

**SUPPORT FOR VICTIMS OF TORTURE  
(AMENDMENT)  
USAID COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT EDG-A-00-02-00030-00  
QUARTERLY REPORT FOR THE PERIOD  
APRIL-JUNE 2006**

**1. General Framework**

During the reporting period (April-June 2006), project staff focused primarily on the implementation of the national workshops in Mexico and Guatemala.

With regard to the use of the legal-psychological methodology for providing support to victims and expert testimony (Activity 1 in the 2006 Work Plan), the workshops made it possible to identify NGOs that undertake international litigation in cases involving torture victims. The workshops in Chile, Peru and Argentina will be used to make further progress in this area.

During the quarter under review (April-June 2006), planning decisions were taken with regard to the activity *Emotional support for victims of torture*, which entails training for psychology professionals. The project decided to enhance the training by incorporating the input and experience generated by the national workshops and the outputs produced in 2006 (e.g., the user-friendly version of the jurisprudence of the Inter-American System and the articles of the specialized publication that is currently being edited).

The training program has already been designed; it will consist of five modules. The content has been defined and an international professor specializing in the subject matter will be assigned to each module. During the last quarter of 2006, the professors will be preparing the module assigned to them, including a bibliography, practical exercises and other important elements. The training course is set to begin in February 2007, parallel to the first annual period of sessions of the Inter-American Court. Therefore, the support for victims in the Inter-American Court will also get under way in 2007, once the support group has been trained.

A change was made in the subregional training. Initially, workshops were to be held in Guatemala, Mexico and El Salvador. However, logistical difficulties made it impossible to coordinate the implementation of the workshop in El Salvador with the counterpart organization during the first half of 2006. As a result, the subregional training will be held in November this year for the South American countries that will be taking part in the national workshops in July and August (Chile, Argentina and Peru). Therefore, the academic and logistical preparations for the subregional workshop will get under way in October, not in August as planned.

Furthermore, during the workshops in Mexico and Guatemala key participants were identified for the subregional training that will be carried out in 2007.

Another important change in the activities planned, based on the experience acquired during the first six months of the implementation of the project, was the reformulation of the campaign for gathering testimonies. After thinking long and hard about the value of compiling testimonies on their own, the staff felt that the project would be better served by combining the exercise with a successful therapeutic experience. Therefore, they decided to combine the campaign for gathering testimonies with research on effective methodologies for supporting victims. This applies to the execution of both the activities and the budget. (This is reflected in the document on the projected implementation of the project sent to USAID on 18 July 2006).

As a result, the research on effective methodologies will become a systematization of successful methodologies for supporting victims of torture and other serious human rights violations. Each systematization will include an outline of the methodology used (highlighting strengths, opportunities, weaknesses and threats), a synopsis of one case and the testimony of the victim involved, including his/her opinion of how the intervention of the project benefited him/her.

The project is now preparing an invitation to a large number of organizations in the Americas to submit a summary of the methodology they use. Twenty of the organizations will subsequently be asked to prepare a more detailed account, including the testimonies of the victims.

The cinema-forums, which form part of the activity "Strategies for sensitizing civil society," were originally due to take place on 26 June. During the period under review (April-June 2006), the project contacted an expert in Latin American audiovisual productions who belongs to the Videoteca del Sur foundation, which has an exclusive collection of 8000 Latin American films and documentaries. The consultant will be putting together a collection of documentaries related to the subject of torture and its victims. However, since the process of selecting the documentaries and obtaining authorization to use them from the copyright holders is slow (the work will take all of the second half of 2006 to complete), the project decided to hold the cinema-forums in 10 countries on 26 June 2007, International Day for Victims of Torture.

The specialized section was presented at the national workshops in Mexico and Guatemala, and will be presented in July and August in the workshops in Peru, Chile and Argentina. The section was due to be made available to the general public on 26 June but the launch had to be postponed until the last quarter of the year (October-December) because the design and content are being evaluated and the observations and inputs received at the workshops will be incorporated. During the reporting period (April-June), the work done on the specialized section mostly involved making changes to the technological platform, to make browsing easier.

According to the schedule of activities updated in March, work on the script for the documentary video was due to start in April. However, the contract could not be signed during the quarter under review (April-June) because the production companies had prior commitments. An outline of the video was prepared and the contract is expected to be signed in August, following which production of the script will begin.

