

**PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT FOR VICTIMS OF TORTURE
IN THE INTER-AMERICAN SYSTEM
USAID COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT EDG-A-00-02-00030-00**

QUARTERLY REPORT FOR APRIL-JUNE 2005

1. General Framework

During the reporting period (April-June 2005), the IIHR focused on enhancing the content of the specialized section of its website that is presently under construction. It also endeavored to provide as much input as possible for the specialized articles. CEJIL concentrated on preparing the litigation of new cases and distributed its specialized publication (Gaceta).

The IIHR maintained close contact with CEJIL. A phone conference took place on 24 June with the directors of CEJIL's different offices, to evaluate the progress of the project and adjust the schedule of activities.

The contents of the specialized section were due to be made available to the public in July. This will not be done until the last quarter of the year, however, as the page continues to be used to coordinate the work of the network-team. Everyone involved felt that it should still not be made available to the public.

No training activities were scheduled for the staff of CEJIL. Nor was the directory of organizations updated during this quarter.

2. Annual Goals

2.1. To consolidate and disseminate a methodology for providing comprehensive psychological support to victims of torture who have filed complaints with the bodies of the Inter-American System

2.2. To influence the development of the jurisprudence of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights and the recommendations and decisions of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, with regard to psychosocial reparations in cases involving torture

3. Implementation of the Project

3.1. Coordination of the Network-Team of Specialist Professionals

3.1.1. Description

The staff provided follow-up to the results of the meeting of the network-team held in March by editing the contributions made at the meeting and posting them on line (see activity "Dissemination of information about the project").

The IIHR was in permanent contact with members of the network-team who had questions about the articles in preparation and encouraged information sharing among them.

3.1.2. Method

The staff communicated electronically with the network-team members to notify them of the information being uploaded to the section and aspects related to the preparation of the articles. The IIHR encouraged the network-team to share information and experiences that would improve the specialized articles, which resulted in smooth communication among the team members.

3.1.3. Background / Rationale

Coordination and communication with the network-team is a key element in the implementation of the project. The meeting of the network-team held in March 2005 improved communication and helped drive home to its members the project's strategic vision and objectives.

3.1.4. Institution(s) Responsible and Coordination

The IIHR team is responsible for coordinating the work of the network-team of specialist professionals.

No visits were made to national USAID offices during this quarter.

3.1.5. Intermediate steps

- Systematization of the results of the meeting of the network-team, which were then uploaded to the specialized section
- Permanent communication with the network-team through the discussion list

3.1.6. Results or Outputs

- Follow-up to the working meeting of the network-team
- Coordination of the network-team

3.1.7. Impact indicators

“The network-team is more knowledgeable about the methodology for providing comprehensive psychological support”

“The network-team is stronger”

“The team–network is producing and disseminating more knowledge”

“Stakeholders have more access to the theoretical-methodological contributions of the network-team”

The network-team is better equipped to implement a psychological support methodology that integrates the legal aspects by having access to specialized documents containing systematized information about torture cases dealt with by the Inter-American System. Constant

communication among the members of the network-team is also enabling them to improve the quality of their work by drawing on the experience and knowledge of their colleagues. This is one of the main advantages of creating a regional network of specialists to provide support for torture victims.

The publication that the network-team is preparing will make it possible to disseminate widely the knowledge and experience acquired, and stakeholders will have access to the theoretical-methodological contributions produced during the implementation of the project.

Means of verification:

- Contributions from the network-team in the specialized section
- Emails to individual members of the network-team

3.2. Comprehensive Psychological Support for Victims of Torture or their Relatives

3.2.1 Description

The Inter-American Court of Human Rights held its 67th Period of Regular Sessions between 13 and 30 June, in San Jose, Costa Rica. The Court's activities included a public hearing in the Blanco Romero vs. Venezuela case. At the request of COFAVIC, the organization that filed the complaint with CEJIL, the project facilitated psychological support.

During this quarter, the reports and written expert opinions were received for the cases of Mapiripán vs. Colombia and Wilson Gutiérrez vs. Colombia. These documents were studied and incorporated into the specialized section.

