

Excellences, ladies and gentlemen

Imagine a world where persons deprived of their liberty are unsung and unreachable hostages of obscurity, solitude and shadowy mysteries. Imagine a world leaving these people behind bars without a backward glance. Imagine a world that never questions if they are being tortured. Imagine we were not gathered today to celebrate the threshold of a world against this world.

We are here today surfing a 10 years' journey of success, failure and lessons learnt from the implementation of the OPCAT.

Today, we can be very proud of our collective achievements under the Optional Protocol. In 10 years, States, civil society, NPMs and the SPT have managed to carry out a significant number of visits, to discuss and follow up on an immense amount of measures concerning legislation and public policy, and brought light to the situation of hundreds of thousands of persons deprived of liberty. We have consolidated the extended understanding of what is a place of detention, and extended the preventive approach to all so-called "non-traditional" places of deprivation of liberty, such as psychiatric hospitals, juvenile detention centers and sites of migratory detention.

The guiding principle of the Optional Protocol must be to make the matter routine; that simply something that we think about all the time. It ought to be routine, it ought to be part of what we are doing all the time.

That can be done best when it is done in transparency, when it is done in the spirit of openness and collaboration.

Based on that we need to explore other ways of working, and adopt very practical attitudes. To me, as mental health professional what I need to highlight is to let those interested in the fight against torture understand that not only the legal aspect can bring justice. The medical, including the mental health related aspects, side of things can bring light into the fight against impunity, and the use of the multidisciplinary professional approach in bringing together the evidence when torture is documented based on the Istanbul Protocol and it is one of the added value of the OPCAT

I will keep the floor now to our honorable panelists
To shed light on the ten years where OPCAT has been in force and
how **OPCAT has prevented torture; by identifying its added value
and lessons learnt** with examples of achievements and best
practices of key stakeholders in the prevention of torture.

At the end, as Martin Luther King suggests, "Injustice anywhere is a
threat to justice everywhere". Imagine a world where we are all
gathered in this room to celebrate 196 successes instead of 83. **We now
know the mission. Let's work together and find the means!**

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