

**INTER-AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF HUMAN RIGHTS**

**USAID COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT EDG-A-00-02-00030-00**

**ANNUAL REPORT OF THE PROJECT BY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR**

**(September 2004 – August 2005)**

**PROJECT: PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT FOR VICTIMS OF TORTURE IN THE INTER-AMERICAN SYSTEM**

**Final Goal:** To provide psychological support to torture victims whose cases are being processed in the Inter-American Human Rights Protection System

**Performance indicator:** More and better-quality comprehensive psychological support being provided to torture victims or relatives whose cases are being processed in the Inter-American System

**Annual Goal 1 (2004):** To consolidate the network-team of professionals specializing in comprehensive psychological support for torture victims whose cases are being processed by the bodies of the Inter-American System  
**Annual Goal 1 (2005):** To consolidate and disseminate a methodology for providing comprehensive psychological support to torture victims whose cases are being processed by the bodies of the Inter-American System

Activities	Impact Indicators 2004-2005 Work Plan	Achievements	Means of Verification
<p><b>Coordination of the Network-Team of Specialist Professionals</b></p> <p><b>Objective:</b> To coordinate the work and information sharing of the network-team of professionals who specialize in providing comprehensive psychological support to torture victims whose cases are being considered by the protection bodies of the Inter-American System</p>	<p>The network-team is more knowledgeable about the methodology for providing comprehensive psychological support</p> <p>The network-team is stronger</p> <p>The network-team is producing and disseminating more knowledge</p> <p>Stakeholders have greater access to the network-team's theoretical-methodological contributions</p>	<p>The work of coordinating and communicating with the network-team is a key element in the implementation of the project. The network-team continued to be consolidated as the members communicated with each other and shared ideas and information via the specialized section and email. Having access to the section's contents allows them to enhance their knowledge regarding psychological support for torture victims in the Inter-American System.</p> <p>One of activities implemented as part of the coordination efforts was a working meeting held 7-11 March 2005, in San Jose, Costa Rica. The main objective was to study and discuss the articles to be included in a specialized publication, with a view to improving the quality of the input. This second working meeting helped consolidate the work begun at the first meeting (held in August 2003). One-and-a-half years on, the network-team is stronger, has taken on board the comprehensive and innovative approach that the project has promoted and has developed the level of mutual trust and cooperation required for its members to work together effectively.</p> <p>The network-team has also developed and assimilated a work methodology for providing comprehensive psychological support to torture victims in the Inter-American System.</p>	<p>Audio recording and transcription of discussion in the plenary session of the <i>Second working meeting of the network-team</i></p> <p>Transcription of group discussions</p> <p>Information sheet and work program of the meeting</p> <p>Group and individual emails sent to members of the network-team</p> <p>Specialized section available to the network-team</p>

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<p><b>Comprehensive Psychological Support for Victims of Torture or their Relatives</b></p> <p><b>Objective:</b> To provide coordinated, systematic psychological support to victims or their relatives before and during the hearings of the protection bodies of the Inter-American System</p>	<p>Improvement in the quality of the comprehensive psychological support provided to torture victims granted hearings by the bodies of the Inter-American System</p> <p>Victims more aware of the importance of presenting their cases to the bodies of the Inter-American System</p> <p>More and better-quality documentation on practices for providing support to torture victims</p> <p>More contributions to the methodology for providing comprehensive psychological support</p>	<p>Between September 2004 and August 2005, there was an increase in the theoretical, technical and logistical capabilities available for providing comprehensive psychological support to torture victims in the Inter-American System. The cases that benefited during the reporting period were The Mapiripán Massacre v. Colombia, Wilson Gutiérrez Soler v. Colombia and Blanco Romero v. Venezuela.</p> <p>In all these cases, during the hearings and in personal communications, the victims stressed how important it was for them and their relatives that their cases were being considered by the Inter-American System, and the impact that their participation in the hearings and the case in general would have on those around them. The victims' relatives regarded the support they received as a key, decisive factor in the process and evaluated it very positively. The victims in the case of Blanco Romero v. Venezuela told the IHR that the psychological support had been very useful. It had enabled them to give the best possible testimony for the litigation process and given them the emotional courage to relive their painful experience. The psychological reports on this experience are used to enhance the project's methodological design and document collection.</p> <p>The psychological support process was enhanced during period under review by making improvements to the methodology, as confirmed in the reports submitted by the specialist professionals in charge of the cases. The legal-psychological strategy used in the Mapiripán v. Colombia case in particular proved very successful, combining as it did the work of two specialists of the network-team and a national organization in support of the surviving victims of a paradigmatic case in Colombia. The successful integration of this work demonstrated the viability and effectiveness of the methodology designed by the project, while making it possible to continue to enhance it.</p> <p>The CEJIL lawyers in charge of the case expressed their satisfaction with the coordinated psychological work involving members of the team-network and Colombian organization AVRE. All of this demonstrates the fruits of the project and the experience accumulated, as well as the importance of using a legal-psychological strategy, an aspect that this project has introduced into the litigation of cases.</p>	<p>Psychological reports submitted by the specialists in charge of the cases</p> <p>IAHR Court press releases on the hearings held in the cases Mapiripán v. Colombia, Wilson Gutiérrez v. Colombia and Blanco Romero v. Venezuela</p> <p>Proposed methodology of the project enhanced</p> <p>Agenda of meetings with victims during the public hearings</p> <p>Minutes of meeting with victims to evaluate the psychological support provided in the Blanco Romero v. Venezuela case</p>

