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MEDIA STATEMENT



Victims of torture must not face reprisals for seeking redress through the United Nations and Regional Mechanisms

Joint Statement* to mark the United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, Tuesday, 26 June 2012

ADDIS ABABA (26 June 2012) – Today, we join together to remind States that they have an obligation to protect victims of torture and to ensure that they do not face reprisals or intimidation for cooperating with international and regional bodies.

In undertaking visits to places of detention within the context of our respective mandates we find that many detainees, at great personal risk, find the courage to share with us their traumatic experiences of torture and ill-treatment.

Unfortunately, there appears to be a growing phenomenon, in many parts of the world, that victims who share their sufferings often end up experiencing and enduring further intimidation, ill-treatment and reprisals.

Reprisals against people who cooperate with mechanisms in protecting and advancing human rights are absolutely unacceptable and are in violation of international law and States' legal obligations. There must be an effective means of ensuring that reprisals do not occur, and if they do, the individuals involved and the State must be held accountable.

On this International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, we stand in solidarity with those who, after having suffered the worst forms of torture and ill-treatment, place their trust in the United Nations and regional mechanisms despite the risk of reprisals.

The duty to assist victims must extend beyond measures to treat, support and provide reparation and rehabilitation for victims. It is imperative that States translate their commitment to the fight against torture with measures that also guarantee that victims and human rights advocates will not be subjected to reprisals and re-victimisation.

* This joint statement was issued by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, Mr. Juan E. Méndez, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights' Chairperson of the Committee for the Prevention of Torture in Africa, Ms. Dupe Atoki and the Special Rapporteur on Prisons and Conditions of Detention in Africa, Mr. Med Kaggwa.

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