



UNITED NATIONS  
PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Wok Bung Wantaim

# WanWok

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## International Day in support of victims of torture

The Regional Office for the Pacific of the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) last Friday (26 June) launched a study on legislative and other mechanisms used to prevent and punish acts of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment by law enforcement officials and prison officials to mark the International Day for the Support of Victims of Torture.

The Study, *A Region-Wide Assessment of Laws Preventing Torture and Other Ill Treatment*, covering 16 countries of the Pacific Islands Forum including Papua New Guinea, highlights that the majority of Constitutions of the region ban torture and ill-treatment. At the same time, it finds that only two countries of the region have ratified the Convention against Torture, the core international human rights treaty that lays down standards in this area.

"It is a terrible fact that torture and ill-treatment happen in all countries of the world," said Matilda Bogner, Regional Representative of OHCHR for the Pacific. "Prisoners and people arrested by police are very vulnerable to such mistreatment."

The study finds that courts of the region have enforced the internationally accepted ban on torture and ill-treatment. The courts have emphasized the point that incarceration itself is the punishment for a crime and that it is not the place of law enforcement or prison officers to meter out further punishments of their own.

"It is good to see that the majority of countries of the Pacific have legal frameworks that ban torture and ill-treatment as required by international law," said Ms. Bogner. "We must remember, though, that it is only when laws are implemented along with strong policies to hold officials accountable for their actions that we see a reduction of such violent acts."

The study was carried out in consultation with the Pacific Islands Forum Member States and has been shared with them. OHCHR hopes that the study will promote the ratification of the Convention against Torture in the region and will facilitate increased dialogue on the issue of the treatment of detainees with the aim of strengthening protections against violations.

"I call on leaders across the world to send a clear and unequivocal message that torture will no longer be tolerated, and that those who practice it are themselves committing a very serious crime" said Navi Pillay, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Christina Saunders, Human Rights Advisor to the UN Country Team in Papua New Guinea can provide copies of the report and is available to discuss this and other human rights concerns in the country.

Contact Christina Saunders, [christina.saunders@undp.org](mailto:christina.saunders@undp.org) if you wish to obtain more information.

## Joint United Nations Team on AIDS (JUNTA) Annual Retreat



The Joint United Nations Team on AIDS (JUNTA) has started work on finalizing its Annual Work Plan (AWP) for 2010.

This follows the recently concluded three-day annual retreat held last week from 24 to 26 June 2009 at the Gateway Hotel in Port Moresby.

The retreat provided an opportunity to the team composed of programme staff from UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, WHO, UNIFEM, UNV, and UNAIDS to review their implementation experiences which provided a platform upon which the Annual Work Plan deliverables were updated for the three key programme areas of prevention, treatment and management.

UNAIDS Country Representative, Tim Rwabuhemba, in his opening remarks highlighted that the measure of success was not what was promised but what was delivered and urged everyone to work together as one in order to deliver as One UN on AIDS.

"Too often we operate as silos, there is no synergy. We must work together to know who is doing what in treatment and care, prevention and management," he said.

The retreat also provided an opportunity to brainstorm on a framework for an HIV advocacy strategy to support implementation of the national strategic plan on AIDS. A core working group was formed to progress this important piece of work.

## Upcoming Events

29 June - 03 July 2009

Papua New Guinea National Comprehensive Condom Programming Workshop

This is YOUR weekly update. Please tell us about the progress on "Delivering as One". We would love to hear from you.

Send your article ideas or suggestions to [hkiromat@unicef.org](mailto:hkiromat@unicef.org)

UN COMMUNICATION TEAM