Finally, the last change concerns the countries in which the national workshops were due to be held. One of the 10 countries, Colombia, had to be replaced as the organization that had been the IIHR's counterpart during the first phase of implementation (since 2002) informed the project that it would have to limit its role in the second phase for institutional reasons. The Corporación AVRE had taken part in the first phase, completed the outputs called for and rated the exercise as very useful. However, it decided it was not in a position to take part in the second phase of the project, which got under way in 2006. Consequently, Ecuador took Colombia's place.

The attached schedule of activities reflects the changes mentioned and others such as the dissemination of the specialized publication and the guide for providing psychological support, which was due to be distributed in the last quarter of 2006 but will not be available until 2007.

## **2. Annual goals**

**2.1.** To promote psychological support actions and the coordination of psychological contributions with the legal strategy of cases involving victims of torture brought before the Inter-American System

**2.2.** To implement institution building actions and promote national networks for providing comprehensive support to torture victims

**2.3.** To sensitize society in general, and civil society and state sectors involved with torture victims, to prevent a repetition of acts of torture and raise awareness of the plight of survivors

## **3. Implementation of the project**

### **3.1. National workshops to train NGOs**

#### **3.1.1. Description**

As decided in the first quarter of the year, the national workshops in Guatemala and Mexico took place in May and June. A workshop was held 22-24 May in Mexico City and 14-16 June in Guatemala City.

In addition, during the reporting period (April-June), the logistical and academic preparations were made for the following workshops:

- Peru: 19-21 July 2006
- Chile: 26-28 of July 2006
- Argentina: 31 July-2 August 2006

The IIHR team in charge of implementing the project met to evaluate the workshops held in Mexico and Guatemala. The results of that meeting were used to fine-tune the program for the next training activities. Since each country also has specific speakers for certain topics, in accordance with its particular context, the team worked on the specific program for each workshop as well.

#### **3.1.2. Method**

The participants were drawn from:

- Organizations that provide psychosocial support and medical and legal assistance
- Ombudsman's offices, mainly officials who visit prisons and other places of detention
- Public defender's offices
- Truth Commissions
- Academic institutions involved in the issue

The objective of the workshop was to train personnel from these organizations in the use of the methodology for providing psychosocial and legal support to victims of torture, with special emphasis on the Inter-American System.

The workshop focused on three areas:

1. The Inter-American System for the protection of human rights and how it can influence developments at the national level
2. Psycho-legal methodology developed by the project “Psychological support for victims of torture in the Inter-American System,” which includes interdisciplinary language, the issues of gender and ethnic diversity, and an analysis of a successful experience in the Inter-American System
3. Jurisprudence dealing with reparations in cases of serious human rights violations: the trend and future challenges

The following elements were incorporated into all the activities:

- Promote strategies for the creation of national networks of the organizations taking part
- Sensitize the participants to the need to seek reparations in torture cases and reintegrate the victims into society
- Incorporate considerations such as gender differences and ethnic diversity into comprehensive support for torture victims
- Promote awareness of the importance of the psycho-legal methodology and interdisciplinary language, which make it possible to understand new and enhanced approaches to problems of this kind

In accordance with the methodology proposed, the program consisted of two types of activities. The first involved theoretical lectures by experts. The sessions lasted 1 hour and 45 minutes each, with the final half an hour being used for questions and feedback from the participants.

The other activities were of a practical nature, with the participants working in groups to produce outputs. The groups studied a hypothetical case, applying psycho-legal strategies for providing comprehensive support to torture victims. They also drafted proposals for creating networks of the organizations taking part whose work involves assisting torture victims. The groups' conclusions were presented in the final plenary session.

The specialized documents produced in the first quarter of 2006 were burned on a CD that was distributed among the participants. They were also used as input for some of the lectures.

### **Workshop in Mexico**

A total of 35 people took part in the workshop held in Mexico, including representatives of civil society organizations and government agencies involved in psychosocial and medical support and human rights work, officials of public defenders' offices, leading academic institutions working in this area and an organization that represents victims. There were five participants from the outlying areas of Mexico: two from Reynosa-Tamaulipas, one from Chihuahua, Guanajuato and one from San Luis Potosí. Three international organizations also sent delegates.



