

# Launch of the revised version on the Istanbul Protocol

Zeynep Koseoglu

On the 29th of June 2022, an updated version of the Istanbul Protocol was launched in Geneva, Switzerland; twenty three years after its first official endorsement by the OHCHR (Office of the Human Rights Commissioner, UN) in 1999. The Istanbul Protocol, or the Manual on the Effective Investigation and Documentation of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; guides human rights activists, experts, and organizations around the world.

The launch of this revised version was enabled by the contributions from more than 180 experts of the anti-torture field. It was hosted by the Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and led by the Istanbul Protocol Editorial Committee.

The Istanbul Protocol lays out the international legal norms and standards for dealing with torture and ill-treatment. It sets the relevant ethical codes, and provides guidelines for the legal investigation of torture. The Protocol also details general considerations for interviews and the guidelines for documenting physical and psychological evidence. The revision adds in two sections which respectively underlines the role of health professionals in documenting torture through various contexts and provides recommendations on the implementation of the Protocol.

Informed by six years of preparation and consultation, this revised version was spear-

headed by four civil society organizations (the Human Rights Foundation of Turkey, REDRESS Trust, Physicians for Human Rights, and the International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims) and four UN bodies, (Committee against Torture, the Subcommittee on the Prevention of Torture, Special Rapporteur on Torture; as well as the UN Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture).

This is the second update to the Protocol, the first being 18 years earlier in 2004. The revision of the Istanbul Protocol is not a replacement but rather an expansion. The document attempts to fill in the gaps created by almost two decades of global change.

In the foreword of the updated document, Michelle Bachalet, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, calls for states to make the Istanbul Protocol an ‘essential part of training for all relevant public officials and medical professionals engaged in the custody, interrogation and treatment of persons subjected to any form of arrest, detention or imprisonment’ (OHCHR, 2022):

## References

OHCHR (2022) *Istanbul Protocol. Manual on the Effective Investigation and Documentation of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment*. Professional series n° 8/Rev. 2. Accessed from: [https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/publications/2022-06-29/Istanbul-Protocol\\_Rev2\\_EN.pdf](https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/publications/2022-06-29/Istanbul-Protocol_Rev2_EN.pdf)