



Several collaborating partners in Copenhagen

Several partners from all over the world visited DIGNITY in June to discuss new or ongoing projects.

Manual for Tunisian Judges and Prosecutors in progress

From 23-27 June 2014, a Working Group from the Tunisian Ministry of Justice traveled to Copenhagen to collaborate with DIGNITY and the Danish Prosecution Service on the drafting and revising of a Manual for Tunisian Judges and Prosecutors.

In 2013, DIGNITY entered into a cooperation with the Tunisian Ministry of Justice aimed at building the capacity of the Tunisian prosecution authority to better address cases of torture and cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment. The Working Group which is made up of representatives from the Ministry of Justice as well as prosecutors and judges, had prepared a first draft of the Manual, which was the focus of workshops during the week-long visit.

With the participation of two Danish prosecutors (one current - Lars Munk Plum and one former - Arne Stevns), the discussions of these workshops centered on issues relating to the role of prosecutors and judges in the effective investigation and prosecution of cases of torture, as well as prevention of torture.



During their visit, the Working Group also met with a number of Danish institutions, including the Danish Independent Police Complaints Authority, the Danish Medico-Legal Council, and the Danish Prosecution Authority, and they also visited a Danish closed prison (Herstedvester).

Based on the outcomes of the discussions that took place, the draft Manual will be revised by the Working Group and presented to a select group of judges and prosecutors in a series of roundtable consultations, before being finalized for presentation at a High Level Seminar in November 2014 in Tunisia.

Community-based approaches to violence in poor urban neighbourhoods

Delegates from DIGNITY partners LAPS (Liberia), CSVR (South Africa) and BALAY (the Philippines) joined in Copenhagen for workshops on how to strengthen, develop and monitor community-based projects in poor



urban neighborhoods. The projects aim to empower and mobilize victims and ensure that risk groups do not fall prey to TOV.

Among other, the new 2015 cross regional project will focus on monitoring and data collection on risk groups. Risk groups are groups that are marginalized from community life in poor urban neighborhoods and where the use of violence is legitimated against, also as means of maintaining the exclusion of them.

Lessons learned eventually will be used to develop more general guidelines for community-based approaches, for advocacy purposes and to generate research outputs.

Violence prevention and citizen security reinforcement in Central America

Delegates from CIPREVI – the Research Center for the Prevention of Violence visited DIGNITY in June to develop a new cooperation model. The aim is to strengthen the synergy between all DIGNITY’s cooperation partners in Central America within the regional program for the prevention of torture and organized violence in Central America. Best practices have already been identified indicating that local political leadership is the key to change. Thus, new initiatives will address local municipalities in the region



The CIPREVI team - Arturo Matute, Gerardo Perez, Julio LeMasson with Prevention of Urban Violence Programme Manager Finn Kjærulf.

promoting collaboration between different sectors. Data, information and analysis will be used as tools for empowerment and participation. Subsequently, the programme will help to strengthen the local capacities in violence prevention when the political will and ownership is present.

CIPREVI is a transnational research centre, which was created in 2011. Director Arturo Matute also presented the region’s history and challenges as well as several of the important results CIPREVI has achieved within only 3 years. Among many achievements the course “Best practices in Violence Prevention at Local Level” has been developed and conducted for 57 students from across the region. A CIPREVI Internet course for the police institutions in EL Salvador is also being launched this month. It is aimed at higher ranks within the police (50 police trainers and chiefs of operations) and goes through several different policing models including community policing.

CIPREVI has in cooperation with DIGNITY researcher Claus Kold been able to establish an open dialogue and cooperation on conflict resolution and leadership with police institutions in El Salvador and Guatemala in order to enable that the meeting between citizen and police will be less violent.



CIPREVI has been organizing the “Police Stations Visitors Week” (PSVW) in Nicaragua, Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador for the last two years. 30 police stations were open to the public in 2012, increasing to 50 police stations in November 2013. In June 2014, CIPREVI also hosted the PSVW Annual Global Award Ceremony in Antigua, Guatemala. The PSVW is a unique global event organized by Altus (go to [homepage](#)). Under the PSVW programme police stations around the world receive hundreds of local citizens to assess the quality of services provided by police. Visitors use a common protocol and scoring system called Police Station Visitors Week Kit developed by Altus and translated into local languages. The aim is to identify best practices in use by police, to strengthen the accountability of police and to promote human rights standards.



The UN International Day in Support of Torture Victims

Every year on June 26th we honor those who have been tortured. This year DIGNITY invited the Danish public to a panel debate on impunity. Also torture survivors in treatment at DIGNITY rehabilitation centre in Denmark were invited to spend a day at the old amusement park Tivoli (sponsored by Tivoli).

