

**REDRESS**

Ending torture, seeking justice for survivors

BULLETIN

No. 8



**YEARS  
STANDING WITH  
SURVIVORS**

DIRECTOR'S LETTER

# 30 Years Fighting Against Torture

This year REDRESS is celebrating its 30th anniversary with a renewed focus on our core aims: helping survivors of torture secure justice and reparations, and removing the barriers they face to obtain the redress they need to rebuild their lives.

In the last three decades, REDRESS has secured justice and concrete reforms against torture through many important judgments on behalf of survivors before regional and national courts, and UN treaty bodies. REDRESS has also played a leading role to strengthen international standards on reparation and on victims' rights.

Under our 2025 Strategy, REDRESS is building on its historical achievements and established strengths. This includes efforts to develop practical measures to deliver justice and reparation for survivors, and to shine a light on situations where torture is prevalent but deserves more attention, such as the torture of marginalised and excluded communities, including women, refugees and the LGBTIQ+ community.

Some of REDRESS's recent initiatives include promoting reparations for survivors of conflict-related sexual violence and highlighting LGBTIQ+ torture in Africa and the Americas. REDRESS has also sought to encourage human rights sanctions to hold perpetrators accountable, pursue cases to seize the assets of perpetrators of torture to repurpose them as reparations for victims, and support civil society partners litigate strategic cases of torture.

At the same time, we have strengthened our governance structures with the recent appointment of two new Patrons (Baroness Frances D'Souza and Lilianne Ploumen) and three new Trustees (Andrew Songa, Ceri Thomas and Sara Hossain), who bring with them a wealth of experience in the private, public and non-profit sectors. As REDRESS begins its 30th anniversary celebrations, we are saddened, however, to have lost Dame Vivienne Westwood, a long-time Patron of REDRESS and a true champion of human rights.

We remain determined to redouble our efforts to drive positive change in the UK and across the globe towards our ultimate goal of ending torture for good, and we look forward to including you in our 30th anniversary celebrations.

**“We remain determined to redouble our efforts to drive positive change in the UK and across the globe towards our ultimate goal of ending torture for good.”**



Rupert Skilbeck,  
Director of REDRESS

Follow Rupert on Twitter @RupertSkilbeck

## Survivors of Torture Launch Manifesto in Parliament

On 30 January, survivors of torture voiced their needs and priorities directly to UK parliamentarians during an event organised by REDRESS in the House of Lords.

They presented the *Survivors of Torture Manifesto* with their recommendations to the UK government to improve access to justice, accountability, and reparation for survivors.

The Manifesto followed an initial consultation undertaken by REDRESS last year, which sought the views of UK-based survivors of torture and their family members on what justice means to them in practice, why it is important, and what remain their key barriers to achieving justice. The findings were collated in the report *Whose Justice?* Further consultations with survivors took place between October and December 2022.

For more information, please contact [camila@redress.org](mailto:camila@redress.org)



# Historic Apology to Victim of LGBTIQ+ Torture



© Promsex. Azul Rojas Marín during the ceremony of apology at the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights.

By **Chris Esdaile**, Legal Advisor  
Follow Chris at [@ChrisEsdaile](https://twitter.com/ChrisEsdaile)

On 3 November 2022, the Peruvian State finally acknowledged its responsibility for the violation of the human rights of Azul Rojas Marín, a trans woman who was tortured by police officers in 2008, which was motivated by discrimination.

The ceremony marked a milestone for the LGBTIQ+ community, as it is the first time ever that, as a result of a decision made by a human rights court, a state has apologised to a member of the LGBTIQ+ community for torture committed due to discrimination.

The ceremony took place at the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights in Lima. It was attended by senior officials from the Judiciary, the National Prosecutor's Office, other State institutions, representatives of embassies, international organisations, and civil society. A photo of Azul's mother, Juana Rosa Tanta Marín, who died in 2017, and who suffered greatly due to what happened, stood in a prominent place throughout the event.

**"I offer, in the name of the Government of Peru, sincere apologies for what occurred, for this violation of your human rights... This act of recognition is not sufficient by itself; the [Inter-American Court's] judgement must be complied with in its entirety. The state must honour its commitments."**

Félix Chero Medina, Minister of Justice.

In 2008, Azul filed a criminal complaint with the Peruvian authorities after she was detained by police officers from the Casa Grande district in an illegal, arbitrary and discriminatory manner. She then suffered violence at their hands, including rape. Despite having sufficient evidence to open an investigation for rape and abuse of authority, prosecution authorities decided not to investigate her claim.

