

REDRESS

Ending torture, seeking justice for survivors

July 2025

JUST REPARATION

Strengthening the community of practice for reparation by sharing topical developments in the field



Just Reparation is a regular roundup of news on reparation, curated by the REDRESS legal team.

This edition highlights key developments in the field of reparation. These include a decision by the National Human Rights Commission Tribunal in Uganda, awarding compensation to a survivor of torture while in police custody; a ruling by the Supreme Court of Sri Lanka ordering compensation for four individuals who were falsely accused of crimes and subsequently tortured; the referral of a case to the Inter-American Court of Human Rights concerning serious human rights violations committed in a mental health facility in Guatemala; and a call made during the African Union summits for historical reparations beyond financial compensation for African people and people of African descent.

This edition also presents experiences from the Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST), supporting survivors of the July-August 2024 protests in Bangladesh. Their work focuses on helping these individuals access justice, accountability, and reparation.

If you would like to contribute a short article for our *Community Corner* section, or if your organisation is hosting an event that you would like to share with our readers or in our social media, please contact our Legal Officer, Alejandro, at alejandro@redress.org.

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BIG STORIES



UGANDA

Uganda Victims of Police Torture to Receive Compensation from National Human Rights Commission

In June 2025, Uganda's Hoima Human Rights Commission Tribunal awarded Shs 69.5 million (approximately USD \$19,391) in compensation to four individuals who were falsely accused of murder and subjected to torture while in police custody. The Commission found that law enforcement officers had tortured the victims during arrest and detention, including through physical abuse and denial of basic legal safeguards.

The compensation followed petitions submitted to the Hoima Commission concerning human rights violations by police officers. After reviewing the evidence, the Commission concluded that State agents had violated constitutional protections against torture and arbitrary detention. The awarded amount included Shs 20 million (approximately USD \$5,245) for torture, and Shs 2 million (approximately USD \$525) for the violation of the right to liberty.

Uganda's human rights institutions are playing an increasingly active role in addressing police misconduct and torture, reflecting both national and international efforts to promote accountability and reparation. Since the adoption of key human rights framework laws, the Commission has been empowered to independently investigate allegations and issue both monetary and non-monetary remedies.

Photo by: US Army Africa CC 2.0

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SRI LANKA

Supreme Court Orders Police Officers to Personally Compensate Survivor of Torture

On 19 June 2025, Sri Lanka's Supreme Court ordered two police officers from the Uragasmanhandiya Police Station to personally pay Rs 2 million (approximately USD \$6,630) in compensation to a man who was arbitrarily arrested, detained, and tortured in 2019. The Court ruled that the full amount must be paid by the officers from their own funds within six months of the judgment.

The victim, a young man falsely accused of theft, was subjected to severe physical abuse during custody and required hospitalisation for twelve days as a result of the torture inflicted.

The Supreme Court found serious violations of constitutional protections under Article 11 (freedom from torture), Article 12 (equality before the law), and Article 13 (freedom from arbitrary arrest and right to be informed of the reasons for arrest).

The Court held both officers individually responsible for the abuse, which included physical torture, threats, and degrading treatment while in detention. A senior bench led by Justice Shiran Gooneratne, and joined by Justices Thurairaja and Nawaz, reaffirmed that custodial torture and arbitrary detention are grave violations that warrant personal liability. This ruling strengthens Sri Lanka's constitutional jurisprudence by reinforcing the principle that individual police officers—not just the State—can be held directly accountable for serious human rights violations.

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GUATEMALA

Human Rights Violations at Guatemala's Federico Mora Hospital Taken to Inter-American Court

On 11 June 2025, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) [submitted a landmark case](#) to the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (IACtHR) concerning serious abuses at Federico Mora Hospital (FMH) in Guatemala. FMH is the country's only public mental health facility, holding both criminally charged and non-charged individuals under armed guard.