Many torturers are rarely held accountable for their actions. The injustice is never set

right and we are letting down the victims. Impunity sends a clear message to torturers that their crimes are tolerable, and nothing prevents them from committing new atrocities. The discussions in the panel focused on what impunity means to the fight against torture.

Among other participants also gave their views on how to use rehabilitation to combat impunity, what to do with the perpetrators when they in fact are prosecuted and how physicians play in combatting impunity.



The panel (left to right): Director Ejecutivo Regional Arturo Matute Rodríguez (CIPREVI), Director of Prevention of Torture in Detentions Jens Modvig (DIGNITY), Director of Legal Affairs Therese Rytter (DIGNITY), Secretary-General Victor Madrigal-Borloz (IRCT) and Programme Manager Nomfundo Magapi, (CSVR).

New CPT member from DIGNITY

Therese Rytter, Director of Legal Affairs, has been elected as Denmark’s new representative to the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT). Since 1994, Therese Rytter has worked as a human rights lawyer with the EU Commission, Amnesty International, Danida (Danish International Development Agency) and now DIGNITY. She is also a National Expert to the United Nations Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture (SPT) and Vice-Chair of the Human Rights Council of Denmark.



Less use of pre-trial detention

Therese Rytter comes with an extensive amount of experience, which she plans to take with her to the CPT. One of her most recent experiences is from projects aimed at reducing the extensive use of pre-trial detention in the Middle East and North Africa region.

“Once I leave the CPT, I hope that the widespread use of pre-trial detention has been limited considerably. Remand is firstly a very intense interference with the individual’s personal freedom. States must carefully consider whether the same objective can be reached by less intrusive means before resorting to putting people behind bars. Moreover, the excessive use of pre-trial detention often creates a breeding ground for other human rights violations. In several parts of the world we have seen that the prevalence of violence among inmates and between inmates and staff is much higher in states with widespread use of pre-trial detention. A consequence is that several inmates have to share the same food, medicine and space, which leads to poor health conditions and the spread of infectious diseases,” says Therese Rytter.

Better conditions for the mentally ill

Another topic, Therese Rytter is focusing on, is the situation of people with mental ill-

ness. A recent study from Denmark showed that 83 percent of inmates have mental disorders like depression and anxiety, while 8 percent of inmates are diagnosed with an actual mental illness.

“My heart beats for the most vulnerable in society. And some of the most vulnerable are the detainees who are struggling with mental illness. Individuals with serious mental illness should not be in prison. They should be in a hospital with the appropriate physical facilities and human resources. Unfortunately, it is also true that many states do not prioritize mental health services. This means that people with mental illness often are medicated or exposed to unnecessary use of force, such as tracked fixation.”

[Read the full story here](#)



Victims accounts needed for new fundraising initiatives

We rely on you, our partners, to help us bring the personal stories of those subjected to torture to the knowledge of the Danish public and donors. Thus we are looking for personal accounts/ testimonials or contact information on persons we could contact for an interview.

We would like to know:

- How was the person's life situation before the incident (job, relations, interests in life, emotional life etc)?
- What happened? Who was involved? (should be directly related to torture/ ill-treatment and with state agents involved)
- Which consequences did the person experience immediately after?
- How did your organization help the person? (in details)
- How has the person's life been after the intervention from your organization? (job, relations, interests in life, emotional life etc)
- We can guarantee anonymity – please let us know.

Please contact Heidi Tokle at hkt@dignityinstitute.dk with any idea for a story.

Recent Julia campaign

Recently, we have run a campaign telling the story of Julia – a pregnant woman from Rwanda who during the genocide was imprisoned, raped and buried alive together with her 1-year old daughter. She came to Denmark and received rehabilitation at DIGNITY. Now her two daughters are young grown-ups attending high school and Julia is living a promising new life in peace with herself. [See more here \(only in Danish\)](#).

Please send us your photos

DIGNITY is working on upgrading our visual profile. We are trying to make our homepage more appealing by using more photos and with the introduction of more fundraising activities we also need photos for print materials. We would like to ask for your help. Would you be able to send us photos we could use in connection with fundraising activities or on our homepage?

What we need is photos that either help to create a better understanding of what we do, how we do it and why we do it. Examples are photos from prisons or photos of torture survivors and treatment sessions. What we also need are photos that tell a story and that want to make people donate to our cause. This means photos that instil hope or empowerment. It could be portraits or photos of interaction.

Quality and information

We would prefer photos in high resolution (min. 1 MB). Unfortunately, we cannot use blurred photos. We would also like to receive a short text explaining what the photo depicts.

Please send photos including any credits you wish posted in relation to the photo to Heidi Tokle at hkt@dignityinstitute.dk. She is also available to answer any of your questions.