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<p><b>Training and support for the staff of CEJIL</b></p> <p><b>Objective:</b> To ensure CEJIL staff receive professional guidance on how to handle cases involving torture victims</p>	<p>CEJIL team better equipped to handle psychological factors in cases involving torture</p> <p>The legal team better equipped to provide comprehensive support to torture victims</p>	<p>During the last quarter of 2004, the project provided follow-up to the process of training CEJIL staff by holding a working meeting on the psychosocial aspects involved in the litigation of torture cases. The meeting took place 6-8 December 2004 in Washington DC and was led by Dr. Carlos Martín Beristain, a renowned international specialist in mental health and human rights. Throughout the training process, emphasis has been placed on how the lawyers should treat the torture victims, the psychosocial dynamics involved and aspects of the litigation of cases of this kind. The team members themselves identified these as topics they needed to learn more about with regard to torture and the unique situation of its victims. The training has raised the profile of torture issues in the Inter-American System because CEJIL is the best-known organization involved in litigating cases. CEJIL is now more sensitized to, and better prepared to tackle, the issue and to make its consequences known to the protection bodies. The specialists who led the different training workshops are internationally recognized experts in the topics addressed. The entire team of CEJIL lawyers took part in the process and in the evaluations of the training sessions they said they were now better prepared to litigate and handle cases of this kind. In 2005, the project also encouraged the lawyers to consult the psychologists for specific guidance on how to handle cases.</p>	<p>Program of the workshop</p> <p>Report of the specialist who led the training</p> <p>Evaluations by the CEJIL team</p>

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<p><b>Litigation of torture cases in the Inter-American System</b></p> <p><b>Objective:</b> To make progress with the processing of torture cases by the protection bodies</p>	<p>Progress with the torture cases being processed by the bodies of the Inter-American System</p> <p>The bodies of the Inter-American System are devoting more time and attention to the issue</p>	<p>During the LXVI Regular Period of Sessions of the Inter-American Court, held 28 February - 15 March 2005 in San Jose, Costa Rica, public hearings were granted to two cases included in the project - the Mapiripán Massacre v. Colombia and Gutiérrez Soler v. Colombia.</p> <p>During the LXVII Regular Period of Sessions of the Inter-American Court, held 13 - 30 June 2005 in San Jose, Costa Rica, a public hearing was granted for the case of Blanco Romero v. Venezuela. COFAVIC, the organizing that presented the petition in the case with CEJIL, requested psychological support. The inclusion of these three new torture cases raised the profile of the issue in the Inter-American System and brought the project closer to achieving its final goal of 17 cases processed by the Court.</p> <p>Progress was also made in other cases included under the project. The Government of Honduras exhumed the remains of Juan Humberto Sánchez on 25 August 2004, as the Court had ordered in its respective judgment. On 5 November 2004, during a public ceremony held at the Presidential Palace and in his capacity as Head of State, Honduran President Ricardo Maduro asked the relatives of Juan Humberto Sánchez for their forgiveness, acknowledging the State's responsibility for the human rights violations suffered by Mr. Sanchez and his relatives.</p> <p>On 1 March 2005, the Inter-American Court issued its judgment in the case of the Serrano-Cruz Sisters v. El Salvador, which was included in the project in 2004.</p>	<p>Documents requesting hearings</p> <p>Record of cases litigated CEJIL</p> <p>CEJIL press release announcing the Government's compliance with the judgment in the case of Juan H. Sánchez v. Honduras</p> <p>Transcription of public hearings of the Inter-American Court</p> <p>Court press releases announcing the hearings in the cases Mapiripán v. Colombia, Wilson Gutiérrez v. Colombia and Blanco Romero v. Venezuela</p> <p>Judgment in the Serrano-Cruz Sisters v. El Salvador case</p>

