THE UNITED NATIONS VOLUNTARY FUND FOR VICTIMS OF TORTURE

GUIDELINES FOR THE USE OF APPLICANTS AND GRANTEES[1]

(Applicable for projects implemented from January 1st to December 31st, 2026)

I. INTRODUCTION 3

II. ADMISSIBILITY OF PROJECTS 3

A. APPLICANTS AND GRANTEES 3
B. DEFNITION OF TORTURE AND BENEFICIARIES 4
C. NON-DISCRIMINATION PRINCIPLE 5
D. VICTIM-CENTRED APPROACH AND GENDER PERSPECTIVE 5
E. PRINCIPLE OF CO-FUNDING 6
F. PROHIBITION OF SUB-GRANTING 6
G. PRINCIPLE OF NON-COMPLIANCE 6
H. TYPES OF GRANTS 6
a) Annual grants 7
b) Emergency grants 8
I. PERIOD TO BE COVERED BY GRANTS 8

III. PROCESS TO SUBMIT PROJECT APPLICATIONS 9

A. WHEN AND HOW TO APPLY 9
a) Annual grants 9
b) Emergency grants 9
B. GRANTS MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (GMS) 9
C. UNITED NATIONS PARTNER PORTAL (UNPP) 10
D. INFORMATION AND DOCUMENTS TO BE PROVIDED BY ORGANIZATIONS 10
a) Contact Information and Banking information 10
b) Financial questionnaire 11
c) Budget proposal 11
d) Reference letters 12
e) Information about beneficiaries 12

IV. ON-SITE VISITS TO APPLICANT ORGANIZATIONS 13

V. FINANCIAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE OBLIGATIONS OF ORGANIZATIONS RELATED TO THE USE OF THE GRANT 14

A. BUDGET REVISION 14
B. PAYMENT AND USE OF THE GRANT 14

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C. PENDING INSTALLMENTS 15
D. WITHHOLDING OF PAYMENTS 15
E. INTERNAL CONTROL SYSTEMS OF ORGANIZATIONS 15
F. HUMAN RESOURCES 16
a) Staff and assimilated categories 16
b) Volunteers and assimilated categories 16
G. COMMUNICATION WITH THE SECRETARIAT OF THE FUND 17

VI. REPORTING ON THE USE OF GRANTS 17

A. GENERAL REPORTING OBLIGATIONS 17
a) Narrative information 17
b) Financial information 17
B. PROGRESS REPORTS 18
C. FINAL REPORTS 18
D. AUDIT REPORTS 18
E. RECORDS OF EXPENSES 19

VII. MISMANAGEMENT, FRAUD AND MISUSE OF FUNDS OF THE GRANT 20

VIII. ENSURING PROTECTION FROM SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE, AND FROM CHILD SAFEGUARDING VIOLATIONS 20

IX. REFUND OF GRANTS 22

X. RESTRICTIVE AND RETALIATORY MEASURES 22

XI. USE OF THE FUND'S LOGO AND TITLE 23

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture (hereafter the Fund) was created in 1981 by the United Nations General Assembly. Its mandate is to receive "voluntary contributions for distribution, through established channels of assistance, as humanitarian, legal and financial aid to individuals whose human rights have been severely violated as a result of torture and to relatives of such victims."[2] The Fund fulfils its mandate by awarding grants for civil society organizations worldwide to implement projects aimed at providing services to victims of torture[3] and their relatives. The Fund receives voluntary contributions from States and private entities.

2. The Fund is managed by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on behalf of the Secretary-General and operates in conformity with the United Nations Financial Rules and Regulations. The Fund's Secretariat is comprised of staff members, fellows and interns of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), based in Geneva, Switzerland.

3. A Board of Trustees (hereafter the Board), composed of independent experts representing the five geographical regions, advises the High Commissioner on the administration of the Fund, including recommendations on grant allocation.

II. ADMISSIBILITY OF PROJECTS

A. APPLICANTS AND GRANTEES

4. Only applications by civil society organizations and other channels of assistance (for example, hospitals and professional associations) (hereafter organizations) are admissible. Applications by governmental, parliamentary or administrative entities, political parties or national liberation movements are inadmissible.