3.3.2 Method

On 20 June, the IIHR received a call from COFAVIC requesting that the project provide psychological support to the victims-relatives of *desaparecidos* who would be giving evidence to the Court. The IIHR and CEJIL discussed the possibility of including the case in the project and eventually decided to do so.

COFAVIC requested that psychologist Claudia Carrillo, who had prepared a written expert opinion on the case and worked with the victims in preparing the litigation in Caracas, be allowed to travel with them to provide further support during their stay in Costa Rica. The project approved this request, as the victims had established a relationship of trust with this professional. Alicia Neuburger, a member of network-team, also became involved in the process. She met with the victims and the COFAVIC psychologist to brief them about the project, the dynamics of the Court's hearings and the procedure after them.

The psychological support included preparing the victims emotionally for the ordeal of testifying at the public hearing; the psychologist's participation in the cross-examinations with the legal team; a prior visit to the Court to familiarize the victims with the room in which the hearings would be taking place; support during the moments before and after the hearings; and, a meeting some hours after the hearing with psychologist Neuburger to discuss the process and the likely ruling, and to wind up the participation in the hearing. A report on this process will be posted on the specialized section.

The day after the witnesses gave evidence, the IIHR team held an evaluation meeting, first with the psychologist to assess her involvement in the process and then with the victims and a COFAVIC attorney. The victims expressed their satisfaction with the psychological support and described how it helped them cope with the ordeal.

3.2.3 Background / Rationale

The project's final goal is to provide psychological support in 17 cases involving torture brought before the Inter-American System during the course of its implementation. Between 2003 and the first period of sessions in 2005, nine cases were incorporated. During the reporting period (April-June), the Court admitted another case. This means that seven more cases are required to achieve the project goal.

3.2.4 Institution(s) Responsible and Coordination

The IIHR is responsible for facilitating the psychological support for victims of torture in the Inter-American System. The IIHR and CEJIL decide together which specialists to assign to each case.

3.2.5 Intermediate Steps

- Academic coordination of the support process, and distribution of functions and hours allotted to each specialist
- Logistical arrangements, to ensure that the specialists take part in the hearings granted for their respective cases

3.2.6 Results or Outputs

One case of torture granted a hearing by the Inter-American Court benefited from the psychological support provided by the project.

3.2.7. Impact indicators

“Improvement in the quality of the comprehensive psychological support provided to victims of torture granted hearings by the bodies of the Inter-American System”

“Victims more aware of the importance of presenting their complaints to the bodies of the Inter-American System. More and better-quality documentation on practices for supporting victims of torture”

“More contributions to the methodology for providing comprehensive psychological support”

The experience acquired with this new case made a useful contribution to the methodology for comprehensive psychological support and interdisciplinary work between the teams of lawyers and psychologists. In their meeting with the victims, the IIHR staff learned that the psychological support had been very useful. It enabled them to give their testimony in the best possible way for the litigation and for their own emotional wellbeing in having to relive such a painful experience. The psychological report on this experience is a useful contribution the project's methodological design and to its document collection.

Means of verification:

- Agenda of meetings with the victims during the public hearings
- Report on psychological support provided in the case
- Minutes of meeting with the victims to evaluate the psychological support

3.3 Litigation of cases involving torture brought before the Inter-American System

3.3.1. Description

New cases that could be included in the project

During the period under review (April-June), a new complaint was filed with the Court and then included in the project: “4 Cardinal Points” vs. Honduras.

A brief summary of the facts of the case is included for informational purposes:

At 1 p.m. on 15 September 1995, a police operation was carried out in the vicinity of Tiburcio Carías Andino National Stadium to prevent crimes being committed during the parades held to commemorate Independence Day. Several uniformed and plainclothes officers detained 128 youths in an illegal and arbitrary manner, given that the police did not have a warrant nor did they catch the youths in flagrante delicto. Among the youths that the police detained were Rony Alexis Betancourt, Marco Antonio Servellón García and Orlando Alvarez Ríos, who were taken to headquarters of the Seventh Regional Command (CORE 7) of the Public Security Forces (FUSEP) and whose admittance to the police cells was registered as numbers 45, 63 and 76, respectively, in the record of arrests kept by that command. Diómedes Obed García was arrested in the same illegal circumstances in the early hours of 16 September 1995. His arrest was not formally entered in the respective records but was confirmed by other detainees. Marco Antonio, Rony, Diómedes and Orlando were found dead on Sunday, 17 September. All had been shot in the back of the head and all died between 3 a.m. and 6 a.m. on 17 September 1995.

