UN Voluntary
Fund for Victims of Torture

Artwork by a victim of torture supported by the UN Torture Fund
The UN Torture Fund

- Was established by **GA resolution 36/151 in 1981**;
- Has a **global outreach** (active in more than 81 countries in the 5 world regions);
- Provides **direct assistance to victims of torture and their family members** through established channels of assistance;
- Assistance to victims can take the form of **humanitarian, medical, psychological, legal, social and financial aid**;
- Awards grants to civil society and other channels of assistance, including **NGOs, rehabilitation centres, victim associations and family members, private and public hospitals, legal clinics, public interest law firms and individual lawyers**; and
- **Average size grants of USD 35,000** are awarded yearly on a competitive basis, and can be renewed if conditions are met. A call for applications is issued every year in January.
Victims of Torture assisted by the Fund may include

- Detainees
- Ex-detainees
- Asylum seekers
- Refugees
- Undocumented migrants
- Internally displaced persons
- Victims of sexual violence in conflict
- Children
- Human Rights Defenders
- Prisoners of conscience
- Journalists
- Victims of enforced disappearance
- Persons with disabilities
- Minorities
- Indigenous Peoples
- LGBT persons
Mission statement of the Fund

The UN Torture Fund:

- Promotes a victim-centred approach;
- Has an impartial, universal mandate;
- Is a tool to address accountability as part of the victims’ healing process;
- Is not a substitute for the obligation of States under international law to support victims of torture;
- Responds to new and emergency situations wherever they occur;
- Forms partnerships with both grass-roots initiatives and well-established rehabilitation centres;
- Complements and co-ordinates its work with OHCHR Programmes and other UN torture-related mechanisms; and
- Enables the collection and dissemination of expertise and best practices.
CVT Jordan, awarded US$150,000 for 2015 provides psychological assistance to victims of torture fleeing Syria and Iraq to Jordan.

Restoring human dignity through psychological assistance and trauma counselling
Haiti’s BAI/IJDH, awarded US$26,500 for 2015, represents torture victims in the case brought against former President Duvalier.
Database Center for North Korean Human Rights, awarded US$30,000 for 2015, provides medical assistance to North Korean defectors and prisoners of war who have escaped to the Republic of Korea.
SYNERGIE, awarded an emergency grant of $20,000 in 2014, provides social assistance to women and young girls who have been victims of sexual violence in Northern Kivu, DRC.

Providing shelter and social assistance to reintegrate victims of sexual violence in conflict.
Staff from Cri de Coeur Mali, awarded an emergency grant of US$ 40,000 in 2013, attend a capacity building workshop conducted by a well-established grantee in Senegal. Cri de Coeur provides assistance to victims of torture from the 2012 conflict in Mali.
Management of the Fund

The Fund is

- Subject to UN Rules and Regulations;
- The Fund is managed by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights on behalf of the Secretary-General, with the advice of a Board of Trustees;
- The Board of Trustees is composed of five members with wide experience in human rights, representing each of the five geographical regions and acting in their personal capacity;
- The Fund reports annually to the Human Rights Council and the General Assembly.
Since 1981 the Fund has provided financial assistance to more than **620 organizations worldwide** for over US$ 168 million.

In 2015, the Board awarded a total of 190 projects under the Fund’s regular cycle. Of those, 187 are projects for direct assistance (**US$ 6,260,000**) and 3 are projects for the purpose of training and capacity building (**US$ 75,400**).

57,630 victims of torture will be assisted with grants from the UN Torture Fund in 2015. Of these victims, 27,221 are women and 30,409 are men.

In 2015, an additional **US$ 1,000,000** is set aside to support inter-sessional emergency projects and capacity-building projects.
Accountability

The Fund Secretariat applies a well-established monitoring and evaluation methodology to ensure accountability in the use of grants:

• As a rule, first-time applicants are visited in order to verify admissibility and feasibility of the project;

• Awarded grantees are visited every 3 to 5 years by OHCHR staff, other UN staff and Board members;

• Grantees are required to provide yearly narrative and financial reports on the use of the grants;

• Grants of US$50,000 and above are subject to a mandatory audit by national external auditors and grants below US$50,000 are audited regularly on a random basis; and

• If the need arises, ad hoc audits are conducted, in collaboration with the UN Office of Internal Oversight.
Financial situation of the Fund

Voluntary contributions received by the Fund from 2002 to 2014

- 2002: $7,327,298
- 2003: $8,103,925
- 2004: $10,752,566
- 2005: $11,654,025
- 2006: $11,178,365
- 2007: $9,419,007
- 2008: $7,991,223
- 2009: $8,476,735
- 2010: $8,436,430
- 2011: $8,201,346
- 2012: $8,146,636
- 2013: $7,832,134
- 2014: $7,510,025

Note: The graph shows the trend of voluntary contributions received by the Fund from 2002 to 2014.
Appeal for funding

• Torture practices remain prevalent worldwide; donations do make a difference;

• The UN Fund is the only grant-making mechanism specifically mandated to respond to the plight of torture victims everywhere;

• The Board of the UN Torture Fund estimates that the Fund requires a minimum of US$ 12 million in voluntary contributions yearly from Member States (up from US$8.4 million in 2014) to fulfil its mandate; and

• The UN Torture Fund, like all UN Trust Funds, can only receive earmarked contributions.
CONTACT

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(Atelier peinture de Claire Harel, association Mana, France)