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**Annual report of the United Nations High Commissioner
for Human Rights and reports of the Office of the
High Commissioner and the Secretary-General**

United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture

Note by the Secretary-General


Summary

The present note, which complements the report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the Fund submitted to the General Assembly at its sixty-ninth session (A/69/296), provides information on the activities of the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture and describes in particular the recommendations adopted by the Board of Trustees of the Fund at its fortieth session.

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I. Introduction

A. Submission of the report

1. The present note was prepared in accordance with General Assembly resolution 68/156, and complements the report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the Fund, which was submitted to the General Assembly at its sixty-ninth session (A/69/296). It presents updated information on the activities of the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture, in particular the recommendations adopted by the Board of Trustees of the Fund at its fortieth session, held in Geneva from 29 September to 3 October 2014.

B. Mandate of the Fund

2. The Fund receives voluntary contributions from Governments, non-governmental organizations and individuals. In accordance with the mandate of the Fund outlined in General Assembly resolution 36/151, and the practices established by the Board of Trustees since 1982, the Fund provides grants to established channels of assistance, including non-governmental organizations, associations of victims and of family members of victims, private and public hospitals, legal clinics, and public interest law firms and individual lawyers, that submit projects involving medical, psychological, social, financial, legal and humanitarian or other forms of assistance to victims of torture and members of their families.

C. Administration of the Fund and composition of the Board of Trustees

3. The Secretary-General administers the Fund through the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) with the advice of the Board of Trustees, which is composed of five members who act in their personal capacity and are appointed by the Secretary-General with due regard to the principle of equitable geographical distribution and in consultation with their Governments. The Board is currently composed of Maria Cristina de Mendonca (Portugal), Morad el-Shazly (Egypt), Anastasia Pinto (India) and Adam Bodnar (Poland). On 10 July 2014, the Secretary-General appointed Gaby Oré Aguilar (Peru) for a three-year term, renewable once, to replace Mercedes Doretti (Argentina) following the latter's resignation.

II. Management of grants

A. Admissibility criteria

4. Project admissibility criteria are outlined in the guidelines of the Fund for Victims of Torture, which were revised at the thirty-ninth session of the Board of Trustees, in 2014. The guidelines require a project to be presented by an established channel of assistance, including non-governmental organizations, associations of victims and of family members of victims, private and public hospitals, legal clinics, public interest law firms and individual lawyers. The beneficiaries must be direct victims of torture or direct family members. Priority is given to projects providing direct assistance to torture victims, which

may consist of medical or psychological assistance, help with social or financial reintegration through vocational training for victims, and various forms of legal assistance for victims or members of their families, including assistance in seeking redress or applying for asylum. As a general rule, projects are supported on a yearly basis for a maximum of two cycles of five consecutive years each, subject to a satisfactory evaluation of the project and availability of funds. Depending on the resources available, the Fund may finance projects to organize training programmes, seminars or conferences to allow health-care professionals or other service providers to exchange best practices. Grant requests for projects involving investigation, research, studies, publications or other similar activities are not admissible.

5. The Fund can also provide emergency assistance. Requests of this type are examined according to specific procedures outlined in the guidelines for the Fund. Emergency projects have to contain the same basic components as regular ones (namely, direct assistance to victims of torture and their families, non-governmental channels of assistance).

B. Monitoring and evaluation of grants

6. Pre-screening visits to projects are undertaken systematically before a grant is awarded. Regular monitoring visits to ongoing projects are also scheduled to assess the implementation of the projects funded. An internal guide on conducting visits to projects that have been funded or are to be funded was developed in 2013 by the secretariat, in order to enhance verification methodology and coherence. In 2014, a total of 89 projects were visited. In the period under review, 50 visits were undertaken by the secretariat of the Fund, of which six were conducted jointly with members of the Board of Trustees, one was carried out by one member of the Board of Trustees, 31 by OHCHR field presences and one by OHCHR desk officers.

7. During the period under review, the joint secretariat (responsible for the administration of this Fund, the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery and the Special Fund established by the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment) has continued to align the working methods of the three funds with a view to heightening cost-effectiveness and sharing best practices. These efforts were noted with satisfaction by the respective Boards of Trustees and by Member States.

III. Financial situation of the Fund

8. The Fund continues to struggle to achieve a satisfactory level of yearly contributions that would enable it to meet all demands for assistance from all regions of the world, including those made in the context of emergency and humanitarian crises. According to the Board, the Fund would need to receive \$12 million on a yearly basis to be able to respond adequately to new and emergency situations, such as those currently unfolding in the Central African Republic, Iraq, the Syrian Arab Republic and its neighbouring countries, and Ukraine.

9. The table below shows the contributions and pledges received in 2014 until the time of writing. As at the fortieth session of the Board, at which grants were recommended for 2015, the Fund had available a total net of \$7,335,400 for grants to be disbursed in 2015.

