



# **A WORLD WITHOUT TORTURE**

**REDRESS**

Ending torture, seeking justice for survivors

# ENDING TORTURE, SEEKING JUSTICE FOR SURVIVORS

REDRESS mission is to deliver justice and reparation for survivors of torture, challenge impunity for perpetrators and advocate for legal and policy reforms to combat torture. Our vision is a world without torture.

## WHO WE ARE

REDRESS is an international organisation dedicated to bringing legal cases on behalf of survivors of torture, an essential part of their recovery. REDRESS pursues legal claims on behalf of survivors of torture in the UK and around the world to obtain justice and reparation for the violation of their human rights.

We empower survivors to access justice through human rights cases against governments, civil cases against individuals, and criminal cases where we advocate for law enforcement bodies to prosecute perpetrators under the principle of universal jurisdiction.

Our approach is strategic, so that as well as representing an individual we target the policy reasons that enabled the torture to take place, by building a campaign that uses advocacy, community engagement, and communications to influence change.

## OUR IMPACT

Our work brings about tangible change. REDRESS focuses its efforts on the practical measures that are needed to deliver justice and reparation for survivors, and to ensure holistic support throughout the process. We target particular situations where we can have most impact, particularly for torture relating to dissent (human rights defenders, journalists, activists) and discrimination (LGBTIQ+ persons, women, ethnic minorities, migrants). We also support and strengthen the anti-torture movement through our Solidarity programme.

## OUR VALUES

**A survivor-centred approach.** REDRESS prioritises the interests and perspectives of survivors in our cases and campaigns. We seek to promote the well-being of survivors, avoid further traumatisation, include survivors in campaigns where possible, and accompany them through the legal process.

**Collaborative partnerships.** We work in partnership with other civil society groups in the countries where we operate. Our culture of collaboration ensures that we work with partners rather than displace them. We also work with specialist international anti-torture NGOs where we complement their techniques or scope.


**Expertise and innovation.** REDRESS has a strong reputation built on expertise and innovation. This is maintained through high standards for research and litigation, and by the constant collaboration with national and international experts, academics and practitioners.

**Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe** is a British-Iranian charity worker who was tortured and kept hostage by Iran for six years, until her release in March 2022. While detained, she remained separated from her daughter and her husband, who lived in the UK. REDRESS brought her case to the attention of the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention and the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Torture. REDRESS also secured diplomatic protection from the UK government for her, the first time it was granted in a human rights case.




## OUR METHODS

### **Holistic Strategic Litigation against Torture**




With this method we represent individual clients but also use legal cases to challenge the underlying problem. We adopt a holistic approach, ensuring referrals for psycho-social support and accompanying survivors through the legal process. We provide training and mentoring to partner NGOs on this technique.

### **Policy Advocacy**



We work with partners to deliver campaigns at the national, regional, and international level to advocate for policy reform for reparation and for the introduction of anti-torture laws and safeguards. This work includes detailed research to inform our conclusions and recommendations and engaging with survivor communities to involve them in the campaign.

### **Communications and Media**



We support our litigation and policy advocacy through press and social media, to influence stakeholders, draw attention to the issues, ensure that survivors have a voice and to raise our profile to enhance our influence.

In 2022 REDRESS undertook detailed research to canvass the views of survivors of torture in the UK regarding what justice means to them. The resulting report Whose Justice? is guiding our work on the priorities of survivors in seeking accountability and redress. We also developed a Survivors of Torture Manifesto with proposals to the UK government.



**Azul** is a transgender woman who was raped by police officers in Peru. In 2020, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights found Peru responsible for the torture and sexual violence she suffered in the first case of discriminatory torture ever decided by a human rights court. Significantly, the Court also ordered Peru to tackle structural discrimination.

## WHERE WE WORK

Torture is a **global phenomenon**, and REDRESS is active in many different parts of the world. Our collaborative approach allows us to prioritise where we work, and not to focus on issues and regions that are effectively covered by other civil society groups.

- **In the United Kingdom**, we have strong civil society connections and experience advocating to the government, as well as bringing individual cases and engaging survivor communities.
- **In the Netherlands**, through our second office, we engage with civil society, donors, and institutions in The Hague, and will develop our Justice work there.
- **In Africa**, we have a long history working primarily in Eastern Africa and North Africa and to some extent in Southern Africa, with some projects in West Africa. We bring cases to the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights.
- **In the Americas**, we have cases and projects across Latin America and have brought leading cases to the Inter-American Court of Human Rights.
- **In Asia**, we use the UN Human Rights system and have worked with partners across the continent, including in Nepal, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Myanmar, Sri Lanka and India.
- **In Europe**, we litigate before the European Court of Human Rights and our work includes cases and projects in Western, Central and Eastern Europe. We also co-lead the United Against Torture Consortium and the International Accountability Platform for Belarus with other leading anti-torture NGOs.
- **In the Middle East**, we use the UN Human Rights System, and we have cases and projects in countries including Syria, the UAE, and Iran.