REDRESS, together with two Peruvian NGOs (PROMSEX and CNDDHH) brought Azul's case before the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights in 2009. In 2020, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights found Peru responsible for the torture suffered by Azul and ordered a series of measures to redress the damage caused to her and to prevent such crimes being repeated. The judgment also found that Peru had violated the rights of Azul's mother.

While accepting the historic apology by the Peruvian State, Azul noted that Peru has not delivered most of the binding reparations ordered by Inter-American Court, including medical and psychological assistance she needs.

**"This formal ceremony, which was ordered by the Inter-American Court, is something very fulfilling for me. But I would like to point out that there are other [measures] which the Peruvian government has yet to comply with."**

Azul Rojas Marín.



[Watch the video of the ceremony](#)

# New Resources for UK-Based Survivors of Torture

By **Camila Marín Restrepo**, Communities Officer

Torture often has a profound and long-term impact on survivors, their families, and their communities. Having access to the right support can help survivors in their process of healing.

REDRESS has published a new *Guide to Justice, Accountability and Reparations for Survivors of Torture* that offers information about the options available to survivors to seek justice, reparation, and accountability, while hoping to increase awareness about their rights. In the Guide, survivors can find information on legal processes (such as criminal cases against perpetrators and cases before international human rights mechanisms) as well as alternatives to legal proceedings. The Guide is available in English, French, Spanish and Arabic.

The new resources are primarily intended for survivors of torture, their relatives and front-line services providers



based in the UK, where it is estimated there are between 60,000 and 100,000 survivors of torture in the forced migration population alone, according to a report recently published by REDRESS, *Whose Justice?*

In addition to the Guide, REDRESS has published new pages in the Help for Survivors section on its website, which provide detailed information on where to find further support in the areas of health, trauma, medical support, and treatment; immigration; and finances, housing and employment.

REDRESS hopes that these new resources will help survivors of torture based in the UK, their families and front-line providers find the support and resources they need.

For further enquiries, please contact [camila@redress.org](mailto:camila@redress.org)

 [Access the Help for Survivors resources](#)

## Labour Party Commits to a Right to Consular Protection

In September 2022, REDRESS welcomed the UK Labour Party’s commitment to introduce a legal right to consular assistance for British citizens, as announced in a speech by the Labour Party’s shadow foreign secretary, David Lammy.

REDRESS works with many British citizens who have been tortured or are at risk of torture abroad, and has long advocated for this right, which would create an obligation for the UK government to provide consular assistance to British citizens detained abroad.

According to the UK government’s own figures around 100 British citizens are tortured or ill-treated abroad every year. The provision of consular protection by the UK government can provide a crucial – and sometimes the only – link between a detainee and the outside world, and it is a vital safeguard against torture.

Due to the UK government’s wide discretion, its overall practice in this area is currently unpredictable, lacks trans-

parency, and is often inconsistent with the UK government’s own internal guidance.



To learn more about our work in this area, read our *Beyond Discretion* report.

# MI5 and MI6's Tip-Off Linked to Torture of British Blogger

By **Leanna Burnard**, Legal Advisor  
Follow Leanna at [@LeannaBurnard](https://twitter.com/LeannaBurnard)

More than five years after Jagtar Singh Johal, a British blogger and human rights defender, was abducted in the streets of Punjab by Indian plain-clothes officers, he remains unlawfully detained in India on baseless charges which carry the death penalty.

This is despite strong evidence suggesting that the charges against Jagtar are based on a confession obtained under torture and an independent UN expert body concluding that his detention “lacks legal basis” and is based on “discriminatory grounds” owing to his Sikh faith and his “status as a human rights defender.”

New evidence uncovered in a legal claim filed by Leigh Day filed on behalf of Jagtar in August, points to a possible tip-off from the British intelligence agencies, MI5 and MI6, to the Indian authorities that led to his detention, when there was a real risk that Jagtar could be tortured, mistreated or face the death penalty. This claim is supported by REDRESS and Reprieve, which are also representing Jagtar.

Jagtar says that following his arrest, electric shocks were administered to his ears, nipples and genitals, his limbs were forced into painful positions, he suffered sleep deprivation and death threats, including threats of being burned alive,

**“I never imagined the scenes I’d seen in horror movies of people being abducted by a foreign Government and violently tortured could become a reality for someone in my family. When it did, I expected our Government would do everything in its power to save my brother. Gurpreet Singh Johal, Jagtar’s brother.”**



© Free Jaggi Now campaign. Jagtar on the day of his wedding in India.

and he was forced to sign blank sheets of paper. Last year, more than four years after being held in pre-trial detention, formal charges were presented against Jagtar which rely on his forced confession under torture and are not supported by any credible evidence.

