



58th session of the Human Rights Council

Item 3 – Interactive Dialogue with the UN Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment

Oral statement by the World Organisation Against Torture on behalf of the United Against Torture Consortium (UATC) and the International Bar Association’s Human Rights Institute (IBAHRI)

4 March 2025

Thank you, Mr. President,

Madam Special Rapporteur,

The United Against Torture Consortium, comprising OMCT, APT, IRCT, FIACAT, REDRESS and Omega Research Foundation, jointly with IBAHRI, welcome this dialogue and wish to express deep concern over the widespread violations of the right to be free from torture and other ill-treatment in the context of protest.

Over the past year and early months of 2025, we have seen harsh crackdowns on protests around the world—from Bangladesh to Kenya, Venezuela and Georgia, amid reports of police violence and ongoing allegations of torture and ill-treatment. We welcome HRC resolution 56/10 on peaceful protests which reaffirmed the absolute prohibition of torture including when an assembly is no longer peaceful. We urge all Member States to implement all necessary measures to prevent torture and ill-treatment, ensure accountability, and provide reparation and rehabilitation.

Repressive policing has been accompanied by an increasing use of crowd-control weapons, including, in some cases, former military-grade weaponry—leading to severe and lasting injuries. Some of those weapons and tools used are listed in the annex of your 2023 report to the General Assembly as equipment that should be prohibited as they are inherently cruel, inhuman or degrading. In this regard, we commend the Alliance for Torture-Free Trade for its work and call on Member States to actively support the creation of a Torture-Free Trade Treaty.

Madam Special Rapporteur, we would like to ask: how do you plan to promote human rights-based policing in the context of protests?

Thank you for your attention.