

UN torture prevention body presents confidential preliminary findings to Italian Government

ROME (22 September 2015) - "In the challenging times of the current migration crisis, it is very important to ensure that everyone is treated well, regardless of their legal status," said Hans-Jörg Bannwart, Head of the delegation of the UN Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture (SPT) at the end of its first visit to Italy.

The SPT delegation presented today its confidential preliminary observations to the Government of Italy, ending a seven-day visit which aimed at assessing the treatment and conditions of detention of migrants, as well as the safeguards for their protection against torture and ill-treatment.

The SPT delegation visited a variety of facilities used to hold migrants in Rome, Trapani, Pozzallo, Turin and Bari, and conducted private and confidential interviews with people deprived of their liberty. The experts also met government officials, the Human Rights Commission of the Senate, international organizations and representatives of the civil society to seek ways of strengthening the authorities' efforts to prevent torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment in the context of immigration detention.

"It is important to recognize the vulnerability of migrants, particularly those whose liberty is restricted and those subject to deportation. This is why adequate safeguards to protect them are needed. We hope that our visit to Italy will contribute to the current work of the Government and others in addressing conditions and practices that may put migrants at risk of ill-treatment," added Mr. Bannwart.

The SPT mandate allows it to conduct on-site visits and to make recommendations to State authorities to establish effective safeguards against risk of torture and ill-treatment in places of deprivation of liberty. The SPT mandate is to be complemented by the establishment of an independent National Preventive Mechanism (NPM) within a year of the State becoming party to the Optional Protocol.

In accordance with the provisions of the Optional Protocol, the SPT will send its final and confidential report to the Italian Government, and hopes to continue its constructive dialogue with the authorities in the near future.

The SPT Delegation to Italy was composed of the following members: Hans-Jörg Bannwart (Head of Delegation), Malcolm Evans (Chairperson of the Subcommittee), Paul Lam Shang Leen (Vice-Chair of the Subcommittee) and Margarete Osterfeld.

END For **media inquiries**, please contact: In Italy: Ms. Yulia Babuzhina (+41 79 201 0122 / ybabuzhina@ohchr.org) In Geneva: Cécile Pouilly (+41 22 917 93 10 / cpouilly@ohchr.org) **Background:** The Optional Protocol on the Prevention of Torture has to date been ratified by 80 countries. The SPT communicates its recommendations and observations to the State by means of a confidential report, and if necessary to the National Preventive Mechanism. However, State parties are encouraged to make these reports public. More about the SPT: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/OPCAT/Pages/OPCATIndex.aspx>

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