

## **UK Torture Review – Inspection due in April 2019**

The United Nation's Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment is an international human rights treaty which entered into force in 1987. Its purpose is to prevent the use of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment (ill-treatment). States which sign up to the Convention are obliged to submit a report every four years and in April 2019 the UK is scheduled for an inspection visit as part of its sixth periodic review. <sup>1</sup>

### **What does the visit entail?**

Before a visit takes place, the Government is asked to provide the following [guarantees](#) to the Special Rapporteur and accompanying United Nations staff:

- freedom of movement throughout the country,
- freedom of inquiry, especially in terms of access to all prisons, detention centres and places of interrogation,
- free contact with central and local authorities of all branches of government,
- free contact with representatives of NGOs, other private institutions and the media,
- confidential and unsupervised contacts, where the Special Rapporteur's mandate so requires, with witnesses and other private individuals, including persons deprived of their liberty,
- full access to all documentary material relevant to the mandate, and
- assurances that no persons, be they officials or private individuals, who have been in contact with the Special Rapporteur will suffer threats, harassment or punishment or be subjected to judicial proceedings.

During the visit the Special Rapporteur meets with:

- government authorities,
- NGOs,
- representatives of the legal profession,
- alleged victims and relatives of victims. The conclusions and recommendations contained in the Special Rapporteur's mission report are intended to assist Governments in identifying factors which may contribute to torture, and provide practical solutions to implement international standards.

### **Position statement of the Scottish government**

The Scottish government has issued a wide-ranging document in preparation for the

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CAT/Pages/CATIntro.aspx>

visit to Scotland. The 86-page PDF document can be found at <https://bit.ly/2TPxdOw>

## **Civil Society Alternative Report**

There are of course many NGOs and organisations across the UK who will be closely following the visit, including Children's Rights Alliance England (CRAE), Children in Wales, Disability Rights UK, Liberty, and Freedom from Torture. The NGO response and subsequent report has been coordinated by REDRESS, and covers the UN's List of Issues Prior to Reporting:

- Prisons, policing, armed forces and intelligence services
- Asylum and migration
- Health and social care settings
- Violence and abuse against women, ethnic, religious or sexual minorities and victims of trafficking and exploitation
- Legislative, administrative and judicial procedure

The Civil Society Alternative Report was made available to supporting groups and organisations in March, will be released online on **16<sup>th</sup> April** and formally launched at the beginning of May. Q-CAT has been included in the list of endorsements. The UN Committee against Torture will consider it as part of the UK state examination in Geneva between **7-8 May 2019**. The day before the public examination, there will be a private briefing for supporting NGOs with members of the Committee in Geneva.

**Our next Briefing will include more information about the Committee's visit, the official UK position, and the Alternative Report.**

Briefings are prepared and/or edited on behalf of Q-CAT Trustees by Barbara Forbes [forbesbarbarae@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:forbesbarbarae@yahoo.co.uk)

The next Newsletter is planned for early June.  
The next Briefing is planned for mid-July.

Website [www.q-cat.org.uk](http://www.q-cat.org.uk) or [www.qcat.org.uk](http://www.qcat.org.uk)

### **Q-CAT at Britain Yearly Meeting**

We will be holding a session on Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> May at 12.30 in Drayton House and hope some of you will come and join us.

We intend that this will be a chance to discuss together Q-CAT's work and particularly how to help Quakers, especially those who are reluctant to engage with the topic, to become more involved.

Trustees will also each be wearing a Q-CAT badge while at the Meeting, so please make yourself known.