilise clinical and other data that we hold about our clients' experience in the UK as torture survivors for research and influencing work, particularly with respect to securing for survivors improved access to protection and rehabilitation. FFT is seeking to expand the data available in the coming years for research on all aspects of its work with torture survivors through, among other things, the development of a comprehensive database and a bespoke 'outcome tool' for assessing clinical outcomes of rehabilitation work.

We are keen to enhance our understanding of the opportunities for engagement with UN human rights mechanisms, through submissions based on our data and information, on issues of relevance to our clients and torture survivors more generally. We are also keen to ensure that we deploy our limited resources for this area of our work to the best effect.

To date we have conducted three projects in the Country Reporting Programme (on Sri Lanka, Iran and DRC) in the course of which we have made submissions to treaty monitoring bodies (CAT, CEDAW, HRC), to the Human Rights Council for UPR and to Special Procedures.

The aim of this project is to enhance Freedom from Torture's use of clinical data on torture and its consequences for survivors, as well as information related to survivor access to protection and rehabilitation in the UK, to engage UN human rights mechanisms for accountability, protection and rehabilitation purposes. An additional aim would be to share the learning about engagement with UN human rights mechanisms with wider NGO audiences.

The objectives of the project are to:

- i) Map UN Mechanisms to which FFT could make submissions, based on clinical evidence of torture and other information related to survivor access to protection and rehabilitation in the UK.
- ii) Provide guidelines on how this information should be presented, in order to maximise effectiveness.
- iii) Review upcoming opportunities in relation to the UN Mechanisms over a 4 year period and provide information on how FFT can engage strategically.

Project Outputs:

Outputs from this project will comprise the following, for FFT's internal use:

- i) A review of UN Mechanisms to which FFT could make submissions based on a comprehensive mapping exercise.

- ii) Guidelines on how FFT's information should be presented, in order to maximise effectiveness.
- iii) A review of upcoming opportunities, including information to inform strategic engagement, in relation to the UN Mechanisms over a 4 year period.

The Clinic team will adapt the above outputs into a publicly available document targeted at facilitating NGO engagement with UN Mechanisms.

Phase 1: (November – December)

- Freedom from Torture will attend an introductory workshop and a follow-up Q&A session with the project team at the Clinic during November/December.
- The project team will be invited to attend Freedom from Torture in London in November/December in order to learn more about the organisation, our clinical and medico-legal report services, our research, data and data collection strategies.
- The project team will familiarise themselves with project materials including Freedom from Torture submissions to UN human rights mechanisms, FFT reports based on the same data and UN documents related to procedures where FFT has submitted evidence.
- The project team will undertake initial mapping of UN human rights mechanisms to which FFT might make submissions and scope the critical literature related to NGO engagement with these mechanisms. The project team will develop the project outline and timeline and share this with FFT.

Phase 2: (January – June)

- Jan-March, the project team will develop and complete the mapping exercise into UN mechanisms and prepare draft guidelines on how FFT's information should be presented to UN Mechanisms; an initial briefing on these will be shared with FFT by end of March.
- Freedom from Torture will attend a further Q&A session at the Clinic in March.

- April- June, the project team will finalise the mapping document and guidelines and complete a review of upcoming opportunities in relation to the UN Mechanisms over a 4 year period.
- April- June, the project team will write up all documents and engage in a review process with Freedom from Torture and relevant academic staff, with a view to completion in June.
- The project team will visit Freedom from Torture to present their findings.

Project Bibliography:

1. Freedom from Torture submissions to UN mechanisms:

Sri Lanka

- *Freedom from Torture submission to the Committee against Torture for its examination of Sri Lanka in November 2011, October 2011*
http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CAT/Shared%20Documents/LKA/INT_CAT_NGO_LKA_47_9519_E.pdf
- *Freedom from Torture submission to the Committee against Torture for its Follow-Up to the concluding observations from its examination of Sri Lanka in November 2011, April 2013*
http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CAT/Shared%20Documents/LKA/INT_CAT_NGS_LKA_12933_E.pdf
- *Freedom from Torture submission for second cycle of Universal Periodic Review of Sri Lanka, 14th UPR session, 2012 Available from FFT; cited in Summary prepared by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights*
<http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G12/156/57/PDF/G1215657.pdf?OpenElement>
- *Freedom from Torture submission to the UN Human Rights Committee – List of Issues for the 5th periodic review of Sri Lanka, December 2013*
http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=INT%2fCCPR%2fICS%2fLKA%2f16069&Lang=en
- *Freedom from Torture up-dated submission to the Human Rights Committee for the 5th periodic review of Sri Lanka in October 2014, September 2014*

http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CCPR/Shared%20Documents/LKA/INT_CPR_CSS_LKA_18229_E.pdf

Iran

- *Freedom from Torture, Summary report for the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Iran, December 2012: Torture in post-election Iran, 2009 – 2011, December 2012* Appended to the Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, Annex 1 p36-44
http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/IR/A-HRC-22-56_en.pdf