5. Projects aiming to establish a new organization are inadmissible. Organizations should be in operation for at least one year before submitting an application to the Fund. The Fund may consider exceptions to the latter for organizations having to establish a new legal entity due to obstacles or measures (see Restrictive and Retaliatory Measures section) preventing them from operating.

6. For the purpose of the present Guidelines, the Fund distinguishes between the following categories of applicant organizations:

[2] General Assembly Resolution 36/151

[3] The Fund follows the approach of the UN Committee against Torture General Comment no. 3 on Implementation of article 14 by States parties (CAT/C/CG/3), "the *term "survivors" may, in some cases, be preferred by persons who have suffered harm. The Committee uses the legal term "victims" without prejudice to other terms which may be preferable in specific contexts".*

a) **First-time applicants**: organizations which have never received a grant from the Fund;
b) **Returning applicants:** organizations which have received a grant from the Fund in the past but not in the previous year;
c) **On-going applicants**: organizations which are currently receiving a grant (annual or emergency) from the Fund.

7. The present Guidelines are applicable to all categories of applicant organizations, unless otherwise specified.

8. By applying for a grant and by receiving a grant from the Fund, organizations agree to abide by Guidelines as at the time of application. They further agree to follow the United Nations financial and administrative obligations related to the use of the grant.

B. DEFNITION OF TORTURE AND BENEFICIARIES

9. For the purpose of the present Guidelines, the definition of torture is provided in article 1 of the United Nations Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, where torture is defined as "any act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person for such purposes as obtaining from him or a third person information or a confession, punishing him for an act he or a third person has committed or is suspected of having committed, or intimidating or coercing him or a third person, or for any reason based on discrimination of any kind, when such pain or suffering is inflicted by or at the instigation of or with the consent or acquiescence of a public official[4] or other person acting in an official capacity."[5]

10. Beneficiaries of projects must be exclusively victims of torture and/or their relatives. Any assistance provided with the Fund's grants should be linked to the consequences of torture.

11. For the purpose of the present Guidelines, the definition of victims is provided in the United Nations Committee against Torture General Comment No. 3 (2012) on the implementation of Article 14 of the United Nations Convention against Torture. Victims of torture are defined as "persons who have individually or collectively suffered harm, including physical or mental injury, emotional suffering, economic loss or substantial impairment of their fundamental rights, through acts or omissions that constitute violations of the Convention. A person should be considered a victim regardless of whether the perpetrator of the violation is identified, apprehended, prosecuted or convicted, and regardless of any familial or other relationship between the perpetrator and the victim. The term "victim" also includes affected immediate family or dependents of the victim as well as persons who have suffered harm in intervening to assist victims or to prevent victimization."

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[4] Please see para. 18 of the UN Committee against Torture General Comment no. 2 on Implementation of article 2 by States parties (CAT/C/GC/2): "(…) [W]here State authorities or others acting in official capacity (…) know or have reasonable grounds to believe that acts of torture or ill-treatment are being committed by non-State officials or private actors and they fail to exercise due diligence to prevent, investigate, prosecute and punish such non-State officials or private actors (…), the State bears responsibility and its officials should be considered as authors, complicit or otherwise responsible."

[5] Please refer to the guidance contained in the Interpretation of Torture in the Light of the Practice and Jurisprudence of International Bodies.

12. The term beneficiaries is at times used to refer to victims of torture and their relatives in the present Guidelines.

C. NON-DISCRIMINATION PRINCIPLE

13. Organizations applying to the Fund must provide documentary evidence (for example, legal statutes or by-laws of the organization) that assistance is provided to beneficiaries without any kind of distinction, such as race, colour, sex, gender, sexual orientation, transgender identity, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, social or ethnic origin, property, birth, disability or other status. The Fund encourages applicants to take specific measures to foster equality and address discrimination, including by providing reasonable accommodation.

D. VICTIM-CENTRED APPROACH AND GENDER PERSPECTIVE

14. Projects should demonstrate a clear victim-centred focus and gender-sensitive approach.

15. A victim-centred approach systematically ensures that beneficiaries occupy a central place in the design and delivery of assistance from the outset of a procedure to its conclusion. Organizations should demonstrate how individual victims are being informed and consulted about available services and associated risks and benefits of the assistance enabling them to make fully informed decisions. The organizations should also explain how victims are involved in in-take process, execution of assistance plans, discharge and follow-up. Organizations should aim to provide, or coordinate the provision of, holistic assistance (medical, psychological, legal and social, etc.) while assessing victims' needs.

