



Within the system of the United Nations, there is a specialized humanitarian instrument designed to support organizations that offer life-saving assistance — psychological, medical, legal and social — to survivors of torture: the [UN Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture](#) , which is managed by the

**UN Human Rights Office (OHCHR)**

. In

[2017](#)

, this unique victim-focused Fund is providing more than

[190 torture rehabilitation centers](#)

with the necessary funding to carry out their mission in 80 countries, making it possible for over 50,000 survivors of torture to get the support they need.

One such rehabilitation centers that is a beneficiary of the UN Fund is the [mental health center Ulysse](#) . Located in

an ordinary-looking building in Brussels, the Centre carries out a task that is anything but ordinary: to give new meaning to the lives of exiled refugees who are often traumatized by torture and also other serious human rights violations. Founded in 2003, Ulysse provides psychological assistance to torture victims and, activities offering psycho-social rehabilitation.

With his team of psychologists, the Director of the Center Alain Vanoeteren helps exiled people to overcome their traumas and to regain their self-confidence and dignity. The staff at the Centre, accompanied by a range of interpreters in various languages, provides a stable and welcoming environment for the treatment of mental health issues and for successful integration into the new community. This much needed support in learning to live with the after-effects of torture is often an intensive and lengthy process.

Due to the lack of torture rehabilitation services provided directly from the local government, the work of the Centre is of crucial importance. With more than 5,000 individual consultations and 2,000 participations of patients to collective activities by year, the Centre has helped thousands of exiled persons over the years with support from various sources such as the regional government and the UN Fund for Victims of Torture.

The support provided by the Fund helps rehabilitation centers such as Ulysse all over the world to assist victims of torture. However, the Fund, which relies entirely on the voluntary contributions from United Nations Member States, the private sector and individuals, has not seen its donations increase over the last years despite a significant increase of demands from torture rehabilitation centers. The Board of the UN Torture Fund estimates that the Fund requires a minimum of [US\\$ 12 million](#) in voluntary contributions yearly from Member States to be able to fully fulfil its mandate.

**UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS**  
OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER

**UN VOLUNTARY FUND FOR VICTIMS OF TORTURE**  
ASSISTING TORTURE VICTIMS WHEREVER TORTURE OCCURS

PROVIDES DIRECT HELP TO **+50 000** VICTIMS & THEIR FAMILIES

IN OVER **80** COUNTRIES, THROUGH **+190** ORGANIZATIONS

PROVIDES GRANTS TO CIVIL SOCIETY PROJECTS THAT OFFER **MEDICAL, PSYCHOLOGICAL, SOCIAL & LEGAL ASSISTANCE** TO TORTURE VICTIMS

DISBURSES **EMERGENCY GRANTS** TO RESPOND RAPIDLY TO CRISIS AROUND THE WORLD

**FUNDING NEEDS**

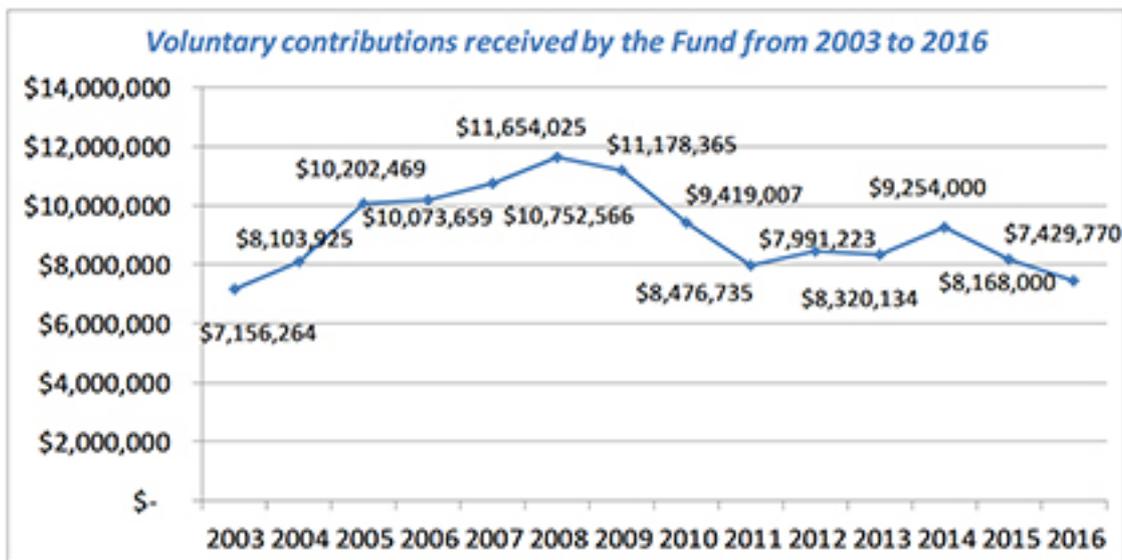
MANY TORTURE REHABILITATION CENTRES ARE **STRETCHED TO CAPACITY & HAVE LONG WAITING LISTS**

**\$12 MILLION USD** ARE NEEDED EACH YEAR TO RESPOND TO THE **INCREASING DEMANDS FOR ASSISTANCE**

<http://ohchr.org/donate/torture>

The international community should do more to ensure that mental health care reaches the victims of torture worldwide. One concrete and simple way is to increase contributions — or begin to make contributions — to the UN Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture in order to reach more survivors, help more families and positively impact more communities around the world.

## Financial situation of the Fund



It was in 1975 when the international community first defined and condemned torture, with the adoption by the UN General Assembly of the Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from Being Subjected to Torture. Over the past 42 years, international laws and mechanisms - such as the UN Committee Against Torture (CAT) - have been put in place, guiding States in their efforts to prevent and punish the crime of torture. Yet, despite a coherent international legal framework, torture continues to be practiced in many parts of the world and victims are left unattended.

Torture leaves deep physical and psychological marks on a person, in some cases the pain and trauma can last a lifetime. In such situations, it is crucial that the wounds and pain inflicted upon survivors — whether physical, psychological or both — be identified and treated. Torture victims should have access to professional tailored services that will assist them in their attempts to rebuild their lives. Medical and psychological support is essential for the rehabilitation and successful integration in their families and communities.

For more information on the work of the Fund, please consult the following links:

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<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Torture/UNVFT/Pages/QAndA.aspx>

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<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Torture/UNVFT/Pages/DecisionMaking.aspx>

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<http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Torture/UNVFVT/HowCanChildrenSurviveTorture.pdf>

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<http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Torture/UNVFVT/BrochureFromHorrorToHealing.pdf>

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[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_mSRXc8QezA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_mSRXc8QezA)