The IACHR found that some patients were detained against medical advice, suffering physical and sexual violence, inhumane conditions, and prolonged isolation—actions amounting to torture. The Guatemalan State failed to prevent, investigate, or remedy these violations. In 2022, the IACHR's held Guatemala responsible for violating fundamental rights, including life, personal integrity, liberty, and equality under the American Convention on Human Rights. Although reparation measures were recommended, the State did not implement them.

The IACHR's submission to the Court requests financial compensation, thorough investigations, the prosecution of perpetrators, and access of victims to appropriate healthcare. It also calls for systemic reforms: repealing outdated guardianship laws, recognising the legal capacity of people with psychosocial disabilities, decentralising mental health care through community services, and developing a clear

deinstitutionalisation plan with oversight. Additionally, the Commission urges stronger protections and reporting mechanisms for survivors of sexual violence, alongside mandatory staff training.

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REGIONAL - AFRICA

Renewed and collective stance before the African Union on demanding reparation for African and People of African Descent

Ghanaian President John Mahama renewed Africa's call for reparation at the 7th African Union Mid-Year Coordination Meeting in Equatorial Guinea, describing it as a unified and urgent demand for justice, dignity, and historical redress.

Aligning with the AU's 2025 theme on justice for Africans and people of African descent, Mahama emphasized that reparation is not just about financial compensation. He highlighted the need for healing, historical recognition, and systemic change. He urged African nations to speak with one voice on the global stage emphasising the need for a united continental stance.

Mahama also announced a strategic alliance between the African Union and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) to strengthen the movement and amplify the voices of people of African descent around the world. As part of this momentum, he shared that a high-level panel discussion on reparation, memory, and heritage, originally planned for the current meeting, has been postponed and will instead be held during an upcoming AU summit.

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COMMUNITY CORNER

We like to include the perspectives and insights of lawyers, activists, survivors, and others engaged in the field of reparation in **Just Reparation**. Alongside updates on progress in specific cases, your contributions are invaluable for enriching our collective understanding and fostering meaningful dialogue within the reparation community of practice. If you would like to feature in the next edition of **Just Reparation**, we encourage you to submit your contributions by 10 August 2025 to alejandro@redress.org.

Parvin's Story: A Glimpse into the Cost of State Violence and the Gaps in Reparation

By Saima Islam Tithy, Nowshin Rahman Shimu, Zakia Sultana Sadia, Alvi Hakim, Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST)



During the July 2024 Uprising that led to the fall of the government in Bangladesh, around 1,400 people were killed due to disproportionate use of force by law enforcement and security forces. Among the injured was Parvin, a 27-year-old brickbreaker and mother of two from Jatrabari, Dhaka.

On 18 July, while returning home from work, Parvin saw police attacking students. She stepped in to help a young man who had been shot, but was herself struck by

pellets with more than six embedded in and around her left eye, destroying her cornea and causing immediate blindness. Students rushed her to the hospital to secure emergency surgery.

Months later, Parvin met paralegals from [BLAST](#) - a national legal aid and rights organization. They learned that despite her urgent need, Parvin was denied adequate care at government hospitals and couldn't afford private treatment.

BLAST, working with Visionary Voyage to mobilize donors, arranged for a cornea to be flown in from Sri Lanka. In February, she underwent surgery and showed signs of improvement. Unfortunately, recent follow-ups confirmed her vision could not be restored due to severe damage.

Parvin was injured in July 2024, but her corneal surgery was delayed by six months until after BLAST intervened. Her case underscores the need for prompt emergency response systems for severely injured victims. The injury has significantly impacted her daily life—she lost her job and can no longer manage her household, though she continues to receive financial support from the benefactor who assisted with her surgery.

Her experience reveals gaps in the government's reparation response. Since 8 August 2024, Government schemes offering free medical aid and 1,00,000 BDT (approx. USD \$823) in financial support have been introduced. Yet, for critical cases like Parvin's, access to effective treatment remains difficult. BLAST has identified other victims suffering due to delayed care or medical malpractice. In Chittagong, one patient's vision worsened, and they developed skin rashes due to an incorrect dosage of prescribed eye drops. In another incident, a 15-year-old boy's injury was worsened when an intern improperly stitched the wound and applied plaster incorrectly, delaying his recovery.