DRC

- *Freedom from Torture submission to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women for its examination of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) July 2013: Torture of women in the DRC 2006-2011, July 2013*
http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CEDAW/Shared%20Documents/COD/INT_CEDAW_NGO_COD_13430_E.pdf
- *Freedom from Torture submission for second cycle of Universal Periodic Review of DRC, September 2013* Available from FFT; cited in *Summary prepared by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights* <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G14/108/26/PDF/G1410826.pdf?OpenElement>

UK

- *Freedom from Torture submission to the UN Committee Against Torture – examination of the 5th periodic report of the United Kingdom in May 2013, April 2013*
http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CAT/Shared%20Documents/GBR/INT_CAT_NGO_GBR_50_19803_E.pdf
- *Freedom from Torture submission for second cycle of Universal Periodic Review of the United Kingdom, 13th UPR session, 2012* Available from FFT, cited in *Summary prepared by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner*

for Human Rights <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G12/118/05/PDF/G1211805.pdf?OpenElement>

2. UN documents related to Freedom from Torture submissions:

Sri Lanka

- *Committee against Torture, Forty-seventh session 31 October–25 November 2011 Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 19 of the Convention: Concluding observations of the Committee against Torture* http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CAT%2fC%2fLKA%2fCO%2f3-4&Lang=en
- *Committee against Torture, Forty-seventh session 31 October – 25 November 2011 Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 19 of the Convention: Concluding observations of the Committee against Torture (Extracts for follow-up of CAT/C/LKA/CO/3-4)* http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CAT/Shared%20Documents/LKA/INT_CAT_FUI_LKA_12382_E.pdf
- *Human Rights Council, Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review, Fourteenth session, 22 October – 5 November 2012, Summary prepared by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Sri Lanka*, July 2012* <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G12/156/57/PDF/G1215657.pdf?OpenElement>
- *Human Rights Council, Twenty-second session, Universal Periodic Review, Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review*, Sri Lanka, December 2012* <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G12/188/71/PDF/G1218871.pdf?OpenElement>
- *Human Rights Council, Twenty-second session, Universal Periodic Review, Decision adopted by the Human Rights Council*, 22/114, Outcome of the Universal Periodic Review: Sri Lanka, April 2013* <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G13/132/12/PDF/G1313212.pdf?OpenElement>
- *Human Rights Committee, List of issues in relation to the fifth periodic report of Sri Lanka*, 23 April 2014* http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CPR%2fC%2fLKA%2fQ%2f5&Lang=en

Iran

- *Human Rights Council Twenty-second session, Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran**, 28 February 2013 (FFT's submission appended in full at Annex 1 p36-44) http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/IR/A-HRC-22-56_en.pdf

DRC

- *Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, Concluding observations on the combined sixth and seventh periodic reports of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, July 2013* http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2fC%2fCOD%2fCO%2f6-7&Lang=en
- *Human Rights Council, Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review, Nineteenth session 28 April–9 May 2014, Summary prepared by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Democratic Republic of the Congo**, February 2014 <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G14/108/26/PDF/G1410826.pdf?OpenElement>
- *Human Rights Council, Twenty-seventh session Agenda item 6, Universal Periodic Review Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review**, Democratic Republic of the Congo, July 2014 <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G14/075/47/PDF/G1407547.pdf?OpenElement>

UK

- *Committee against Torture, Concluding observations on the fifth periodic report of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, adopted by the Committee at its fiftieth session (6-31 May 2013)* http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CAT%2fC%2fGBR%2fCO%2f5&Lang=en
- *Human Rights Council, Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review, Thirteenth session, 21 May - 4 June 2012, Summary prepared by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland**, March 2012 <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G12/118/05/PDF/G1211805.pdf?OpenElement>
- *Human Rights Council, Twenty-first session, Universal Periodic Review, Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review, United Kingdom of Great*

Britain and Northern Ireland, July 2012 <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G12/150/31/PDF/G1215031.pdf?OpenElement>

- *Human Rights Council, Twenty-first session, Universal Periodic Review, Decision adopted by the Human Rights Council 21/107, Outcome of the Universal Periodic Review: United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, October 2012* <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/RESOLUTION/GEN/G12/175/49/PDF/G1217549.pdf?OpenElement>

3. Freedom from Torture research reports:

- *Out of the Silence: New evidence of ongoing torture in Sri Lanka 2009-2011, November 2011* http://www.freedomfromtorture.org/feature/out_of_the_silence/5979
- *“We will make you regret everything” - Torture in Iran since the 2009 elections, March 2013* http://www.freedomfromtorture.org/feature/iran_report/7203
- *Rape as torture in the DRC: Sexual violence beyond the conflict zone, June 2014* http://www.freedomfromtorture.org/feature/drc_report/7878
- *The Poverty Barrier: The Right to Rehabilitation for Survivors of Torture in the UK, July 2013* http://www.freedomfromtorture.org/feature/the_poverty_barrier/7412