



- **PRESS RELEASE**

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## APT Secretary General awarded distinguished British honour

**Geneva 15 June 2015.** The Association for the Prevention of Torture (APT) is proud to announce that its Secretary General, Mark C.A. Thomson, has been appointed the Order of St. Michael and St. George for his extraordinary services to the prevention of torture in the world.



The Companion of the Order of St. Michael and St. George (CMG) is a British order of chivalry, founded in 1818 by George, the Prince Regent (later King George IV). Under the motto of *Auspicium melioris aevi* - token of a better age – it is awarded for exceptional achievements overseas.

The list of Honours is traditionally announced on the day of the Queen’s birthday. Following the public announcement on Saturday 13 June, the APT’s President, Martine Brunschwig Graf, said:

“This is a very fitting tribute to our Secretary General. We are delighted that Mark should receive this accolade for his impressive international work in restoring the dignity of persons deprived of their liberty and for his unwavering belief in a better world.”

Mark Thomson commented:

“I’m most grateful for this distinguished honour. It is also a public acknowledgement of the achievements of the whole APT team and our loyal partners, who share with me a common commitment to improve the treatment of people, whose basic human rights are far too often forgotten once in detention.”

Mark Thomson has worked for the promotion of human rights for more than 30 years. Educated in Fiji and England he started working with community development and popular education projects, especially in Latin America. After coordinating Amnesty International’s engagements with United Nations mechanisms he was a leading organiser of Non-Governmental Organisations’ participation in the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights. As Secretary General of the APT since 2001 he has contributed to the drafting, adoption and

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implementation of several important human rights instruments, including the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention against Torture. This treaty established the global torture prevention system, in 2006, which half the world's States have already joined or are committed to joining. The APT today assists governments, policy makers and detaining authorities, all over the world, to change laws and practices related to detention, with the aim of reducing the risk of torture and ill-treatment.

Mark Thomson will be invited to accept the Order from Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II at a ceremony in London later in the year.

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