

Torture

Policy statement

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Recommended citation: World Physiotherapy. Policy statement: Torture. London, UK: World Physiotherapy; 2023. Available from: <https://world.physio/policy/ps-torture>

The United Nations Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

World Physiotherapy endorses the United Nations Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and encourages its member organisations to promote its implementation and monitoring. (1)

The Convention was adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 10 December 1984 (resolution 39/46) and entered into force on 26 June 1987 after it had been ratified by 20 states. An Optional Protocol to the Torture Convention was adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 18 December 2002 (resolution 57/199). The Optional Protocol, which entered into force on 22 June 2006, establishes a system of regular visits by international and national bodies to places of detention in order to prevent torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

The Convention consists of 33 articles. In article 1 torture is defined as “any act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person for such purposes as obtaining from him or a third person information or a confession, punishing him for an act he or a third person has committed or is suspected of having committed, or intimidating or coercing him or a third person, or for any reason based on discrimination of any kind, when such pain or suffering is inflicted by or at the instigation of or with the consent or acquiescence of a public official or other person acting in an official capacity. It does not include pain or suffering arising only from, inherent in or incidental to lawful sanctions.” (1)

Approval, review and related policy information	
Date adopted:	Endorsed at the 17th General Meeting of WCPT June 2011. Endorsement re-affirmed at the 18th General Meeting of WCPT in May 2015. Endorsement re-affirmed at the 19th General Meeting of WCPT in May 2019. Endorsement re-affirmed at the 20 th General Meeting of WCPT in May 2023.
Date for review:	Dependent on monitoring of UN updates.
Related World Physiotherapy policies:	World Physiotherapy policy statements: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ethical principles and the responsibilities of physiotherapists and member organisations• Patients'/clients' rights in physiotherapy• The consequences of armed violence, landmines and other weapons of war• Torture

References

1. United Nations. Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. New York, USA1984 [24 Nov 2023]. Available from: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-against-torture-and-other-cruel-inhuman-or-degrading>.

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