The discussions during the workshop focused on the following subjects of interest to the participants:

- Importance and use of the Protocol of Istanbul for torture cases
- Institutionalization of the use of the Protocol of Istanbul by public and nongovernmental agencies
- Importance of the legal distinction between torture and cruel and inhuman treatment
- Use of international jurisprudence at the national level
- Strengthening of the national systems and the Inter-American System for combating impunity
- Importance of full and effective compliance with reparations ordered by the Inter-American Court
- Discussion of the legal and psychosocial importance of reparations, including the views of the victims themselves
- Inclusion of gender and ethnic diversity in the litigation of cases at the national level. Exploration of advocacy strategies and strategies for raising the profile of torture and its victims

Although this was the first time that an activity of this kind had been held, the work in groups enabled the participants to acquire a comprehensive and practical grasp of the psycho-legal methodology. They bonded and worked well together, and enhanced their different areas of expertise and professional experience.

On 24 May, the closing ceremony of the event took the form of a public activity that included the presentation of the book *Verdad, Justicia y Reparación. Desafíos para la democracia y la convivencia social*. The speakers were Gilda Pacheco, Fabián Sánchez, the Director of the CMDPDH, and Emilio Álvarez Icaza, the President of Mexico City's Human Rights Commission (CDHDF). IHR consultant Víctor Rodríguez served as the moderator.

The workshop was covered by the following representatives of media organizations: Antonio Soto (Revista Expreso Republicano), Víctor Ballinas (La Jornada), Manuel Temottzin (Radio Capital) and Carlos López (Excelsior). On 22 May, Ligia Orozco of W Radio interviewed Project Coordinator Gilda Pacheco and Fabián Sánchez, the Director of the counterpart organization, about the subject matter of the workshop.

## Workshop in Guatemala

Thirty-four representatives of NGOs and public institutions involved in the issue of support for torture victims took part in this workshop. They included representatives of civil society organizations and government agencies involved in psychosocial and medical support and human rights work, officials from public defenders' offices, and leading academic institutions working in this area, including 6 participants from the outlying areas of Guatemala. Two international organizations also sent delegates.



The discussions during the workshop focused on the following subjects:

- Handling of cases involving capital punishment in the Inter-American System
- Strategies for combating torture and forced disappearances. How to overcome the population's refusal to acknowledge and talk about what happened
- Use of international justice to resolve cases of serious human rights violations and make adequate redress to the victims
- Validation of the term "victim," as the victims themselves accept it and understand that their rights have been violated
- Need for political will to make reparations and training for human rights, psychosocial and victims organizations
- Use of the Protocol of Istanbul, since this instrument provides guidelines of how to collect evidence of torture but cannot be presented as evidence in itself
- Use of the *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders* (4th ed.) as a strategy or evidence but not as a criterion for psychological support
- Inclusion of the gender issue in the Inter-American System and the application of formal justice in gender-related matters at the internal and local levels
- The importance of cultural aspects and the difficulties involved due to questions of language, access and cosmic vision

- Difficulties and problems involved in the application of ILO Convention 169 for indigenous peoples

The working groups' main contribution was new and creative input for the presentation of written expert evidence in the Inter-American System. The participants discussed the importance of using a useful and instructive methodology, approach and discourse to demonstrate the harm done and determine the reparations needed.

The TV channel Guatevisión broadcast a report on the activity. Various newspaper reporters also interviewed Gilda Pacheco and Víctor Rodríguez of the IIHR, and Judith Erazo and Nieves Gómez of ECAP, about the subject matter of the workshop.

### **3.1.3. Background / Rationale**

The training required by NGOs that work with torture victims was identified during the execution of the project "Psychological support for victims of torture in the Inter-American System." The workshops held confirmed the importance of sharing an interdisciplinary methodology that makes it possible to provide victims with comprehensive support during the litigation of their cases. The organizations and institutions that took part in these training activities were extremely interested in the subject.

The inputs and expertise shared during these activities will be made available to the organizations that took part through the specialized section of the IIHR website, so that they, in turn, can share them with other organizations and professionals working in the same areas.

