



association pour la prévention de la torture
asociación para la prevención de la tortura
association for the prevention of torture

- For a torture-free world





association for
the prevention
of torture

Torture is like genocide and slavery – it is a destroyer of humanity and dignity. It deeply wounds its victims and poisons entire societies for many generations.

Torture and other ill-treatment happen not only in prisons and police stations but also in centres for juveniles and migrants, psychiatric hospitals and military detentions. The risk of torture and abuse exists everywhere, throughout the world and in all places where persons are deprived of their liberty. Weak justice systems and lack of capacity within detaining authorities further increase this risk.

Torture is absolutely prohibited. It is an extreme abuse of state power, which has to be fought through all available means.

The **apt** works to prevent torture from happening in the first place!

- Jean-Jacques Gautier
From an idea
to a global reality



The Association for the Prevention of Torture was founded in 1977 by the Swiss banker **Jean-Jacques Gautier** (1912-1986). He was convinced that it would be possible to prevent torture by putting in place a system of regular, unannounced visits by external actors to all kinds of places of detention.

At the time, few believed that states would ever agree to let outsiders into their prisons and detention centres. But Gautier persisted. With the help of a few committed individuals and organisations he gradually mobilised support for his initiative.

With the adoption in 1987 of the European Convention for the Prevention of Torture, a committee was created to visit all places of detention within Council of Europe states. In 2002 the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention against Torture (OPCAT), opening up prisons, police stations, mental health institutions and all other places of detention to examination by independent monitors. Gautier's vision has become a global reality.



- ## Our vision

The **apt**'s vision is a world without torture or any other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, as proclaimed by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. To achieve this vision we work within three integrated areas:

- Promoting a system for independent monitoring visits to prisons and other places where people are held in detention,
- Lobbying governments to ratify the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention against Torture and other relevant treaties and advocating for adequate national legal frameworks to prevent torture.
- Creating partnerships for prevention within countries, bringing together governments, police services, legal actors and civil society to combat torture.

- ## Working worldwide to prevent torture

Torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment happen behind closed doors, out of public view. We therefore promote transparency and respect for the rule of law in all places of detention.

With 35 years of experience the **apt** has developed a unique global overview and expertise in all aspects of the prevention of torture. We work worldwide to support governments, justice systems, human rights institutions and civil society to take effective actions to prevent torture.

Through direct contacts, open dialogue and close partnerships with local actors we provide:

- legal advice for preventive bodies and legislators;
- training and capacity strengthening;
- research and analysis on causes of ill-treatment;
- exchanges between torture prevention actors;
- practical tools and resources.

- ## Building partnerships for prevention

The **apt** always works with local partners. We help to bring together governments, national human rights institutions, civil society, police services, judges and lawyers in the fight against torture. Our aim is to strengthen their capacity for effective prevention work in their countries.

Publications in several languages

The **apt** publishes a range of handbooks, manuals, practical guides and briefing papers. Most of the publications and tools are available in several languages.

For more information, downloads and hardcopy order, visit www.apt.ch/publications

We also provide an on-line database on the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention against Torture: www.apt.ch/opcat and a comprehensive compilation of national torture laws: www.apt.ch/laws

- You can make a difference!

Our work has had a profound impact on the prevention of torture in the world. Learn more about us and about how you can support our work on www.apt.ch or join us on Facebook and Twitter.

Association for the Prevention of Torture

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