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<p><b>Enhancement of the project's methodology for providing comprehensive support (2004)</b></p> <p><b>Final design of the methodology for providing comprehensive psychological support (2005)</b></p> <p><b>Objective:</b> To improve the methodology used by the network-team to provide comprehensive psychological support to torture victims and present expert opinions to the protection bodies</p>	<p>Continuous improvement in the methodology for providing comprehensive psychological support to torture victims</p> <p>Further development of important aspects of the methodology</p> <p>Enhancement of the methodological design, useful for all the stakeholders</p>	<p>The process of continuously improving the comprehensive psychological support methodology was enhanced by the feedback provided by the network-team, the coordination between the legal and psychological teams and constant additions to the specialized section. Building up the specialized section is spurring the development of the legal-psychological strategy in torture cases, while helping to improve the methodology for providing comprehensive psychological support to victims.</p> <p>A final version of this methodological design will be disseminated by means of a manual on the psychological support process that is currently in preparation, also incorporating the legal perspective. The network-team meeting in March 2005 generated inputs related to the comprehensive psychological support methodology that will be included in the manual.</p> <p>Further work on important aspects of the methodology and the implementation of the project in general is being undertaken for a specialized publication that will highlight the work carried out throughout the execution of the project. The specialized articles help strengthen the training and the contributions of the network-team of specialists and when they are published they will be a very useful tool for improving the emotional state of torture victims who have recourse to the Inter-American Human Rights Protection System.</p>	<p>Electronic access to the specialized section</p> <p>Preliminary version of the specialized articles</p> <p>Preliminary version of the manual on the psychological support process</p>

**Annual Goal 2 (2004-2005): To influence the development of the jurisprudence of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights and the recommendations of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights with regard to psychosocial reparations in torture cases**

Activities	Impact Indicators 2004-2005 Work Plan	Achievements	Means of Verification
<p><b>Sensitization of the Inter-American System</b></p> <p><b>Objective:</b> To improve the measures ordered by the protection bodies of the Inter-American System to help victims overcome the psychological impact of torture</p>	<p>Progress reflected in the jurisprudence on torture of the Inter-American Commission and Court</p> <p>Progress in sensitizing the two bodies to the psychological impact of torture</p> <p>Psychosocial reparations for victims or their relatives incorporated into the recommendations/ judgments of the bodies of the Inter-American System</p>	<p>The medium-term impact indicators regarding the process of sensitizing the Inter-American System call for progress in the judgments and recommendations of the protection bodies, while the short-term indicators refer to the granting of hearings of cases included under the project.</p> <p>Several meetings were held with members of the Inter-American Court and Commission. In the meetings with members of the Inter-American Court, the judges and the secretary demonstrated great interest in the project and, in particular, the final outputs (including the specialized section and the printed publications). These meetings also made it possible to ascertain their opinions regarding the performance of the psychological experts in the public hearings that involved torture cases. This important contribution will to be taken into account in enhancing the methodology for providing comprehensive psychological support to torture victims in the Inter-American System, which includes expert testimony from psychologists.</p> <p>The protection bodies are aware of the project and constantly being sensitized to its aims and activities. They are granting hearings to cases covered by the project and show a readiness to permit the presentation of oral expert testimony.</p> <p>The permanent contact with members of the Court and the Commission during different activities, and especially during the hearings, makes it possible to sensitize them continuously to the project's priority issues and objectives on behalf of torture victims whose cases are considered by the System. The aim is to promote progress with the jurisprudence on torture, particularly as regards the standards for reparations, and a better understanding of the problems faced by the victims.</p>	<p>Agendas of meetings with representatives of the protection bodies</p> <p>Hearings granted to torture cases in the Inter-American System</p>

