



United Kingdom
Mission to the
United Nations



association for
the prevention
of torture



UNITED NATIONS
HUMAN RIGHTS
OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER

PERMANENT MISSION OF DENMARK
TO THE UNITED NATIONS



Permanent Mission of Norway
to the United Nations

YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED

SIDE EVENT AT THE UNITED NATIONS' 71st GENERAL ASSEMBLY
SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR ON TORTURE AND OTHER CRUEL, INHUMAN
OR DEGRADING TREATMENT OR PUNISHMENT

A UNIVERSAL PROTOCOL FOR INVESTIGATIVE INTERVIEWING AND ATTENDANT SAFEGUARDS

The absolute prohibition against torture and other ill-treatment is a fundamental and non-derogable norm of international law. Law enforcement officers and officials from other investigative bodies are bound to respect and protect the inherent dignity and physical and mental integrity of all persons – including suspects, witnesses, and victims – during questioning. Nevertheless, the use of torture, other ill-treatment, coercion, and intimidation against persons in custody and during interviews, continue unabated in different parts of the world – and despite crystal-clear scientific and historical evidence that abusive and coercive techniques elicit unreliable information, and are indeed counterproductive, resulting in adverse operational, institutional, and public safety consequences.

In his latest thematic report, **Special Rapporteur on Torture Juan E. Mendez (A/71/298)** calls for the development of a Universal Protocol for investigative interviewing practices that are grounded in fundamental principles of international human rights law, identifying a set of standards for non-coercive interviewing methods and procedural safeguards that ought, as a matter of law and policy, to be applied at a minimum to all interviews by law enforcement officials, military and intelligence personnel, and other bodies with investigative mandates.

Drawing on the Special Rapporteur's report, this side-event side-event seeks to sensitize Member States to the need to develop model of investigative interviewing that is non-coercive, ethically sound, evidence- and research-based, and empirically founded. Such a model would move away from accusatory, manipulative, and confession-driven techniques and provide state agents with positive guidance on how to operate the presumption of innocence in their pursuit of truth.

Panelists will provide input and comments on both the substantive and the advocacy levels, offering strategies for how to best ensure that the universally applicable prohibition of torture and other ill-treatment, and the principle of humane treatment of detainees, are implemented in practice during questioning and interviews in different investigative contexts. The side-event will also provide a platform for Member States, UN agencies, civil society, and other relevant mechanisms and stakeholders, to discuss prospects for the development of a Universal Protocol for investigative interviewing and attendant safeguards.

**Representatives of Member States, UN agencies and
civil societies are cordially invited.**

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON THE EVENT PLEASE VISIT THE ANTI-TORTURE INITIATIVE'S WEBSITE AT: www.antitorture.org

WEDNESDAY 19 OCTOBER 2016
10 AM – Conference Room 11

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

H.E. Ambassador Ib Petersen
Permanent Representative of Denmark to the United Nations

MODERATED BY:

Mr. Mark Thomson
Secretary General, Association for the Prevention of Torture

PANELISTS

Mr. Juan E. Méndez
Special Rapporteur on Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

Prof. Shane O'Mara (Remotely)
Professor, Trinity College Dublin, Institute of Neuroscience

Ms. Katherine Hawkins
The Constitution Project

Dr. Asbjørn Rachlew
Norwegian Centre for Human Rights
Superintendent, Norwegian Police (on leave)

Mr. Gaston Chillier
Executive Director, Centro de Estudios Legales y Sociales

Mr. Mark Kelly
International Human Rights Lawyer
Member, European Committee for the Prevention of Torture

CLOSING REMARKS

H.E. Ambassador Martin Shearman
Ambassador for Human Rights, Development and Peacebuilding
United Kingdom Mission to the United Nations

The side-event is collaborative and organized by the Anti-Torture Initiative in cooperation with the Special Procedures Branch of OHCHR, and co-sponsored by the Association for the Prevention of Torture, El Centro de Estudios Legales y Sociales, the Permanent Mission of Denmark to the United Nation, the United Kingdom Mission to the United Nations, and the Permanent Mission of Norway to the United Nations.

The event is open to the public (registration 3 days in advance required for participants without UN badges).

UN identification badges are required for entry. Interested guests without a UN identification badge should send an email to anicoles@wcl.american.edu by 12 PM, Monday, October 17, 2016.