

# Submitting allegations of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment to the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture.

## What does the Special Rapporteur do?

The work of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Torture is laid out in a [resolution of the UN Human Rights Council](#). Her three main activities are:

1. **ADVISING** the United Nations Human Rights Council and General Assembly on how to prevent and respond to torture and other ill-treatment.
2. **CONDUCTING** fact-finding country visits.
- AND
3. **SENDING** urgent appeals and other letters of allegations documenting risks of torture or past instances of torture. She also can write to governments to comment on adopted or pending national laws or policy.

## Explaining Submissions

The Special Rapporteur relies on information submitted by individuals, groups, States, organizations and institutions to act, and she may also undertake her own fact-finding through a variety of means. Please note that *without a submission, she cannot ordinarily act on your allegations*.

Submissions may cover allegations by States, non-State entities such as armed groups, or companies and businesses.

All special procedures mandate holders are prohibited from relying solely on information from news items, media reports or journalistic investigations, or social media posts.

## Speaking Publicly about Allegations

The Special Rapporteur, as an international lawyer, will only speak publicly about situations about which she has credible allegations, submitted through the formal submission process, and/or substantiated via other sources whenever possible.

All special procedures mandate holders are required to have (attempted) to engage with the State in question before speaking publicly on the case or situation.

When she makes public statements, she has calculated the impact of such statement. She carries out various other ways to exert influence to assist victims and survivors of torture, or those at risk or detained. Much of her work is out of the public eye.

## Consent

The Special Rapporteur can only act on cases of named individuals with their explicit consent, or if she has received consent from their lawyer, family member or another authorised representative.



## Important Information to Remember About Submitting Allegations

To ensure that the case you are presenting can be considered by the Special Rapporteur, please ensure you adhere to the following:

- Allegations should be submitted through the [online submission process](#).
- The victim of the alleged torture or ill-treatment, their family member, lawyer or NGO representative, has provided written consent that the victim agrees for their case being considered.
- Submissions must contain credible, detailed and factual information.

**Use everyday language:** In your submission, please describe in everyday (not legal) language what happened to you or what is being threatened or denied. This may include the abuse and/or injuries suffered, medical reports, conditions of your detention, the location, dates, who was responsible (if known), etc. An assessment of whether that specific information constitutes torture or another form of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment is carried out by the Special Rapporteur.

- Submissions must avoid abusive or politically motivated language.
- Submissions cannot rely exclusively on media reports.
- The concerned State does not have to have ratified the Convention Against Torture or any other international treaty, as the prohibition on torture is universal.
- There is no requirement for victims to exhaust domestic remedies, however if effective options are available to the complainant the case may be deprioritised for others with no such options.
- Any individual or group, including civil society organizations, national human rights bodies, and intergovernmental entities, as well as States, can submit information.

When submissions have been received, they will be reviewed to ensure they align with the scope of the mandate and comply with these criteria. Those that do not meet these requirements can not be pursued.

## Thematic submissions of structural, legal or endemic problems

Submissions are also welcome from reputable NGOs that include information about general conditions or concerns, based on research reports, with or without specifying individual victims.

Please note that if you send research reports to the Special Rapporteur, they will be read but not considered a submission for action, unless you use the online system and make an official submission requesting action.

Submissions that offer reflections or analysis of new or draft legislation will also be considered.



## Timeframes

The Special Rapporteur receives many hundreds of submissions per year and regrets that she is not able to act on them all. Based on present staffing levels, she is only able to take up between 70-80 submissions per year, either individually or together with other mandate holders. If you have not heard from the mandate within three months of submission, you can assume that your case has not been followed up.

Once a submission has been selected for action by the Special Rapporteur it can be acted upon urgently in cases where there is a risk of serious injury or death, or other irreparable harm to the victim. Other submissions will be reviewed over a longer timeframe.

60 DAYS >

Before speaking publicly, the Special Rapporteur is required to send a letter to the country in question. They have up to 60 days in which to reply to that letter and put their own position forward. Only where it is considered in the public interest, or to avoid irreparable harm to the victim, would the Special Rapporteur consider speaking out publicly with a press release ahead of that deadline.

3 DAYS >

For submissions involving draft or existing legislation, the Special Rapporteur's letter is published three days after it is sent to the country.



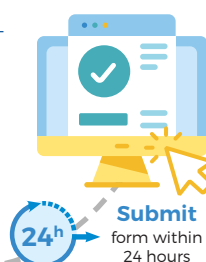
60 Days  
Letter Sent &  
Replied To



3 Days  
Letter Published

## How to submit information online:

The [Special Procedures Submission online form](#) guides users through required and optional fields, ensuring completeness. Submissions can be saved and completed within 24 hours. This is the best way to submit cases to the mandate.



## Managing expectations

The Special Rapporteur on Torture, like the other special procedures of the Human Rights Council, is a volunteer who works part-time. She also has an extremely small team working on communications, who are perpetually over-worked. The volume of correspondence coming into the mandate is overwhelming. While the Special Rapporteur would like to pursue every case that is submitted, this is not practically possible. Cases that do not follow the procedure detailed above, will not be considered.

Please help us, help the victims of torture by following the process detailed on the online form. Follow up by sending an email to the mandate email.



## Useful Links

**SPECIAL PROCEDURES SUBMISSION ONLINE FORM:**  
<https://spsubmission.ohchr.org/>

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE SUBMISSION PROCESS:** <https://www.ohchr.org/en/special-procedures-human-rights-council/what-are-communications>

**COMMUNICATIONS SEARCH** (to view all published allegation letters and any response from the relevant State(s)): <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/Tmsearch/TMDocuments>

**ABOUT THE MANDATE:**  
<https://www.ohchr.org/en/special-procedures/sr-torture>

## Useful Contacts

For inquiries relating to submission of communications:  
[HRC-sr-torture@un.org](mailto:HRC-sr-torture@un.org)

If you are a media professional and would like to speak to the Special Rapporteur on any of her interventions, PLEASE CONTACT:

- > MAYA DEROUAZ [maya.derouaz@un.org](mailto:maya.derouaz@un.org),
- > DHARISHA INDRAGUPTHA [धारिशा.इन्द्रगुप्ता@un.org](mailto:धारिशा.इन्द्रगुप्ता@un.org),
- > OR HER TEAM AT [Hrc-sr-torture@un.org](mailto:Hrc-sr-torture@un.org)