

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

## Public Statement

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### **India: After a decade of empty promises, time to ratify CAT and end torture**

Amnesty International is deeply concerned that, ten years after having signed the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment or Punishment (the Convention), India has yet to ratify the Convention. It has yet to make effective changes in domestic legislation to end the widespread practice of torture across the country.

In October 1997, India signed the Convention against Torture. India has since emerged as a key player in the international environment. During this period during several meetings with various senior government officials, Amnesty International delegates had received assurances that addressing the continuing prevalence of torture was high on the government's agenda.

However, despite a vigorous campaign by civil society and human rights organisations – including Amnesty International -- during the last decade, the Government of India has failed to ratify the Convention. Neither has it seriously addressed the endemic nature of torture across the country including in the proposed police reforms bill.

Amnesty International continues to receive reports of torture and degrading treatment of individuals in custody from those states where stringent security legislation is enforced – such as Jammu & Kashmir, Gujarat, Chattisgarh and some of the north-eastern states – but also from other states where torture is routinely used.

In last decade several orders from the Supreme Court, guidelines enunciated by national and state human rights commissions and official sanctions, have not deterred officials from inflicting torture on individuals on the basis of their caste, religion, socio-economic and sexual identity. Reports of torture of those belonging to the minorities and marginalised communities including *dalits*, *adivasis* and women are commonplace.

Amnesty International also points out that the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture has still not been invited to India despite making several requests.

On the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, Amnesty International urges the Government of India, as a responsible country in the international arena to:

- immediately ratify the UN Convention Against Torture;
- implement effective changes in domestic legislation to combat torture;
- invite the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture to visit the country.