

UNITED NATIONS



OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS



FACT SHEET

ABOUT TORTURE AND OTHER CRUEL, INHUMAN OR DEGRADING TREATMENT OR PUNISHMENT

The United Nations has always condemned torture as one of the vilest acts a human being can perpetrate on another. Torture – defined as the intentional infliction of severe physical or mental pain or suffering to obtain information or a confession, punish, intimidate or coerce -- seeks to annihilate the victim's personality and denies the inherent dignity of the human being.

Torture is a crime under international law. According to all relevant instruments, it is absolutely prohibited and cannot be justified under any circumstances. This prohibition forms part of customary international law, which means that it is binding on every member of the international community, regardless of whether a State has ratified international treaties in which torture is expressly prohibited. The systematic or widespread practice of torture constitutes a crime against humanity.

ABOUT OHCHR

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) helps protect and promote all human rights around the world. Headquartered in Geneva, the Office is also present in over 40 countries. OHCHR works to ensure the enforcement of universally recognized human rights norms, including through promoting both the universal ratification and implementation of human rights treaties and respect for the rule of law. It also aims to remove obstacles to the full realization of all human rights and to prevent or stop human rights abuses. For more information please visit www.ohchr.org

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