

**79<sup>th</sup> ORDINARY SESSION OF THE AFRICAN COMMISSION ON  
HUMAN AND PEOPLES' RIGHTS**

**Hybrid**

**14 May - 3 June 2024**

**Concept Note for the Panel organised by the Committee for the  
Prevention of Torture in Africa  
Virtual**

**Date: 15 May 2024      Time: 12:00 - 13:30 GMT**

**Theme: Celebrating 20 years of the CPTA's commitment and 40 years  
of the Convention Against Torture**

**I.      Background and rationale**

1. In October 2002, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (the African Commission) at its 32<sup>nd</sup> Ordinary Session adopted the Guidelines for the Prohibition and Prevention of Torture and Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment in Africa (the "Robben Island Guidelines"), with a view to guaranteeing an effective right to all persons not to be subjected to torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment (ill-treatment), as guaranteed by Article 5 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (the African Charter).
2. Previously referred to as the Follow-up Committee on the Implementation of the Robben Island Guidelines, the Committee for the Prevention of Torture in Africa (CPTA) was established by the Commission at its 35<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session in May 2004 with a mandate to promote the implementation of the Robben Island Guidelines. The CPTA is specifically mandated to popularize the Robben Island Guidelines among national and regional stakeholders, promote and facilitate their implementation within States Parties and at the regional level, and present a progress report to the Commission at each Ordinary Session.
3. Furthermore, the CPTA initiates Resolutions on issues relating to Article 5 of the African Charter; publishes its Annual Report on the situation of torture and other ill-treatment in Africa, its Annual Thematic Report on a specific issue relating to Article 5, and its Annual Newsletter; works with partners to disseminate useful materials on the prevention of torture; and develops

practical guidelines for the interpretation and promotion of various aspects of Article 5 with the aim of assisting States Parties and relevant stakeholders in fulfilling their obligations.

4. With a broad mandate ranging from the prevention of torture to its prohibition, the Committee is composed of three Commissioners and five expert members who ensure that States Parties to the African Charter act on cases of human rights violations, by systematically investigating reported cases of torture in order to stop and prevent such crimes.
5. The Committee for the Prevention of Torture in Africa thus plays a leading role on the African continent in the fight against torture, in collaboration with all stakeholders: States Parties, regional and international organisations, National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs), National Mechanisms for the Prevention of Torture (NPMs), and civil society organisations.
6. Over the last 20 years, the Committee has been the driving force behind a number of achievements, including General Comment No. 4 on the Right to Redress for Victims of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the establishment of an alert and reporting mechanism on situations of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment (the Abidjan Rules) and, more recently, a compendium on Article 5 of the African Charter's jurisprudence.
7. Furthermore, the African Commission, through its Committee for the Prevention of Torture in Africa, has stepped up its efforts to disseminate the United Nations Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and to ensure its implementation. The Committee is also working to encourage African States to establish effective National Preventive Mechanisms (NPMs), in accordance with the Optional Protocol to the United Nations Convention Against Torture (OPCAT).
8. In this respect, 2024 marks both the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Committee for the Prevention of Torture in Africa and the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, which aims to prevent torture throughout the world.
9. The Convention Against Torture was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 10 December 1984 and, after being ratified by a 20<sup>th</sup> State, entered into force on 26 June 1987. This date is now considered as International Day in Support of Victims of Torture.
10. The Convention primarily calls on States to criminalise torture. To date, the following fifty-two (52) African States have ratified it: Algeria, Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gabon, The

Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritius, Mauritania, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sao Tomé and Príncipe, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Sudan, Swaziland, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda and Zambia. Only two African States are yet to ratify this treaty: the United Republic of Tanzania and Zimbabwe.

## **II. Methodology**

11. Presentations will be made by resource persons, renowned for their expertise, followed by discussions with the participants.
12. Presentations will focus on:
  - i. Commemoration of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Committee for the Prevention of Torture in Africa;
  - ii. Key achievements of the Committee in preventing and combating torture;
  - iii. Commemoration of the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Convention and the importance of collaboration between the United Nations and the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights in the fight against torture;
  - iv. The importance of collaboration between the Committee for the Prevention of Torture and States Parties to the Charter;
  - v. The importance of collaboration between the Committee for the Prevention of Torture and civil society;
  - vi. The importance of a multidimensional and dynamic approach to torture and ill-treatment.

## **III. Objectives**

13. The panel aims to celebrate the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Committee for the Prevention of Torture and the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Convention Against Torture, while reflecting on the Committee's key achievements.

## **IV. Expected outcomes**

14. This commemoration will incorporate a future-oriented dimension with a view to guaranteeing an effective right to all persons not to be subjected to torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, and will initiate the process for reflection on the drafting of a model law criminalising torture and ill-treatment.

## **V. Date and venue**

15. The Panel will be held virtually on 15 May 2024, from 12:00 to 13:30 GMT during the 79<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session of the ACHPR.

#### VI. Target audience

16. This panel is intended for participants attending the 79<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, which generally comprise the 54 States Parties to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, National Human Rights Institutions, regional and international organisations and non-governmental organisations.

17. Specifically, the panel is designed to target both State and non-State actors working on the issue of torture and similar acts.

#### VII. Programme

18. The panel will be moderated by Commissioner Hatem Essaiem, Chairperson of the Committee for the Prevention of Torture in Africa. At the end of the panel discussion, a short tribute to the Committee for the Prevention of Torture in Africa will be broadcast.

05 min	Introductory remarks	<b>Commissioner Hatem Essaiem</b> , Chairperson of the Committee for the Prevention of Torture in Africa
10 min	Video message from CPTA members and partners to mark its 20th anniversary	
07 min	Commemoration of the 40 <sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Convention and the importance of collaboration between the United Nations and the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights in the fight against torture	<b>Mr. Abderrazak Rouwane</b> , Vice-Chair of the United Nations Committee against Torture
07 min	The origins of the Committee for the Prevention of Torture in Africa: the Robben Island Guidelines	<b>Mr Juvenal Babona</b> , Africa Representative, Association for the Prevention of Torture
07 min	Importance of collaboration between the Committee and States	<b>Mr Julien Ngane Ndour</b> , Director of Human Rights at the Senegalese Ministry of Justice

07 min	Importance of collaboration between the Committee and civil society: the Abidjan Rules	<b>Mrs Anitha Gateretse</b> , member of the FIACAT International Bureau
07 min	Importance of a multidimensional and dynamic approach to torture and ill-treatment	<b>Eva Nudd</b> , Independent Legal Consultant,
20 min	Questions / contributions / comments of participants	<b>Commissioner Idrissa Sow</b> , Vice-Chairperson of the Committee for the Prevention of Torture in Africa
10 min	Responses and observations of panellists	All Panel members
05 min	Closing remarks	<b>Commissioner Hatem Essaiem</b> , Chairperson of the Committee for the Prevention of Torture in Africa