### **3.1.4. Institution(s) responsible and coordination**

The IIHR coordinated and implemented the national workshops with the assistance of a counterpart organization in each country. In the case of Mexico, it was the Mexican Commission for the Defense and Promotion of Human Rights (CMDPDH) and in Guatemala, the Team for Community Studies and Psychosocial Action (ECAP).

### **3.1.5. Intermediate steps**

- Coordinate with the counterpart organization in each country
- Make logistical preparations for workshops (site of the event, certificates, badges, etc.)
- Make academic preparations (select and invite participants, prepare program, information sheet, prepare presentations by the IIHR and coordinate with guests speakers)

### **3.1.6. Results or outputs**

- Workshops held in Guatemala and Mexico
- 69 people trained in the psycho-legal methodology for providing support to victims of torture proposed by the project

### **3.1.7. Impact indicators**

***“Organizations better equipped to provide comprehensive support to torture victims, from an interdisciplinary perspective”***

***“The organizations have greater capabilities and expertise for monitoring the State’s actions with regard to human rights and reparations for victims”***

The participants were extremely interested in the training and in the approach presented. The fact that this type of work can be applied to other, similar issues (exhumations, justice and indigenous health) with an interdisciplinary approach led to a fruitful dialogue and learning experience. It unquestionably increased the tools, expertise and knowledge of the organizations taking part for dealing with torture victims and their cases.

The participants regard the psycho-legal methodology as a useful mechanism for exerting influence at the national level - for example, in cases involving human rights violations such as those that occurred recently in San Salvador Atenco and the femicides in Ciudad Juárez.

Now that the participants are familiar with the jurisprudence of the Inter-American System on the question of reparations, they are better placed to monitor the State’s policies on these issues.

#### **Means of verification:**

The following documents:

- Programs of workshops
- Lists of participants
- Evaluations of the participants
- CDs containing specialized documents for each workshop
- Information sheets on workshops distributed among participants
- Audio recording of each workshop

### **3.2. Dissemination of the project and specialized information via institutional mechanisms**

#### **3.2.1. Description**

As programmed in the 2006 work plan, between April and June progress was made in coordinating the activity related to the project’s subject matter to be held during the 24<sup>th</sup> Interdisciplinary Course in Human Rights (28 August - 8 September this year). Working with the IIHR’s Pedagogical Unit, it was decided that the project would award grants to cover part of the expenses of at least five of the participants whose work is related to the issues covered by the project.

The individuals concerned will also take part in seven hours of complementary training parallel to the course. The activity will focus on the psycho-legal methodology created by the project for work with torture victims in the litigation of their cases. Members of the CEJIL Mesoamerica team and other professionals who could benefit from this training will also be invited to take part in the activity. The training will take place on 10 September.

The project coordinator, Gilda Pacheco, will take part in a panel discussion during the course dealing with the work being carried out under this project.

The staff also worked on the material that will be used to disseminate the project in various training activities - fliers and *señaladores* referring to the project's specialized section on the IIHR Web page to which the public will have access in the last quarter of 2006.

Furthermore, the IIHR disseminated information about project activities in the media.

The document related to the systematization of jurisprudence on the Inter-American System that was prepared during the first quarter of the year was sent for editing. Further contacts were made with consultant Suzanne Villarán (a former member of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights) with a view to her coordinating the user-friendly version of this work, which will be published in the last quarter of 2006.

Finally, an activity took place on 26 June at IIHR headquarters to commemorate International Day in Support of Victims of Torture.

### **3.2.2. Method**

A consultant was hired to enhance the subsection of the specialized section called "Rights Protection." The work consisted of researching both printed documents (publications, journals and printed bulletins) and electronic documents (Internet, digital bulletins, discussion lists); and selecting information to be added to the subsection related to both the Universal System and the Inter-American System for the Protection of Human Rights. This research resulted in 262 new documents being uploaded to the specialized section.

The project also contacted a specialized consultant with a view to hiring him to systematize processes and information related to the Optional Protocol against Torture, information that is to be included in the specialized section.