## OUR PROGRAMMES

### Justice

#### **We pursue legal claims for survivors and the prosecution of perpetrators.**

REDRESS is dedicated to promoting access to justice for survivors of torture, an essential part of their recovery. We bring human rights cases against governments, civil cases against individuals, and criminal cases where we advocate for law enforcement bodies to prosecute perpetrators under the principle of universal jurisdiction. Through this work we promote the right of access to justice under the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the absolute prohibition of torture.

We prioritise cases with a strategic objective: those that may bring about necessary legal, political, or social changes beyond the case. However, we always seek to ensure that survivors' needs are at the forefront of the process. We adopt a holistic approach, providing survivors with the help they might need, by referring them to specialist agencies for support beyond our expertise in areas such as housing, employment, health, and social support.



**Jagtar Singh Johal** is a British national and Sikh activist who has been unlawfully detained in India since 2017. Jagtar faces political charges carrying the death penalty, based on a confession extracted under torture. REDRESS has brought his case to the attention of UN Treaty Bodies and Independent Experts, and with Reprieve, is supporting a legal claim brought by his legal team at Leigh Day. It argues that the British intelligence services may have contributed to his torture by sharing intelligence with the Indian authorities.

There are two main areas of work under our Justice programme: Justice UK and Justice International.

## **Justice UK**

There are many torture survivors in the UK, both British citizens and refugees. We bring legal claims on behalf of survivors based in the UK, ensure referrals for their psycho-social support, engage with their communities, and conduct advocacy to push for policy changes to improve their situation and address the underlying causes of torture.

We engage with the Metropolitan Police and the Crown Prosecution Service to prosecute perpetrators. We work to ensure that the absolute prohibition of torture is upheld in the UK and that the UK government is held to account for any involvement in torture or other ill-treatment. We also work to improve consular protection for UK citizens who have suffered, or are at risk, of torture overseas.

## **Justice International**

We support international and regional legal claims and advocacy on behalf of torture survivors worldwide. We work with national partners to bring cases before domestic and regional courts, UN Treaty Bodies and the International Criminal Court. We focus on countries where there is impunity for torture but where there are also opportunities for justice. We cooperate with prosecutors in Europe to support cases under the principle of universal jurisdiction.

**Necati Zontul** was raped by Greek coastguards after the boat he was travelling in with other migrants was intercepted. In 2012, reaffirming that the rape of a detainee by State officials amounts to torture, the European Court of Human Rights ordered Greece to pay him €50,000 in compensation. Following the judgment, the Greek government gave new powers to the Greek Ombudsman to investigate illegal activity by Greek law enforcement officials that has a discriminatory motive.



# Reparation

## We deliver remedies and reparation for survivors.

REDRESS works to secure the delivery of effective reparation for survivors of torture, including through compensation and the introduction of practical measures to implement international standards for satisfaction, rehabilitation, non-repetition, and restitution.

Through litigation and policy advocacy we develop and implement national legal frameworks that deliver reparations for individuals and communities. This work includes developing asset recovery and sanctions to deliver reparations, promoting reparations in specific tribunals including the International Criminal Court, and implementing the UN Basic Principles on the Right to Reparation.



**Leopoldo García Lucero** was a supporter of Salvador Allende. He was subjected to torture and forced exile under the Pinochet regime in Chile in the 1970s. In 2013, in a landmark ruling, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights ordered Chile to pay him £20,000 for the lack of justice in his case and to finalise a criminal investigation within a reasonable time. Subsequently, Leopoldo received a formal apology from the Chilean government.

REDRESS has developed a **novel project** on asset recovery and sanctions as a way to deliver reparations to victims of torture, which has already been deployed to seek such reparations for victims of hostage-taking by Iran, the conflict in Ukraine and those who have suffered from rampant embezzlement and human rights violations in Equatorial Guinea.





# Dissent

## We challenge torture used to suppress activism and protest.

Torture is used with impunity against human rights defenders, journalists, lawyers, protesters and activists, particularly climate and environmental defenders, often taking the form of police brutality. With more authoritarianism, such torture has increased, including through the inappropriate use of emergency powers.