Parvin's story is one of resilience and community solidarity. But it also highlights the urgent need for coordinated medical responses, stronger reparations mechanisms, and accountability for those providing services to survivors.

OTHER STORIES

KENYA

**Kenyan High Court Rules Illegal
Rendition and Torture of IPOB
Leader Nnamdi Kanu**

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HUNGARY

ECtHR Rules Against Hungary Over Collective Expulsions and Asylum Barriers

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INDIA

Supreme Court Rebukes UP Authorities: ₹5 Lakh Compensation for Bail Delay

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FRANCE

Court of Cassation Defines Judge's Role in Loss of Chance Cases

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DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

African Court Accepts DRC's Case Against Rwanda Over Eastern Congo Abuses

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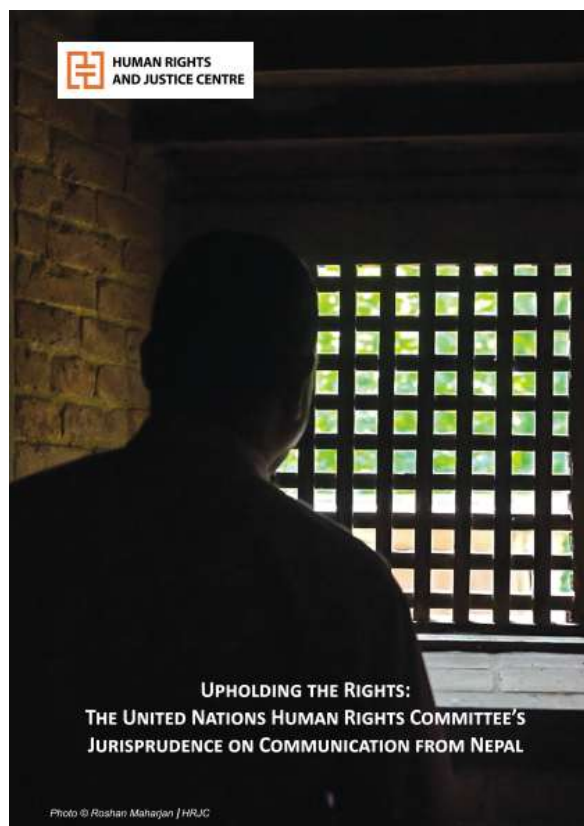
WEEKEND READS

Upholding the Rights: The United Nations Human Rights Committee's Jurisprudence on Communications from Nepal

by Human Rights and Justice Center - Nepal

This publication includes 28 Views of the HRC on communications from Nepal. As per the Views, Nepal was responsible for the translation of the decision of the HRC into the local language, dissemination of the translated version of the decision, investigation into the facts of the case, providing information on the investigation, and, in case of death, locating the remains and handing them over to the family, prosecuting and punishing the perpetrator of the violation, providing adequate compensation to the victims, providing rehabilitation to the victims, guaranteeing non repetition of the similar violation in the future, amending legislation, and ensuring measures of satisfaction to the victims. Except for the translation of some decisions, in none of the cases did Nepal fulfill its responsibility as pointed out in the Views.

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Democratic Republic of the Congo Interim reparative measures project with survivors of conflict-related sexual violence - Impact report

by Global Survivors Fund

The impact report shows, among others transformative outcomes for the 1,093 survivors of conflict-related sexual violence who participated across four provinces between 2020 and 2024. Designed and implemented in close collaboration with survivors—through co-creation, a steering committee with at least 40% survivor members, and tailored individual and collective reparative activities—the project provided financial compensation, vocational training, psychosocial and psychiatric care, mobile medical clinics, legal support (including issuing 127 birth certificates for children born of sexual violence), and survivor-designed community centres.

