



To all States parties to the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

5 May 2025

Re: 2025 ELECTIONS TO THE UNITED NATIONS COMMITTEE AGAINST TORTURE

Excellencies,

The undersigned non-governmental organizations would like to draw your attention to the upcoming election, in October 2025, of five members to the UN Committee against Torture.

The 10-member Committee against Torture serves a crucial function in guiding States parties on the implementation of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (hereinafter “the Convention”). Members are elected for a term of four years in accordance with article 17 of the Convention.

One key determinant of the effectiveness of the Committee, as with all the UN treaty bodies, is the expertise, independence, impartiality and diversity of its membership, as set out in the Convention and General Assembly resolution 68/268.

Experts should be persons of “high moral standing” and “recognized competence in the field of human rights” serving in their personal capacity (article 17). Diversity in treaty body membership is reflected in the gender balance and the geographic representation of its experts, as well as their professional backgrounds. Independence and impartiality are crucial for the fulfilment of the mandate and the credibility of treaty bodies, as laid out in the General Assembly [resolution 68/268](#), entitled “Strengthening and enhancing the effective functioning of the human rights treaty body system”.

The Committee is currently comprised of eight men and two women. Historically, women’s representation in the Committee has been only approximately 21%. It is, therefore, of utmost importance to take action to promote a balanced gender representation within the Committee, which will have a crucial impact on the legitimacy and effectiveness of the main human rights body addressing torture and other ill-treatment globally.

The need to ensure gender diversity in the Committee, and the specific measures to achieve this goal, are further highlighted in the recent [General Recommendation 40](#) of the CEDAW Committee on the equal and inclusive representation of women in decision-making systems, as well as in the Human Rights Council [Advisory Committee Report](#) on representation of women in human rights organs and mechanisms. Both the CEDAW Committee and the Advisory Committee have recommended States to have transparent procedures at the national level for nomination and selection for positions in international organizations, as a way to ensure women are represented.

We believe that open, transparent and competitive national processes for selecting treaty body candidates contribute to better treaty body membership. As a State party to the Convention, if you are planning to nominate a candidate, we would therefore like to encourage you to consider setting up such a process to select the most suitable candidate, in accordance with the highest membership criteria. We recommend that such a





process involves, at a minimum, open and wide calls for applications and a transparent selection process with a view to recommending the strongest candidate possible for formal nomination by the competent government authority. We further request that you include gender diversity as a specific selection criterion and goal in formal nomination and during the voting process.

To assist States parties to identify candidates, we have highlighted key criteria for membership in a suggested *checklist* (see Annex) as set out in article 17 of the Convention and in General Assembly resolution 68/268 on Strengthening and enhancing the effective functioning of the human rights treaty body system. The annexed document also includes some of our own recommendations related to these criteria.

Once nominations have formally closed on 16 June 2025, we will circulate an invitation to an event with the nominated candidates or a “Meet & Greet”, to offer them the opportunity to present their skills, experience, expertise, intended contribution to the Committee’s work and availability to serve.

We hope that the checklist will be useful to you as a State party to identify the strongest possible candidates and remain available to provide further information throughout this process.

Signatories

Amnesty International

Association for the Prevention of Torture*

GQUAL Campaign

International Federation of ACATs*

International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims*

International Service for Human Rights

Omega Research Foundation*

REDRESS*

World Organization against Torture*

*Member of the United Against Torture Consortium



KEY CRITERIA FOR MEMBERSHIP OF THE UNITED NATIONS COMMITTEE AGAINST TORTURE

In October 2025, elections to the UN Committee against Torture will take place as the term of five Committee members ends on 31 December 2025. To this end, States parties are invited to take into account the below criteria for the selection of candidates to this election:

■ BE PERSONS OF HIGH MORAL STANDING¹

Candidates must be people of high integrity in their personal and public life. Candidates must not have been involved, by act or omission, in any violation of international human rights law or international humanitarian law.

■ HAVE RECOGNIZED COMPETENCE AND EXPERIENCE IN THE FIELD OF HUMAN RIGHTS, IN PARTICULAR IN THE FIELD COVERED BY THE RELEVANT TREATY²

Candidates must have demonstrated expertise within a field relevant to the mandate of the Committee, e.g. through past or present professional activities, work-related achievements, or holding of other relevant expert positions. Such experience may relate to prevention of torture or other ill-treatment, monitoring of places of detention, prison and criminal justice systems, experience in the documentation, investigation or prosecution of cases of torture and other ill-treatment (accountability), medical or health expertise in the rehabilitation of survivors of torture or other ill-treatment, gender-based forms of torture. Candidates shall also have experience of working in a multidisciplinary environment with a diverse group of stakeholders.

According to the Convention, consideration should be given to the “usefulness of the participation of some persons having legal experience.”³ To ensure a multidisciplinary perspective in the Committee’s work, States shall also consider nominating experts with backgrounds in other fields that are relevant to torture and other forms of ill-treatment. Legal and other expertise in areas of specific relevance to the Convention among others criminal law, asylum, immigration law, extradition law, detention law and standards, including with respect to detention conditions and regimes, juvenile justice, and gender-based violence would be particularly important.

¹ This checklist has been prepared by Amnesty International, the International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims, REDRESS and the World Organization against Torture (OMCT).

United Nations Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (Convention), Article 17.1 and Statement of the [Committee against Torture] adopted on 4 November 2013, at its fifty-first session (28 October–22 November 2013), UN Doc. CAT/C/51/2.

² Convention, Article 17.1 and [General Assembly Resolution 68/268](#) on the *Strengthening and enhancing the effective functioning of the human rights treaty body system*, 21 April 2014, (hereinafter GA res 68/268).

³ Convention, Article 17.1.

■ **SERVE IN THEIR PERSONAL CAPACITY AND IN FULL INDEPENDENCE⁴**

Candidates must be independent of all States. States should therefore refrain from nominating candidates who hold any paid or unpaid position within the executive or legislative branch of government, unless situated within an independent authority, or who perform any other functions that could compromise their independence and impartiality (real or perceived).

■ **PROMOTING DIVERSITY IN MEMBERSHIP⁵**

When nominating candidates to the Committee, **States should also give due consideration to a diverse membership with balanced geographical and gender representation.** Diversity in the membership could include, in addition to equal gender representation and gender diversity, experts from diverse ethnic, cultural, religious and secular backgrounds, experts from Indigenous communities, and experts with disabilities. Consideration should also be given to the nomination of victims of torture or other forms of ill-treatment.

Finally, a balance between Committee members from civil law and common law jurisdictions should be sought in order to give representation to “different forms of civilization and the principal legal systems.”⁶

⁴ Convention, Article 17.1. See also “The independence and impartiality of treaty body members is compromised by the political nature of their affiliation with the executive branch of the State. Members of treaty bodies shall consequently avoid functions or activities which are, or are seen by a reasonable observer to be, incompatible with the obligations and responsibilities of independent experts under the relevant treaties, ”[Guidelines on the independence and impartiality of members of the human rights treaty bodies \(Addis Ababa guidelines\)](#), para. 12.

⁵ GA Res 68/268, at para. 13 and Convention, Article 17.1.

⁶ Convention, Article 17.1.