

REDRESS

Seeking Reparation for Torture Survivors

UN General Assembly adopts the Principles and Guidelines on the Right to Reparation for Victims

REDRESS welcomes the adoption on 10 November 2005 by the Third Committee (Social, Cultural and Humanitarian) of the United Nations General Assembly of the "**Basic Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Remedy and Reparation for Victims of Gross Violations of International Human Rights and Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law**".

This instrument constitutes an important means for ensuring that States comply with their obligations under international law to guarantee an effective remedy and reparations when violations of international human rights and humanitarian law occur, including torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, as well as to prevent the commitment of future violations.

The General Assembly adopted the **Principles and Guidelines** and recommended that States promote their widespread use and dissemination among law enforcement officials, military and security forces, legislative bodies, judiciary, human rights defenders, and the public at large. The guidelines were negotiated over a 15-year period and were said by several delegations to be indispensable for States' efforts to end impunity and ensure justice.

REDRESS believes the adoption of the **Principles and Guidelines** is a vital step towards recognition of the rights of victims of torture and other crimes under international law. As observed by the representative of Chile (the main sponsor of the draft), although the resolution is not legally binding it clearly demonstrated the international community's concern for and solidarity with victims of such violations. The **Principles and Guidelines** would help victims and their representatives, as well as States design and implement public policies on reparations, and were flexible enough for States to implement. Their adoption would constitute a milestone in the fight against impunity.

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