

[Committee against Torture condemns reprisals against those who cooperate with the UN](#)

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(Geneva) - The UN Committee against Torture has condemned reprisals against those who cooperate with the United Nations as a violation of human rights and appointed two experts to prevent and ensure accountability for reprisals.

In a [formal statement](#) issued at the close of its 51st session in Geneva, the Committee affirmed that persons have a right to complain to the UN about torture and ill-treatment and that States have a legal obligation to 'ensure that the complainant and witnesses are protected against all ill-treatment or intimidation as a consequence of any complaint or any evidence given'.

In its statement the Committee also highlighted the crucial contribution of non-governmental organisations and human rights defenders to the work of UN treaty bodies 'through submissions, inputs, hearings or briefings.' Such contributions are fundamental 'to the effective functioning of the Committee and the implementation of the entire Convention [Against Torture],' they said.

The Committee has appointed two independent international human rights experts to coordinate its response to alleged reprisals, including by undertaking fact-finding missions to the State concerned and by requesting further action from the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the UN Secretary-General where appropriate to ensure the cessation of reprisals.

Welcoming the Committee's statement, Legal Counsel for the International Service for Human Rights, Madeleine Sinclair, said 'All persons have the right to unhindered access to UN human rights bodies to expose and seek accountability for human rights violations. Protection and exercise of this right is especially important in order to shine an international light on the dark practice of torture.'

The Committee's statement comes just days after the [UN General Assembly adopted a significant resolution condemning intimidation and reprisals](#) against human rights defenders and others who work to expose and combat torture and ill-treatment.

It also comes soon after the adoption of a [landmark resolution specifically addressing reprisals against those who cooperate with the UN by the UN Human Rights Council in September](#).

'It is very pleasing to see the emerging international consensus condemning reprisals against those who cooperate with the UN. The next step is for States to translate this consensus into concrete action by enacting

[specific laws and policies at the national level](#) to protect human rights defenders and others who seek accountability for human rights violations through the UN,' Ms Sinclair said.

Contact: Madeleine Sinclair, Legal Counsel, International Service for Human Rights, on m.sinclair@ishr.ch or +1 917 544 61 48.

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