The next step is for the Inter-American Court to grant public hearings in this case.

Hearings granted by the Inter-American Court

During the reporting period (April-June), the Inter-American Court of Human Rights sat and held hearings. As reported under the activity “Psychological support for victims of torture or their relatives,” the Blanco Romero vs. Venezuela case was included in the project and public hearings were held 27 and 28 June.

Preparation and implementation of visits to the region

Activities were carried out to enhance the documentation of cases of the kind covered during the hearings of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights held in Asuncion, Paraguay.

3.3.2. Method

With regard to the visits carried out to prepare the litigation of cases, the team focused on the cases Víctor Hugo Maciel vs. Paraguay and Vargas Areco vs. Paraguay. Both involve the

practice of recruiting children as soldiers. Paraguay is accused of being responsible for the death of these children, who were tortured and mistreated by the military, and for failing to bring the perpetrators of these acts to justice.

Meetings took place with the lawyers handling the case and family members on 10 and 12 May, at the offices of SERPAJ Paraguay, to inform them of the status of the proceedings and explain the possibilities opened up by the project. Both families were in agreement with the cases being included, and the counterpart was advised to contact Carlos Portillo, a member of the network-team of the project, whose name was already offered as evidence in the briefs that the victims' representatives presented requesting that the cases be forwarded to the Court.

3.3.3. Background / Rationale

The number of cases involving torture included in the project has risen steadily since 2003, and the goal of 17 is now within sight. The issue has thus achieved a high profile with the protection bodies of the Inter-American System, making it possible to inform and sensitize them to the complexity of this problem.

3.3.4. Institution(s) Responsible and Coordination

CEJIL's team of specialists is in charge of the litigation of the cases. It coordinates the provision of psychological for each case with the IIHR.

3.3.5. Intermediate Steps

- Visits to prepare the litigation of cases
- Identification and study of new cases to be included in the project
- Forwarding of briefs to the Inter-American Court

3.3.6. Results or Outputs

- Litigation of a case involving torture before the Inter-American Court
- Victims of torture receiving psychological support

3.3.7. Impact Indicators

“Progress in the cases involving torture brought before the bodies of the Inter-American System”

“The bodies of the Inter-American System are devoting more attention to the issue”

Between April and June, CEJIL made efforts to prepare and include new cases in the project. The Inter-American System is thus dealing with more cases involving torture and forced disappearance.

Means of verification:

- Press releases from the Inter-American Court announcing the granting of hearings
- Briefs requesting hearings

3.4. Final design of the methodology used to provide comprehensive psychological support

3.4.1. Description

The contents of the specialized section were improved by posting new documents for the network-team to use. These inputs will strengthen the process of providing psychological support to torture victims and preparing the specialized articles.

The team finished systematizing the outputs of the meeting of the network-team held in March 2005, for the specialized articles for the publication on psychosocial contributions in torture cases in the Inter-American System.

3.4.2. Method

The following documents were placed in a subsection of the specialized section to facilitate the preparation of each article:

- Objective and strategic vision
- First draft
- Recommendations IIHR
- Recommendations meeting network-team

The network-team can use these documents to expand the articles based on the criteria adopted at the meeting of the network-team and the strategic vision contributed by the IIHR. The deadline for completing the new versions of the articles is 31 July 2005.

3.4.3. Background / Rationale

The specialized section is a tool for providing inputs to enhance the work of the network-team. A variety of documents are posted on it containing useful, summarized information about cases of torture and reparations. As well as providing input for the specialized articles, the specialized section will eventually be made available to all stakeholders, thus increasing its use and impact.