Contributions and pledges received from 1 January to 10 November 2014

<i>Donor</i>	<i>Amount</i> <i>(United States dollars)</i>	<i>Date of receipt</i>
State		
Andorra	13 755	25 April 2014
Austria	59 289	16 September 2014
Chile	10 000	15 April 2014
Denmark	530 129	30 September 2014
Egypt	10 000	9 July 2014
Germany	547 196	27 March 2014
Germany	200 535	7 August 2014
Germany	748 150	2 December 2014
Holy See	917	14 March 2014
Holy See	923	28 October 2014
India	25 000	29 October 2013
Ireland	116 919	4 April 2014
Kuwait	10 000	18 February 2014
Liechtenstein	25 907	17 November 2014
Norway	133 761	27 May 2014
Peru	1 850	5 September 2014
Turkey	10 000	30 May 2014
United Arab Emirates	10 000	6 May 2014
United States of America	6 350 000	9 December 2014
Subtotal	8 804 331	
Private / public individual donors		
Nederlands Juristen Comité voor de Mensenrechten (NJCM)	4 080	11 March 2014
Subtotal	4 080	

<i>Donor</i>	<i>Amount</i> <i>(United States dollars)</i>	<i>Date of receipt</i>
Total contributions	8 808 111	
Pledges		
Algeria	5 000	11 November 2013
Finland	348 692	21 November 2014
Mexico	5 000	28 August 2014
Total pledges	358 692	

IV. Fortieth session of the Board of Trustees

10. The fortieth session of the Board was held in Geneva from 29 September to 3 October 2014. The Board examined applications for funding and made recommendations on grants to be awarded to beneficiary organizations for the period from 1 January to 31 December 2015.

11. The amount available for distribution to projects was calculated after deducting programme support costs, the operating cash reserve and the expenditure for non-grant activities from the total amount of contributions received after the thirty-eighth session of the Board, held in October 2013.

12. The Board of Trustees considered a total of 257 admissible project proposals aimed at providing direct assistance to victims of torture and their family members, amounting to a total request of \$14,796,502.

13. The Board reviewed positively a total of 190 projects in more than 81 countries for a total amount of \$6,335,400. Notably, it recommended for a grant 167 ongoing projects aimed at providing direct assistance to victims, for a total of \$5,670,000; 20 new projects aimed at providing direct assistance to victims, for a total of \$590,000; and three grants for new training and seminars projects, for a total of \$75,400.

14. The Board also recommended setting aside an additional \$1 million to support capacity-building projects of new rehabilitation centres, in particular in less developed regions, and for emergency grants to be considered in 2015 through its intersessional procedure, thereby adhering more strictly to General Assembly resolution 36/151.

15. In doing so, the Board reached all its operational targets to be achieved from 2015 to 2017, as described in the report of the Secretary-General submitted to the General Assembly (A/69/296). All project proposals were reviewed on a competitive basis, taking into account the merit and documented needs, as well as years of continuous support by the Fund to the same project. This resulted in a more manageable project portfolio, a significant increase in the average grant size and a more balanced distribution of projects among the five regions of the world.

16. The Board also recommended that special attention should continue to be paid to the needs in Ukraine and the Middle-East, in particular in the Syrian Arab Republic and Iraq.

17. At its fortieth session, the Board held a meeting with Member States during which two representatives of organizations supported by the Fund, Dieynaba Ndoye of Vivre Caprec in Senegal, and Amin Ahmed of Wchan Organization for Victims of Human Rights Violations in Iraq, presented their work in support of victims fleeing from Central African Republic and Guinea and with victims from Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic. During the meeting, delegations from all regions praised the concrete impact achieved on the ground by the Fund, and congratulated the Board and secretariat for the increased outreach and transparency demonstrated in 2014.

18. In application of the policy recommendations adopted by the Board at its thirty-ninth session, administrative compliance by grant beneficiaries was vigorously enforced during the period under review, particularly in relation to the requirement for the timely submission of financial and audit reports.

19. Recalling its desire to make the Fund a platform for knowledge-sharing and expertise, the Board recommended that the secretariat organize a thematic workshop at its forty-first session, at which selected experts and practitioners would be invited to present their research and experience.

20. During its fortieth session, the Board also reiterated its will to increase cooperation with other torture-related mechanisms. In this perspective, it met with two members of the Committee against Torture, Jens Modvig and Alessio Bruni, to discuss concrete means of enhancing cooperation between the Committee and the Fund in the light of Committee general comment No. 3 on article 14 of the Convention. Informal discussions were also held with the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, Juan Mendez.

21. The Board also encouraged the secretariat to continue its outreach and visibility efforts.

V. Making a contribution

22. Governments, non-governmental organizations and other private or public entities can contribute to the Fund. It is important to note that only specifically earmarked contributions are attributed to the Fund. For more information on how to contribute, and details about the Fund, donors are requested to contact the secretariat of the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, United Nations, 1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland; e-mail: unvfvf@ohchr.org; telephone: +41 22 917 9624; fax: +41 22 917 9017.

VI. Conclusions and recommendations

23. **The Board called upon donors to increase their contributions to the Fund as much as possible, given that it needs to attain a more satisfactory level of contributions in order to respond to the need for assistance for victims of torture and the members of their families worldwide.**

24. **The Fund would need to receive \$12 million on a yearly basis in order to respond adequately to new and emergency situations, such as those currently unfolding in the Central African Republic, Iraq, the Syrian Arab Republic and its neighbouring countries. Contributions should be received by September 2015.**

25. **Contributing to the Fund is a concrete translation of the commitment of States to the elimination of torture.**