Activists are often disappeared, which makes it easier for torture to take place. The use and threat of torture against those who dissent closes down civil society space, making it even more difficult to hold governments to account. We are responding to this problem in specific jurisdictions with projects that use strategic litigation to highlight the issue, determine responsibility, and push for policy reform.

REDRESS co-leads with several international and Belarusian organisations the **International Accountability Platform for Belarus**. The platform collects information and evidence on alleged crimes under international law committed during the 2020 presidential elections and its aftermath. This evidence is being preserved in digital archives, ensuring it will be accessible for prosecutors in the long term. Until March 2023, the IAPB had collected information and evidence from over 2,300 survivor-victims and witnesses, and over 750,000 open-source intelligence files.



**Oliver Acuña Barba** is a Mexican journalist who after being critical with the government in his work, was arbitrarily detained and tortured by police officers in 2006. He spent two years in prison for a crime he did not commit, lost his home and possessions. He was forced to go into exile in the United Kingdom. REDRESS has brought his case to the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights.

## Discrimination

### We challenge torture used against marginalised and excluded minorities.

Torture is often used against minority groups, knowing that they may be powerless to respond, further marginalising them. REDRESS uses strategic litigation to challenge discriminatory torture used against such minorities including women, LGBTQ+ persons, refugees, migrants, and those facing multiple forms of discrimination.

This includes torture directed by state agents, and also situations where the state tolerates or acquiesces in torture by others. We also work with survivors of conflict-related sexual violence, including in [Asia](#), to seek ways to secure justice and reparations to them.

**Magdulein Abaida** was campaigning for women's equality to be enshrined in the new Libyan constitution when she was abducted and tortured by a militia group in 2012. REDRESS filed a complaint before the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. In 2002, the UN body requested that Libya provide her with reparations, prosecute those responsible, and address gender-based violence and discrimination against women in Libya. It was the first decision regarding gender-based violence against a human rights defender.



**Purna Maya** (not her real name) was dragged from her home and raped by four soldiers in 2004 in Nepal, before being dumped on the street. She suffered grave injuries and had to have her uterus removed. In 2017, in the first decision involving a victim of sexual violence during the Civil War in Nepal, the United Nations Human Rights Committee ordered Nepal to investigate, prosecute and punish the men who raped her and to provide her with full reparation. It also called on Nepal to make torture a crime in its domestic law and to remove other barriers to justice for rape victims. REDRESS and Advocacy Forum-Nepal worked jointly in this case.

## Solidarity

### We support and strengthen the anti-torture movement.

For nearly 30 years REDRESS has worked with anti-torture NGOs across the world, many of which operate in extremely difficult circumstances. These are mutually beneficial relationships. Our partners bring knowledge of the issues, expertise in national law and policy, experience working with survivors, and cultural awareness. REDRESS matches this with expertise in the law of torture, global connections, and the capacity to deliver international campaigns.

We ensure that these relationships are effective and collaborative partnerships, and that both REDRESS and our partners are strengthened by the process. This work also includes engaging the anti-torture movement through networks, building its resilience, promoting the use of holistic strategic litigation as an effective technique against torture through training and mentoring, encouraging our volunteers, and working with academic experts.

In 2023, REDRESS joined forces with five of the world's leading anti-torture organisations to launch the **United Against Torture Consortium** in partnership with over 200 civil society organisations and other partners in more than 100 countries. Funded by the European Union, the Consortium will strengthen and expand the anti-torture movement by pooling expertise in torture prevention, protection, rehabilitation and strategic litigation.



REDRESS has developed a comprehensive set of **training materials** to help lawyers, activists, and medical professionals bring legal challenges that have a broader impact outside of the individual case. They include a series of practices notes, training modules, PowerPoint presentations and animation videos explaining key legal concepts about strategic litigation against torture, with which REDRESS seeks to strengthen the anti-torture movement.

## **REDRESS**

**87 Vauxhall Walk**

**London, SE11 5HJ**

**United Kingdom**

**+44 (0)20 7793 1777**

**[info@redress.org](mailto:info@redress.org)**

**[redress.org](http://redress.org)**



**[REDRESSTrust](https://twitter.com/REDRESSTrust)**



**[@redresstrust](https://www.instagram.com/redresstrust)**



**[company/REDRESS](https://www.linkedin.com/company/REDRESS)**

# **REDRESS**

**Ending torture, seeking justice for survivors**

Photo credits (in order): UK government, Dianne Magbanua, Promsex, Free Jaggi Now, REDRESS, REDRESS, Reuters, Sopa Images Limited/Alamy Stock Photo, Olivier Acuña, Magdulein Abaida, IRCT, ESA/REDRESS.