

Physicians for Human Rights

Torture, Former Combatants, Political Prisoners, Terror Suspects, & Terrorists

<https://phr.org/issues/torture/setting-anti-torture-norms/>

Policy Issue Resources

PHRs extensive torture investigation and documentation experience has made us a world leader in establishing norms for investigating and documenting these unlawful practices.

PHR led the development in the late 1990s of the [Istanbul Protocol](#), the first set of international guidelines for the medical documentation of torture and its consequences. In 1999, this groundbreaking resource was adopted as the United Nations recognized standard. With it, PHR and our partners have trained thousands of health professionals on five continents to evaluate and document forensic medical evidence of torture. This global network of experts is providing critical material medical evidence that is helping to break down the wall of impunity for perpetrators of torture.

Together with the International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims and other NGOs, PHR has developed [model training materials](#) for health professionals to document torture and ill-treatment according to Istanbul Protocol standards.

PHR is currently leading a multi-year international effort to update and strengthen Istanbul Protocol norms in partnership with the International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims, the Human Rights Foundation of Turkey, REDRESS, the UN Committee against Torture, the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture, the UN Subcommittee for the Prevention of Torture, and the UN Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture. The project includes the participation of more than 180 experts from 51 countries and seeks to strengthen the Istanbul Protocol through updates and clarifications, including guidelines for states to implement the conditions necessary for effective torture investigation and documentation.

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