

## **Advancing Accountability for Torture in Syria: Enhancing Medical and Legal Documentation for Justice and Rehabilitation**

In the wake of Bashar al-Assad's fall in December 2024, Syria faces the immense task of rebuilding its legal and healthcare systems after years of repression. The mass release of prisoners offers a historic opportunity for recovery — but also exposes survivors and their families to a critical lack of support, justice, and care.

**The Center for the Enforcement of Human Rights International (CEHRI)**, in close partnership with the **Syrian Association for Mental Health (SAMH)**, is launching a pilot project to meet this urgent need. By training Syrian medical, legal, and psychological professionals in the internationally recognized **Istanbul Protocol** standards, the initiative will strengthen the identification, documentation, and legal processing of torture cases. This work lays the foundation for accountability, healing, and long-term justice.

The project is part of the **UN Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture (UNVFVT) Special Call for Syria**, which has awarded us an initial grant. We are now seeking additional funding to fully implement the project during the planned period of **July 2025 – June 2026**.

### **Activities include:**

- **Awareness-Raising Sessions:**  
One-day session for social workers, legal and health professionals, ministry of health members, and civil society representatives, focusing on evidence identification and documentation under the Istanbul Protocol.
- **Basic and Advanced Trainings on the Istanbul Protocol:**  
One-day basic training for 50 psychiatrists, psychologists, medical, and legal professionals on Istanbul Protocol principles, followed by a two-day advanced interdisciplinary training on forensic documentation and legal applications. The training enhances coordination between Syrian medical and legal professionals and promotes trauma- and culture-sensitive approaches.
- **Training for Syrian Lawyers on Case Building:**  
Two-day sessions for 50 Syrian lawyers and legal professionals on building cases for domestic, regional, and international accountability, evidence collection, witness testimony, and on existing legal pathways.
- **Supervised Documentation of Survivor Cases:**  
Interdisciplinary teams will document at least 40 survivor cases following Istanbul Protocol standards, ensuring informed consent, psychological support, and data security.

- **Development of a Syria-Specific Istanbul Protocol Handbook:**  
A practical Arabic-language handbook with simplified tools, templates, and guidelines tailored to the Syrian context, distributed to trained professionals and civil society organizations.
- **Establishing a Holistic Care Network for Survivors of Torture in Syria:**  
The project will establish an accessible network of mental health, medical, and legal professionals to provide comprehensive support to survivors of torture in Syria.

With deep local ties, a gender-sensitive framework, and collaboration with key Syrian and international partners, this initiative will drive forward the vital work of justice, recognition, and healing for those who have endured unimaginable suffering.

**We invite you to join us in building a future where survivors are heard, supported, and empowered to seek justice.**

Contact us at [info@cehri.org](mailto:info@cehri.org) for more information or [help us](#) with our cause.