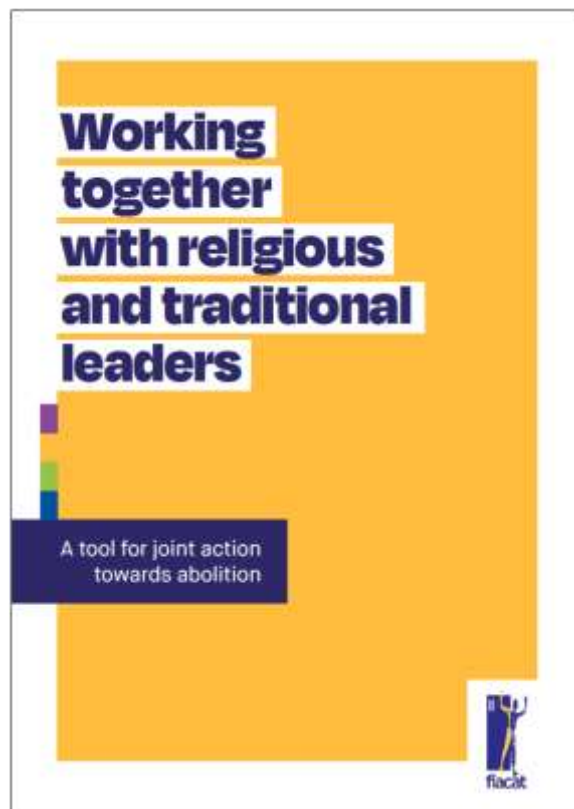
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Working with Religious and Customary Leaders: A Tool for Joint Action for Abolition

by FIACAT

In Africa, traditional and religious leaders are key players in any major process of societal change, and therefore key allies in the fight for the abolition of the death penalty. Stemming from discussions that took place during awareness-raising workshops for opinion makers conducted in several African countries in recent years together with ACATs on the field, this tool is aimed at actors of the abolitionist movement who wish to understand and mobilize the potential of religious and customary leaders. It aims to explore the specificities of their role; practical strategies for engaging them with the abolitionist movement, in a collaborative approach; and common arguments that can be mobilised in the context of joint actions.



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EVENTS

[Here](#) are some upcoming events on strategic litigation against torture and other related topics that may be of interest to you.

Q&A on the Duterte ICC case: Combating Disinformation and Promoting Victims' Access to Information



In this webinar REDRESS and our partners from the Philippines will present a new Q&A resource developed to counter disinformation surrounding the case of Rodrigo Duterte before the International Criminal Court (ICC).

This session will feature insights from Philippine civil society organisations and a victim-survivor, who will share firsthand experiences with disinformation, its impact on victims' engagement and participation, and the strategies being used to challenge false narratives and promote access to accurate, reliable information. It will take place on **Tuesday, 29 July 2025 at 10 am CET | 4 pm PH time**.

[Register here](#)

REDRESS Webinar Series



REDRESS has launched its webinar series on Strategic Litigation in Practice. The July session focused on experiences of strategic litigation in emblematic cases of torture featured in [Casebook 1: Leading Strategic Litigation Cases Against Torture](#). The panel included Juan Méndez, Former UN Special Rapporteur on Torture, who spoke about *Velásquez Rodríguez v. Honduras*; Viviana Krsticevic, Executive Director of the Center for Justice and International Law (CEJIL), who discussed *La Cantuta v. Peru*; and Elba Bendo (she/her), lawyer at the European Human Rights Advocacy Centre (EHRAC), who presented on *Khashiyev and Akayeva v. Russia*. The session was moderated by Alejandra Vicente, REDRESS's Head of Law.

[Watch the webinar](#)

If your organisation is hosting an event and would like to share it with our community of practice through this newsletter or REDRESS social media, please send the details to our Legal Officer at alejandro@redress.org. Thank you for reading, see you next month!

Take a look at our previous editions [here](#).
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