An independent medico-legal examination commissioned by REDRESS found in 2019 that there were reasonable grounds to believe that he was tortured in India. Despite the seriousness of the allegation, India has never provided Jagtar with an independent medical examination and has taken no steps to investigate the serious allegations of torture, as far as REDRESS is aware.

In January, REDRESS and Reprieve briefed MPs ahead of a backbench debate in the House of Commons organised by Jagtar’s MP, Martin Docherty-Hughes, on Jagtar’s ongoing imprisonment. During the debate, a cross-party group of MPs, urged the UK government to change its strategy and demand more robustly his release.

## UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention Findings, 19 November 2021

*“The Working Group observes that Mr. Johal was not presented with a warrant at the time of his various arrests; was denied the right to counsel... was subjected to torture and refused medical treatment; was not granted prompt consular assistance; was not brought promptly before a tribunal; and was judged behind closed doors without the presence of his lawyer and his diplomatic representative.”*

4.11.2017

4-9.11.2017

17.10.2019

19.11.2021

9.8.2022

4.11.2022

Jagtar is abducted by plain-clothes police officers in India

Jagtar says he is tortured to force him to confess

Medical experts find there are ‘reasonable grounds’ to believe Jagtar was tortured

UN experts conclude Jagtar’s detention ‘lacks legal basis’

Jagtar’s legal team at Leigh Day file a legal claim in the High Court in London against the UK Foreign Office, the Home Office and the Attorney General

5<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Jagtar’s arrest in India

# Targeted Sanctions as a Human Rights and Accountability Tool

By **Natalia Kubesch**, Legal Officer  
Follow Natalia at [@NataliaKubesch](https://twitter.com/NataliaKubesch)

REDRESS continues to advocate for the use of targeted sanctions as way to prevent human rights abuses and corruption, through imposing a financial cost on perpetrators.

Following sustained advocacy by REDRESS and partners, in December, the UK government announced a significant number of sanctions against 21 perpetrators and four entities involved in serious human rights abuses in 11 countries, including Russia/Crimea, Iran, Kosovo, Mali, Moldova, Myanmar, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Serbia, South Sudan, and Uganda. It also imposed sanctions on five individuals involved in serious corruption.

The All-Party Parliamentary Group on Magnitsky Sanctions (for which REDRESS acts as its Secretariat), the UK Anti-Corruption Coalition (UKACC) and REDRESS, welcomed these designations, at least five of which reflected evidence provided by civil society in collaboration with REDRESS and UKACC.

Our organisations have repeatedly called on the UK government to increase its use of Magnitsky sanctions to hold the worst human rights abusers and kleptocrats accountable. Magnitsky sanctions are used across several jurisdictions across the world since 2017 to curb human rights abuses and corruption by freezing the perpetrators' assets and stop them from travelling internationally. They were first introduced by the UK government in 2020.



© Reuters. A McLaren P1 Coupe, part of a collection of 25 luxury cars owned by Teodorin Obiang which was confiscated by the Geneva prosecutor's office.

While in the first year of the Magnitsky sanctions regime (2020/21), the UK sanctioned 102 perpetrators for human rights abuses and corruption, this fell to only six perpetrators in the second year (2021/22).

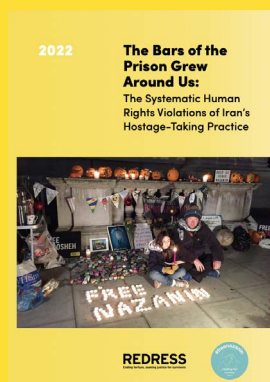
REDRESS and partners have sought to maximise the potential of sanctions by investigating abuses and submitting evidence to sanctions authorities, by using data-driven analysis to shape public policy, and by supporting NGOs across the world to use sanctions.

REDRESS and partners have also advocated for a more effective use of these human rights and accountability tools, urging the U.S., Canada, UK, and EU, to coordinate better on sanctions. We have published several publications on this issue, including *Multilateral Magnitsky Sanctions at Five Years*, the first-ever report analysing the use of sanctions in these jurisdictions, and a [UK-focused analysis](#) on the use of sanctions.

## New report highlights the systematic pattern of abuses during hostage-taking

Ahead of a special session of the UN Human Rights Council on the deterioration of the human rights situation in Iran in November, REDRESS and the Free Nazanin Campaign submitted an unprecedented report to state delegations attending the session.

