

On the 40th Anniversary of the UN Convention against Torture, Survivors Call for a Torture-Free Trade Treaty

Joint statement by Center for Victims of Torture (CVT) and Amnesty International in solidarity with survivors of torture and other ill-treatment

Forty years ago, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (UNCAT), an international treaty designed to ensure that States prevent torture and other forms of ill-treatment, hold perpetrators accountable, and provide redress to survivors. 175 States are parties to the treaty, and yet torture and other ill-treatment remains widespread across the world, in settings including detention centers, interview rooms, and against protesters on the street. On the 40th anniversary of the UNCAT, torture survivors themselves are calling on all of us to do more to end this abhorrent practice.

Today, manufacturers are producing, and states across the world are trading, equipment that has no purpose other than torture or other ill-treatment. Widely traded standard law enforcement equipment is also often misused for torture or other ill-treatment. In an open declaration, torture survivors are demanding an end to this unregulated trade in the tools of torture, by advocating for a Torture-Free Trade Treaty.

“Some of us were tortured with the very equipment that a torture-free trade treaty would prohibit or regulate. All of us were tortured because too many people have turned a blind eye to these barbaric acts. The international community must do more to prevent torture in practice. A torture-free trade treaty is one way to reduce the prevalence of torture around the world.”

Recognizing that the global community may face challenges in making a Torture-Free Trade Treaty a reality, survivors ask them “to remember that [they] are making decisions about people’s lives; about us, and people like us with inalienable rights. If a torture-free trade treaty would spare even one person the horrors that we have experienced, it is worth any effort that doing so would require. World leaders can achieve this goal if they commit to it, and lives can be saved.”

The full declaration is available [here](#).

The Center for Victims of Torture and Amnesty International are members of the Torture-Free Trade Network, a global coalition of civil society organizations working to establish a Torture-Free Trade Treaty.