3.4.4. Institution(s) Responsible and Coordination

The IIHR's team of specialists

3.4.5. Intermediate Steps

- Draft, correct and edit the documents to be placed in the specialized section

3.4.6. Results or Outputs

- The contents of the specialized section were improved. The following documents were prepared, edited and placed in the specialized section:
- 115 legal terms, in the glossary
- Report on psychological support and written expert opinion, and report on support given to the victims during the hearings in the case of Mapiripán vs. Colombia

- Report on the expert opinion provided in the case of Wilson Gutiérrez vs. Colombia, and expert testimony presented to the Inter-American Court
- Synthesis of 10 cases involving torture and forced disappearance brought before the Inter-American System
- Systematization of the types of **reparations** ordered in the Court's jurisprudence on cases involving torture and forced disappearance
- Summary of key information about the cases involving torture and forced disappearance (petitioners, date on which the acts were perpetrated, date on which the case entered the Inter-American System, articles violated, type of violation, details of the judgment, expert opinion/details of expert, orientation and object or key points of the expert opinion, information about the process of providing support)
- News items related to the project's subject matter

3.4.7 Impact Indicators

“Continuous improvement of the methodology for providing comprehensive psychological support to torture victims”

“Further development of important aspects of the methodology”

“Enhancement of the methodological design, making it useful to all stakeholders”

Beefing up the specialized section has a direct, positive impact on the implementation of the psychological-legal strategy in the torture cases and on the methodology for providing comprehensive psychological support to the victims.

Means of Verification:

- Electronic access to the specialized section:
<http://www.iidh.ed.cr/comunidades/PrevencionTortura/index.htm>

3.5. Sensitization of the Inter-American System

3.5.1. Description

As part of the continuous efforts to sensitize the protection bodies of the Inter-American System, a working lunch was arranged with Suzanne Villarán, a member of the Inter-American Commission, and Cecilia Medina, a judge of the Inter-American Court. Gilda Pacheco, who coordinates the project for the IHR, also took part in this meeting, held 27 June. The participants evaluated the overall impact of the project and discussed how torture affected men and women differently and how this should be highlighted in written expert opinions and academic publications on the subject.

3.5.2. Method

The meeting with the members of the protection bodies took place during the 67th Period of Regular Sessions of the Inter-American Court, held 13-30 June in San Jose, Costa Rica.

3.5.3. Background / Rationale

The sensitization of the protection bodies of the Inter-American System is designed to be a continuous process throughout the life of the project. The team mainly takes advantage of the sessions of the Court and the Commission to do so.

3.5.4. Institution(s) Responsible and Coordination

The IIHR organized the meeting with the members of the protection bodies.

There was no coordination with USAID officials in Washington because no missions to the Inter-American Commission were carried out during this quarter (April-June).

3.5.5. Intermediate Steps

- Arrange the meeting with the members of the protection bodies

3.5.6. Results or Outputs

- Sensitization meeting with two members of the protection bodies of the Inter-American System

3.5.7. Impact Indicators

“Progress with the jurisprudence on torture of the Inter-American Commission and Court”

“Progress in sensitizing these bodies to the psychological impact of torture”

“Incorporation of psychosocial reparations for victims or their relatives into the recommendations and judgments issued by the bodies of the Inter-American System”

The permanent contact with members of the Court and the Commission during their periods of sessions ensures the continuity of the sensitization process. The aim is to promote progress with the jurisprudence on torture, particularly in the standards for reparations, and a better understanding of the problems faced by the victims.

Means of verification:

- Agenda of meeting with the two members of the protection bodies

3.6. Dissemination of Information about the Project

3.6.1 Description

As part of the strategy for increasing the project’s impact and dissemination, a discussion took place Friday, 3 June entitled *“Torture as the antithesis of mercy: a reading in the context of human rights,”* led by renowned Mexican psychoanalyst Raúl Páramo.

Discussion with Dr. Raúl Páramo, Auditorium of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, 3 June 2005, San Jose, Costa Rica.

The activity took place in the Auditorium of the Inter-American Court and the Court's lawyers were invited, to promote further sensitization on this subject.

Turning to CEJIL's activities, the issue of the Gaceta entitled "New prospects for the litigation of torture cases: Psychological Aspects" was disseminated widely in Portuguese.

