

Ending Coercive Interrogation: The New Principles on Effective Interviewing for Investigations and Information Gathering

Concept note

10 December 2021 (17:30-19:00 Geneva time)

Background

Ample scientific evidence shows that traditional interrogation methods are often unreliable and violate human rights, particularly when they result in forced confessions and miscarriages of justice.

Based on rigorous science and experience of criminal investigators, the new [Principles on Effective Interviewing for Investigations and Information Gathering](#) – also known as the Méndez Principles - provide guidance and solutions to States on moving away from confession based criminal justice systems, thereby reducing the risks of coercion, torture and ill-treatment.

The Principles are designed to protect the fundamental rights of persons suspected of crime as well as of victims and witnesses. Guided by the pursuit of truth and the operationalisation of the presumption of innocence, they enable the gathering of more reliable and accurate information, and contribute to the respect of human rights in the administration of justice.

The Principles were finalized in May and officially launched on 9 June 2021, following a four years long expert driven process, which was supported by the Association for the Prevention of Torture (APT), the Anti-Torture Initiative and the Norwegian Centre for Human Rights.

Against this background, the APT in partnership with the Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights is organizing an event to introduce and raise awareness on the new Principles among relevant stakeholders.

During the event, experts, academics, and practitioners as well as young scholars will discuss four main issues:

- Aims, purpose, process and main characteristics of the Principles;
- Interdisciplinary foundations of the Principles;
- Impact of the Principles on human rights protection and advancement;
- Implementation of the Principles, particularly from the perspective of National Human Rights Institutions.

Objectives

- To introduce and raise awareness of the Principles.

Speakers

- Pavle Kilibarda, Teaching Assistant and PhD Candidate, Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights (moderator);
- Barbara Bernath, Secretary General, Association for the Prevention of Torture;



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asociación para la prevención de la tortura
association for the prevention of torture

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Humanitarian Law and Human Rights

- Steven J. Barela, Associate Research Fellow, Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights;
- Nils Melzer, UN Special Rapporteur on Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment;
- Ruth Ssekindi, Director, Uganda Human Rights Commission.

Target audience

- Members of international organizations, NGOs, experts, and diplomats;
- Students, scholars and practitioners of human rights and international humanitarian law (IHL).

Languages

- English

Format:

- Friday 10 December 2021, 17.30 – 19.00 Geneva time
- The event will take place both in Geneva (Villa Moynier, 120B Rue de Lausanne) and online via Zoom with registration available: https://geneva-academy-ch.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_h2b13GOsTMG8pZmLjNpVgg



Annotated agenda

17.30 – 17.35	Opening remarks <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pavle Kilibarda, Teaching Assistant and PhD Candidate, Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law
17.35 – 18.10	Session 1. Introduction of the Principles on Effective Interviewing <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Aims, Purpose, Process and Main Characteristics of the Principles</i>, Barbara Bernath, APT Secretary General• <i>Interdisciplinary Foundations of the Principles</i>, Steven J. Barela, Associate Research Fellow, Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights Discussion moderated by Pavle Kilibarda
18.10 – 18.50	Session 2. Relevance and practical implications of the Principles <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Impact of the Principles on human rights protection and advancement</i>, Nils Melzer, UN Special Rapporteur on Torture• <i>Implementation of the Principles, particularly from the perspective of National Human Rights Institutions</i>, Ruth Ssekindi, Director, Uganda Human Rights Commission Discussion moderated by Pavle Kilibarda
18.50 - 19.00	Concluding remarks <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Barbara Bernath, APT Secretary General;• Pavle Kilibarda, Teaching Assistant and PhD Candidate, Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights

11.11.2021