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<p><b>Dissemination of Information about the Project</b></p> <p><b>Objective:</b> To afford greater access to information about torture and its psychological impact on the victims or their relatives, and about psychological support, especially with regard to the Inter-American System</p>	<p>More people informed about the psychological impact of torture and psychological support methodologies</p>	<p>As part of the strategy for increasing the project's influence and dissemination, a discussion took place Friday, 3 June 2005 entitled "<i>Torture as the antithesis of mercy: a reading in the context of human rights.</i>" Led by renowned Mexican psychoanalyst Raúl Páramo, the activity was held in the Auditorium of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights.</p> <p>The IIHR held its <i>Twenty-third Interdisciplinary Course in Human Rights</i>, on democracy, political rights and citizen participation, from 18 to 29 July 2005 in San Jose, Costa Rica. An activity was organized during the course to discuss the programs and activities of the IIHR's Department of Civil Society Entities. The staff presented details of the project and the specialized section. More people know about the project as a result of these dissemination activities.</p> <p>In 2004, the project began preparing a specialized book on topics related to torture victims and psychological contributions in the international litigation of cases. This publication is intended for use by lawyers involved in international litigation, commission members and judges (the international protection bodies), lawyers who assist them and individuals and entities interested in this subject. The articles are currently being expanded and the content improved, based on the input received at the meeting and the strategic vision contributed by the IIHR team.</p> <p>By publishing the project's book on psychosocial contributions and then disseminating it widely, more people will become familiar with the experience, especially the work of the network-team and the theoretical-technical input it produces.</p> <p>The Portuguese-language version of CEJIL's specialized Gaceta on torture and reparations for its victims was disseminated widely in Brazil (there are also Spanish and English versions). Launching and disseminating this specialized Gaceta has made it possible to communicate information about the project to a large number of people in the hemisphere, since the material is in the hands of human rights advocacy organizations. This increases substantially the number of people who learn about and are sensitized to the subject, and the dissemination of the innovative subjects addressed by it.</p>	<p>List of participants in the discussion on torture and photographs of the event</p> <p>List of participants in the discussion held during the Interdisciplinary Course</p> <p>List of participants in the seminar organized by CEJIL, APT and CTV, where copies of the special issues of CEJIL's Gaceta on torture in Portuguese were distributed</p> <p>Preliminary version of the specialized articles</p>

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<p><b>Updating of the Directory of Organizations</b></p> <p><b>Objective:</b> To incorporate new information into the online directory of organizations that provide psychosocial torture support to victims</p>	<p>Users have more access to up-to-date information on organizations that offer psychosocial support to torture victims</p>	<p>Regional directory of organizations specializing in psychosocial care for torture survivors and their relatives. The online directory gives users greater access to up-to-date information on organizations involved in torture-related issues.</p>	<p>Electronic access to directory of organizations</p>

**How was progress made in achieving the performance indicator of the project PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT FOR VICTIMS OF TORTURE IN THE INTER-AMERICAN SYSTEM?**

Considerable progress was made in attaining the performance indicator: "More and better-quality comprehensive psychological support being provided to torture victims or relatives whose cases are being processed by the protection bodies of the Inter-American System," since each new case taken on board by the project yields important lessons that are used to enhance the comprehensive psychological support methodology.

The staff also made progress with the efforts to coordinate the legal and psychological aspects of the work, achieving close communication between psychologists and lawyers in several cases. This is one of the project's innovative achievements.

The project edged closer to its goal of covering 17 cases. Three new cases were included between September 2004 and August 2005 (making a total of 10 so far) and another three are being prepared for the last hearings of the Inter-American Court and the IACHR in 2005.