The task of systematizing materials for the internal training also got under way. In June, the staff identified the legislation policy instruments related to the project's subject matter that have been distributed during the training workshops, with a view to systematizing and eventually publishing them.

3.6.2 Method

The discussion on torture took place in the Auditorium of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. The IIHR organized it with the Center for Psychoanalytical Studies of Aspas, the School of Psychology, the Doctoral Program on Society and Culture of the University of Costa Rica and the Independent University, to foster reflection on the subject of torture and other grave human rights violations in our hemisphere, from an interdisciplinary perspective.

CEJIL's Gaceta was distributed at a seminar held 23-24 June in Sao Paulo, Brazil, on the Implementation of the UN Convention against Torture. The activity was organized by CEJIL, the Association for the Prevention of Torture (APT) and the Teotonia Vilela Commission (CTV).

3.6.3 Background / Rationale

CEJIL's Gaceta was printed in 2004, in Spanish, English and Portuguese. Since then, it has been distributed among human rights organizations and advocates. It is a special issue dealing specifically with torture, its psychosocial consequences and possible forms of reparation.

The discussion on torture was part of the actions organized by the IIHR to publicize the project and the issue of torture in general, to promote debate on ways of preventing it and of assisting the victims.

3.6.4 Institution(s) Responsible and Coordination

CEJIL is in charge of distributing the specialized issue of the Gaceta. The IIHR team organized the discussion on torture.

3.6.5 Intermediate Steps

- Logistical organization of the discussion on torture
- Identification of activity to distribute CEJIL's Gaceta among the target population

3.6.6 Results or Outputs

- Dissemination of information about torture in general and the project in particular
- Dissemination of CEJIL's Gaceta in Portuguese

3.6.7 Impact Indicators

“More people are knowledgeable about the psychological impact of torture and methodologies for assisting the victims”

More people are knowledgeable about and sensitized to the subject as a result of the dissemination of the special issue of CEJIL’s Gaceta on torture and ways of making reparations to victims, and other activities implemented to inform the target population.

Means of verification:

- List of people who attended the discussion on torture and photographs of the event
- List of participants in the seminar organized by CEJIL, APT and CTV
- Issue of CEJIL’s Gaceta in Portuguese

4. LESSONS LEARNED

The request that the IIHR received from COFAVIC for psychological support for the relatives of victims involved in a case demonstrates the importance of providing psychological support in hearings granted by the Court, and the growing demand from organizations responsible for litigating cases. This made the IIHR even more aware of the need to intensify dissemination actions and thus give continuity to the project by reaching out to other organizations in the hemisphere.

PROJECT ON PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSISTANCE TO VICTIMS OF TORTURE IN THE INTER-AMERICAN SYSTEM

2005 TIMETABLE- Updated June 2005

ACTIVITIES	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Activities carried out by the IIHR												
Functioning of the electronic communication network												
Strengthening of the specialized section												
Opening of the specialized section												
Comprehensive Psychological Assistance to Victims of Torture or Next of Kin												
Meetings with specialists and attorneys												
Analysis of psychological reports submitted by specialists												
Preliminary draft of the Guiding Manual for the Psychological Assistance Process												
Drafting of the final report												
Presenting the final report and publications												
Meetings with representatives of the bodies (Washington, U. S. A.)												
Preparation of the work meeting of the network-team												
Work meeting of the network-team (San José, Costa Rica)												
Systematic summary of the contributions of the network-team meeting												
Preparation and revision of publications												

ACTIVITIES	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Printing of publications												
Distribution of publications and dissemination materials												
Updating of directory												

Activities carried out by CEJIL	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Coordination of the offer of psychological assistance by the Staff												
Preparation of trips in the region												
Travel in the region												
Drafting of reports on the trips												
Analysis of cases with a potential to request hearings												
Preparing and submitting requests for hearings before the Commission												
Follow-up on requests for hearings												
Identification of the specialist to provide support and prepare the expert opinion												
Preparation for the hearings granted												
Development of the hearings												
Informal meetings with representatives of the Commission and of the Court (Washington, U. S. A.)												
Implementation of the follow-up on Training of CEJIL Staff												
Dissemination of the Gazette												

Preparation of materials												
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