

## First Committee Statement 2025 - Torture-Free Trade Network

UNGA 80 – First Committee

Torture-Free Trade

17 October 2025

Statement delivered by Ms. Juliana Miranda – Centro de Estudios Legales y Sociales (CELS)

Distinguished Chair, Excellencies, Colleagues,

I stand before you today to highlight the urgent need for a global, legally binding Torture-Free Trade Treaty. Around the world, law enforcement equipment and weapons are being used to commit acts of torture and other cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment. This includes both standard equipment—such as tear gas, some types of rubber bullets, and batons—which can be used for torture and other ill-treatment, as well as inherently abusive equipment, such as spiked batons, body-worn electric shock devices, and inhumane restraints. These abuses can be committed during protests, in places of detention, in the process of arrest, or in other settings, and the devastating physical and psychological impacts on survivors can be life altering. Despite the serious human rights risks involved, the international trade in law enforcement equipment and weapons remains largely unregulated.

Recent positive steps at the regional level, such as the European Union’s update to its Anti-Torture Regulation to expand its list of prohibited and controlled goods, should inspire global action. However, regional efforts alone are not sufficient. Only international cooperation and enforceable global norms can end this shameful trade.

There is growing momentum to establish international standards. The Alliance for Torture-Free Trade—which includes over 60 states—has pledged to act collectively to stop the trade in goods used for torture. The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, UN Special Rapporteurs, and regional organizations have stated their support for Torture-Free Trade. The UN Special Rapporteur on Torture’s 2023 thematic report made a compelling case for a legally binding treaty, recommending States act to ban the trade in inherently abusive equipment and strictly regulate standard equipment that can be misused for torture or other ill-treatment. Notably, in June this year, the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture, the UN Committee Against Torture, and the UN Sub-Committee on the Prevention of Torture, among others, called for an international legal instrument regulating the global trade in law enforcement equipment to “help stamp out torture and other ill-treatment, protect victims and prevent further violations.”

Increasingly, people across the world are making their voices heard. The civil society Torture-Free Trade Network, that I represent here today, is made up of over 85 organisations from around the world. Over a quarter of a million people have signed Amnesty International’s petition demanding

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an end to the trade in instruments of torture. The message is loud and clear: the international community must act.

There is an urgent need to begin negotiations for a legally binding Torture-Free Trade Treaty. States can also take steps nationally and regionally, such as committing to ending the production and trade in goods the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture has identified as prohibited, and establishing trade controls for equipment on the Special Rapporteur's list of goods that can be misused for torture and other ill-treatment.

Torture and other ill-treatment are absolutely prohibited at all times and in all circumstances under international law. We call on all States present to reaffirm your resolve and take collective action to end the trade in tools of torture forever.

Thank you.

Signatories (Torture-Free Trade Network member organisations and other civil society partners):

1. ACADHOSHA (Action des Chrétiens Activistes des Droits de l'Homme à Shabunda)
2. ACAT Belgique
3. ACAT France
4. ACAT Switzerland
5. African Centre for Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture Victims
6. African Policing Civilian Oversight Forum (APCOF)
7. Almonqith Organization for Human Rights
8. American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)
9. Amnesty International
10. Antigone
11. Article 36
12. Asia Alliance Against Torture (A3T)
13. Asociación para una Ciudadanía Participativa (ACI PARTICIPA)
14. Association for the Prevention of Torture
15. Banglar Manabadhikar Suraksha Mancha (MASUM)
16. Campaign Against Arms Trade
17. Campaña Colombiana Contra Minas
18. Center for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR)
19. Center for Victims of Torture (CVT)
20. Centre for Human Rights, University of Pretoria
21. Centro de Derechos Humanos Paso del Norte
22. Centro de Estudios de Derecho, Justicia y Sociedad-Dejusticia
23. Centro de Estudios Legales y Sociales (CELS)
24. Civil Society and Human Rights Network - CSHRN
25. Comisión de Solidaridad y Defensa de los Derechos Humanos, A. C.

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26. Comisión Mexicana de Defensa y Promoción de Derechos Humanos
27. Consortium des Associations de Jeunes Pour la Défense des Victimes de Violences en Guinée (COJEDEV)
28. Deaconess Foundation's Centre for Psychotraumatology
29. DIGNITY - Danish Institute Against Torture
30. FIACAT (International Federation of ACAT)
31. Freedom from Torture
32. Fundación Regional de Asesoría en Derechos Humanos (INREDH)
33. Independent Medico-Legal Unit (IMLU)
34. International Bar Association's Human Rights Institute
35. International Human Rights Clinic at Harvard Law School
36. International Network of Civil Liberties Organizations (INCLO)
37. International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims (IRCT)
38. Irídia - Centre for the Defense of Human Rights
39. JusticeMakers Bangladesh in France (JMBF)
40. Kasarani Social Justice
41. Kenya Human Rights Commission
42. Le Collectif des Associations Contre l'Impunité au Togo (CACIT)
43. Le Collectif des Défenseurs Sahraouis des Droits Humains au Sahara Occidental (CODESA)
44. Lebanese Center for Human Rights (CLDH)
45. Legal Resources Centre (LRC)
46. Legend Golden Care Foundation
47. Liberia Association of Psychosocial Services
48. Listening and Assistance Center (LAC)
49. Mouvement pour la Defense de l'Humanité et l'Abolition de la Torture (MDHAT)
50. Mwatikho Torture Survivors Foundation
51. Nonviolence International Canada
52. Omega Research Foundation
53. Organisation contre la Torture en Tunisie
54. PAX
55. Pax Christi Uvira asbl
56. People's Watch (India)
57. Physicians for Human Rights (PHR)
58. REDRESS
59. Réseau Camerounais des Organisations des Droits de l'Homme (ONG RECODH) - Cameroon Network of Human Rights Organisations (CNHRO)
60. Réseau Ouest Africain des Défenseurs des Droits Humains
61. Restart Center
62. Ruaraka Social Justice Centre
63. Rule of Law and Accountability Advocacy Centre (RULAAC)
64. Safeguard Defenders

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65. SOHRAM-CASRA, Centre Action Social Réhabilitation et Réadaptation pour la Victime de la Torture et de la Guerre
66. Solidarité avec les Victimes et pour la Paix (SOVIP)
67. Temblores ONG
68. The Commission for the Disappeared and Victims of Violence (KontraS)
69. Validity Foundation – Mental Disability Advocacy Centre
70. Women's Association for Women and Victims' Empowerment (WAVE)
71. Women's International League for Peace and Freedom
72. World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT)
73. Yelef Initiative