An activity was held on 26 June to commemorate *International Day in Support of Victims of Torture*. Advantage was taken of the opportunity to mark the entry into force of the United Nations Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture. The special guests on hand included Sonia Picado Sotela, President of the Inter-American Institute of Human Rights and Chair of the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture, Daniel Soley, Deputy Ombudsman of Costa Rica, and Bruno Stagno, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Costa Rica. Gilda Pacheco, Director of the IIHR Department of Civil Society Entities, served as the moderator and IIHR Deputy Director Joseph Thompson also took part.

Around 90 people attended the activity, including members of the diplomatic corps, IIHR staff members, officials from public institutions, representatives of civil society, academics and members of the public interested in the issue.

### **3.2.3. Background / Rationale**

When preparing the 2006 work plan, the staff focused on the need to raise awareness and sensitize the different sectors that take part in IIHR courses to the importance of implementing actions to prevent torture. In addition, during the first half of 2006, organizations dedicated to the defense of human rights showed great interest in the proposed psycho-legal methodology

created by the project. Hence, the idea of offering additional training to some of the participants in the Interdisciplinary Course whose profile coincides with the characteristics of the project's target population.

The specialized section is designed to help strengthen networks of organizations, mainly those devoted to the litigation of cases involving torture victims in international courts and medical and psychosocial support for victims, providing tools and theoretical and methodological inputs for their work.

#### **3.2.4. Institution(s) responsible and coordination**

The IIHR team in charge of the project programs and implements the activities and information dissemination materials.

#### **3.2.5. Intermediate steps**

- Hire consultants for the user-friendly version of the jurisprudence and beef up the content of the specialized section
- Program activity related to the project for the 24<sup>th</sup> Interdisciplinary Course in Human Rights
- Program activities and material for disseminating the project and the issue of torture victims
- Lay out and print dissemination materials
- Enhance content of specialized section

#### **3.2.6. Results or outputs**

- 262 documents uploaded to the specialized section
- Activity in support of torture victims held on 26 June

#### **3.2.7. Impact indicators**

***“More specialized information disseminated about the prevention of torture and support for victims”***

***“More dissemination of the jurisprudence of the Inter-American System dealing with reparations for torture victims”***

The activities undertaken and materials produced during the period under review (April-June) were designed to raise the profile of both the issue of torture victims and their need for comprehensive support, and the execution of the project itself.

Furthermore, the way is being paved for the broad dissemination of the jurisprudence of the Inter-American Court dealing with reparations in torture cases by preparing a user-friendly version of the material. The publication's format is such that large segments of the population will find it accessible, mainly in the countries in which the project is being implemented.

#### **Means of verification:**

- Fliers and *señaladores*
- Contracts of consultants hired to systematize specialized information

- List of grantees whose participation in the Interdisciplinary Course is being funded by the project in order for them to receive training in the psycho-legal methodology

#### **4. Lessons learned**

The basic purpose of the training workshops held during the reporting period (April-June) was to pass on the psycho-legal expertise acquired in the Inter-American System at the national level. The experience reconfirmed the fact that one of the key elements of the practical component is the preparation of a proposal for using the jurisprudence of the Inter-American System at the domestic level, from an interdisciplinary and intersectoral perspective.

The people who took part in the workshops were very interested in the psycho-legal methodology, describing it as creative and innovative. They also said it was very useful, as it helps close the gap between the different disciplines. This has been a key objective since the first phase of the project: to interconnect the legal and psychosocial disciplines in order to facilitate comprehensive support for torture victims.



<b>ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>JAN</b>	<b>FEB</b>	<b>MAR</b>	<b>APR</b>	<b>MAY</b>	<b>JUN</b>	<b>JUL</b>	<b>AUG</b>	<b>SEP</b>	<b>OCT</b>	<b>NOV</b>	<b>DEC</b>
Implement national workshops with NGOs												
Prepare cinema forum series												
Produce script and documentary video												
Prepare material and activities in emblematic courses												
Implement activities and disseminate information in emblematic courses												
Launch specialized section on website												
Update specialized section												
Systematize jurisprudence IAS												
Publish user-friendly version of jurisprudence of IAS												
Design data sheet & issue invitation regarding effective methodologies for helping victims & presenting testimony												
Invite people to take part in campaign to systematize successful experiences & testimony												
Systematize experiences regarding effective methodologies for providing support and presenting testimony												
Design monitoring and evaluation mechanism (to be decided)												
Hold meeting to evaluate the project												
Produce evaluation report on project												