

## New appointed Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment

On July 8<sup>th</sup> of 2022, the UN Human Rights Council announced the new assigned special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment: Dr. Alice Jills Edwards, member of this Journal's Editorial Advisory Board. We celebrate and congratulate her!

As an qualified barrister, published author, competent lawyer, scholar, diplomat and negotiator, Dr. Edwards has over two decades of professional experience in human rights, international law, UN mechanisms and academia. Throughout her career, Dr. Edwards worked with different actors such as national and international bodies, CSOs, and governments to enhance mechanisms within police and law enforcement, discrimination law, criminal justice, prison and correctional standards, as well as immigration, asylum, statelessness and human trafficking concerns.

Dr. Edwards holds a PhD in Public International Law from the Australian National University; a Master of Laws in Public International Law awarded with Distinction from the University of Nottingham; a Diploma in International and Comparative Law from the René Cassin International Institute for Human Rights in France; and a Bachelor of Laws (with Honours) and Arts from the University of Tasmania in Australia.

While having engaged with world-leading universities, her academic path results in over

50 publications and reports. Among these, she authored and co-edited *Human Security and Non-Citizens: Law, Policy and International Affairs* (2010), *Violence against Women under International Human Rights Law* (2011), *Nationality and Statelessness in International Law* (2014), and *In Flight from Conflict and Violence: UNHCR's Consultations on Refugee Status and Other Forms of International Protection* (2017). She also published empirical case studies on legal angles concerning the application of the UN Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture (OPCAT) to immigration and refugee detention centres. These publications have been used by governments, courts, CSOs, UN bodies and international organisations.

While Dr. Edwards has engaged in advisory committees for the revision of the Istanbul Protocol (OHCHR, 2022) and the Méndez Principles, she has also contributed to drafting the underpinning CEDAW General Recommendation N° 32 (CEDAW, 2014), the UNHCR's detention guidelines (UNHCR, 2012) and the first guidelines on gender-related persecution (UNHCR, 2002). Being the first woman in this role, she also brings a significant focus on gender. Her dedicated work to ensure adequate compensation for female who suffered sexual violence during the Bosnia and Herzegovina conflict, was later adopted as State policies and UN

operational practice, and informed her book, *Violence against Women under International Human Rights Law* (Cambridge University Press, 2011). Her cutting-edge legal argument alleging that sexual violence and rape are forms of torture and persecution is now widely accepted, allowing hundreds of thousands of survivors to claim protection under the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees.

In her early international relations career, she worked for Amnesty International and a development NGO in Mozambique. During her tenure as Head of the Secretariat of the Convention against Torture Initiative (CTI), 15 new States ratified the UNCAT and initiated their implementation processes.

With such demonstrated commitment and engagement to improve the lives of individuals who have been subjected to torture and other human rights violations, her mandate will put the rights of survivors and their families at centre, advocating for their right to rehabilitation, restoration and engaging them in decision-making. While adopting a clear community-led approach, she also brings a feminist and egalitarian perspective to matters of prevention, consequences and accountability of ill-treatment and inhumane practices.

Again, we celebrate and congratulate Dr. Edwards, and we are sure her rapporteurship will bring solid and pragmatic advice on international law and best practice and contribute to long-term and substantial change in the fight against torture and ill-treatment worldwide.

Congratulations, Alice!

### References

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