This report details for the first time the systematic pattern of human rights abuses committed through Iran's hostage-taking practice, drawing in part from detailed testi-



monies from 26 victims of hostage-taking or their family members.

The victims shared their experiences from their initial detention and interrogation through illegitimate legal proceedings, abuses suffered during imprisonment, false and abusive propaganda by the regime, and their use as "diplomatic assets".



Read coverage in  
[The Guardian](#)

# Survivors of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence Voice Their Priorities for Reparations

By **Julie Bardeche**, Legal Advisor

Follow Julie on [@JulieBardeche](#)

Torture is often used against minority groups to further marginalise them, knowing that they may be powerless to respond. Our [Discrimination programme](#) challenges torture that is used to silence and oppress marginalised and excluded minorities.

Under this programme, we have been collaborating with the Global Survivors' Fund, working with partner organisations and survivors in Cambodia, Bangladesh, Myanmar and Chad to identify the needs and opportunities for reparations of survivors of conflict-related sexual violence in these countries. Final reports on Chad, Myanmar and Bangladesh will be published in the next months.

REDRESS is working with Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST) and Naripokkho in Bangladesh, Kdei Karuna in Cambodia and the Association Tchadienne pour la Promotion des Droits de l'Homme (ATPDH) in Chad.

The Global Survivors' Fund presented the [preliminary findings](#) of two studies on [Cambodia](#) and [Chad](#) during a side event organised during the 76th Session of the United

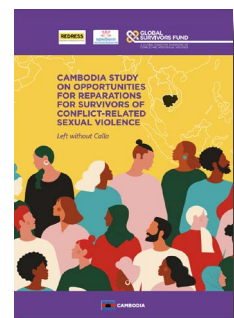


© Davidlohr Bueso (CC BY 2.0). Photos of female prisoners held by the Khmer Rouge at S-21.

Nations General Assembly in September 2021.

In July, we published the full report on Cambodia, which examined the scope and prevalence of conflict-related sexual violence during the Khmer Rouge regime (1975-1979) and the main obstacles that survivors face in realising their right to reparations.

The report was published as the residual functions of the ECCC (the hybrid tribunal dealing with the Khmer Rouge crimes), which will enable final reparations projects, are being decided.



[Read a blog piece](#)

## New Practice Notes on Strategic Litigation

By **Holly Huxtable**, Legal Officer

Follow Holly on [@HollyHuxtable](#)

Following the launch of seven practice notes on strategic litigation against torture last year, REDRESS has published two new practice notes on [Case Management and Digital Security for Strategic Litigation against Torture](#), and on [Evaluating the Impact of Strategic Litigation against Torture](#).

Produced under our [Solidarity Programme](#), they aim to help organisations around the world address and overcome common issues and challenges organisations often face in relation to managing and evaluating strategic litigation cases against torture.

The latest practice notes are the result of a consultative process and workshops held last year. The workshops offered an opportunity for NGOs from Asia, Africa, and Latin America working in anti-torture and broader human rights litigation to share experiences on case management and the security threats they face in their work.

REDRESS is grateful to the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture (UNVFVT) and the Matrix Causes Fund for supporting this project.



## 30 Years of REDRESS



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Since 1992 REDRESS has worked to deliver justice and reparation for survivors of torture - many targeted because of discrimination or to suppress dissent - and to promote solidarity in the anti-torture movement.

Supporting REDRESS means helping us bring legal claims for survivors and the prosecution of perpetrators. It also means standing with marginalised individuals and movements challenging injustice by supporting us challenge

torture that is used to suppress these groups. You will also be strengthening the anti-torture movement, as we work in collaboration with local partners around the world, many of whom operate in extremely difficult circumstances.

As we celebrate 30 years, we are growing our programmes, and you can support this important work.

Please contact Anoushka Canagaretna, Programme Development Manager, on [anoushka@redress.org](mailto:anoushka@redress.org)

## Become a regular supporter

It is the vital contributions of REDRESS's supporters that enable us to continue to redress torture where and whenever it occurs. In order to maintain ongoing casework to represent those wrongfully imprisoned or targeted for their identity or activism, we rely heavily on donations that can support our legal team.

Litigation of this nature often takes several years to reach a judgement, so sustained support allows us to see these cases through to fruition, supporting survivors with the

assistance they need to pursue justice. Your contributions also help us to strengthen the global anti-torture movement.

We are constantly striving to strengthen resilience within communities affected by torture and the organisations assisting them, increase awareness and advocate for judgements that will prevent further abuses from taking place. Supporter donations facilitate this work to realise our vision of a world without torture.

Support our ongoing cases: [redress.org/donate](https://redress.org/donate)

