

Survivors of torture MANIFESTO



Between March and July 2022, REDRESS sought the views of UK-based survivors of torture and their family members in the UK on what justice means to them in practice, why it was important, and what were their key barriers to achieving justice within the UK. Through interviews and conversations with 18 survivors of torture and their family members, the resulting report, 'Whose Justice? Reflections from UK-based survivors of torture', identified a series of broad recommendations to the UK Government to improve access to justice, accountability, and reparation for survivors of torture. Through further detailed consultation with survivors between October and December 2022, the following recommendations have been developed and endorsed by survivors.

We call on the UK government to:



Uphold the absolute prohibition of torture and ill-treatment and act as a global leader in ending all forms of torture and ill-treatment abroad.

- Speak out strongly against all States utilising torture, and work with the international community and civil society to secure meaningful accountability mechanisms for all States and perpetrators committing torture. This should include the re-introduction of the FCDO's Anti-Torture Strategy.
- Use the full range of legal, political and diplomatic tools to secure access to justice and reparations for all survivors of torture, wherever it occurs.
- Where the UK itself has been accused or found guilty of complicity in torture, lead by example, by supporting the transparent and independent investigation of allegations in order to hold perpetrators accountable.



Place the voices and perspectives of survivors of torture at the centre of UK national and international policy on justice and reparations and recognise survivors as experts by experience.

- Consult with survivors in national policy reviews and policy development, including the UK's approach to consular assistance and its Anti-Torture Strategy.



Review law and practice to remove barriers to accountability through the use of universal jurisdiction.

- Devote sufficient resources to ensure that investigations and prosecutions of international crimes are carried out swiftly, and without delay.



Improve the use of Magnitsky sanctions as a tool in preventing torture and holding perpetrators accountable.

- Use Magnitsky sanctions without fear or favour, in consultation with survivors and civil society groups and in coordination with other governments.
- Adequately resource the FCDO's Sanctions Unit and the Office of Financial Sanctions Implementation.
- Increase government transparency and accountability on the use of sanctions through an appropriate parliamentary oversight mechanism.



Enshrine in law the right to consular assistance for all British nationals detained abroad at risk of torture, cruel, and inhuman or degrading treatment, including those with dual nationality.

- Develop and publish clear criteria for the transparent exercise of consular assistance, in consultation with survivors of torture and their families.
- Prioritise consular access and visitation to all detained nationals at risk of torture.
- Ensure that FCDO travel guidance provides adequate advice for British nationals and dual citizens of the risks of torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment in countries known to carry out these abuses.



Improve the provision of centralised, comprehensive and accessible information on support services, including referral pathways, and resources available to survivors of torture in the UK.

- This must include information on available mechanisms to access justice and reparation for torture and other grave human rights violations, rehabilitation and psychosocial support options through the NHS and other providers, and support services for claiming asylum and integrating into the UK.



Substantially increase dedicated resourcing available for rehabilitation for UK-based survivors of torture.

- This must include resourcing available through the NHS in addition to dedicated government support via specialised health charities, with the aim of improving the availability, accessibility, acceptability and quality of physical and psychosocial health services, including trauma and psychotherapy services.



End the UK's 'hostile environment' asylum policy and replace it with an immigration system that treats asylum seekers with dignity and respect and processes applications efficiently in order to avoid prolonging distress.

- Ensure compliance with international law and standards to prevent survivors of torture from being placed in immigration detention, and to prevent them from being sent back to countries where there is a risk of torture (refoulement).
- Strengthen family reunification efforts within the asylum and visa system, particularly where remaining family members have been persecuted and tortured or are deemed at risk.