16. Professionals involved in the project should be guided by trauma informed practices, based on understanding, recognizing, and responding to the effects of all types of trauma to prevent possible risks of re-traumatization by victims and vicarious traumatization by staff and volunteers.

17. Organizations should also explain how they assess and address risks and the effects of torture experienced by different beneficiaries (such as women, men, girls and boys, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Intersex people (LGBTI), migrants, indigenous peoples, national, ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities, persons with disabilities, etc.). They should further clarify how they make a realistic assessment and manage victims' expectations as to what engagement with the legal system may involve, if and where applicable, and whether psychological and/or medical support is offered during the process.

18. A gender perspective should be integrated in all stages of the project. The project should take into account the different impact that acts of torture, in particular sexual and gender based violence, may have on all victims but particularly on women, girls and LGBTI people. Organizations should propose adequate measures ensuring confidentiality to provide gender-sensitive assistance to victims. A gender perspective should also be reflected in the management of the project, including the composition of staff and volunteers involved in implementation.

E. PRINCIPLE OF CO-FUNDING

19. The amount requested to the Fund for annual grants must not exceed two thirds of the total budget of the project. Exceptions to this rule will be considered, provided that the Fund's Board deems the justification satisfactory.

F. PROHIBITION OF SUB-GRANTING

20. The Fund provides direct support to organizations; it does not subsidize projects through intermediary organization. This rule helps to prevent fees retention on the funds channelled and allows the Fund to monitor its use directly. The organization receiving the grant must implement the project directly; it may not provide sub-grants to one or more recipients to carry out the project activities. Payments to consultants, contractors or providers of services that routinely support the organization in the implementation of the project are not considered sub-grants.

21. Exceptions to this rule may be considered as a response to obstacles or measures external to organizations (see Restrictive and Retaliatory Measures section), impeding the receipt of the Fund's grant. In such cases, the use and reporting of the grant, including audits, will be the sole responsibility of the intermediary organization receiving the funds. Other potential avenues for payment of the grant may also be considered. These exceptions will be considered without prejudice of the rule of non-retention of fees on the funds channelled.

G. PRINCIPLE OF NON-COMPLIANCE

22. Any application from an organization that has not complied with the present Guidelines for the use of previous grants (such as overdue or unsatisfactory progress, final or audits reports) will be considered inadmissible. No application will be accepted from such an organization in the following three years, and a refund of the previous grant may be requested under certain circumstances (see Refund of Grants section).

H. TYPES OF GRANTS

23. The Fund awards two types of grants to civil society organizations:

    (i) **Annual grants:** applications received through an open call for applications open every year from 15 January to 1 March; and
    (ii) **Emergency grants:** applications received throughout the year under exceptional circumstances.

24. The present Guidelines are applicable to both types of grants, unless otherwise specified.

25. An organization receiving one type of grant may also apply for the other.

26. Applications are reviewed on a competitive basis, taking into account the merit of the application; geographic distribution of resources; the needs addressed; priorities set by the Board (if applicable); and satisfactory compliance with the Fund's Guidelines. The awarding of grants is subject to the availability of funds.

27. Projects may include a skills-building and/or institutional development component. This may cover capacity-building activities for the applicant and/or other grantees, in order to develop their professional skills to assist torture survivors, or activities aimed at improving self-care, prevention and protection from vicarious trauma. It can also encompass institutional policies and internal procedures/protocols such as safeguards against sexual exploitation and abuse, and protection from restrictive and retaliation measures (see Restrictive and Retaliatory Measures section). Eligible expenses may include the salary of external expert(s) and course fees and related materials. The portion of the grant allocated to the institutional development component should not exceed 20% of the budget requested to the Fund.

28. As a rule, the Fund will not support the capital costs of projects for construction work (e.g. for the building of shelters).

a) Annual grants

29. The Fund awards annual direct assistance grants to projects providing medical, psychological, social, economic, legal, humanitarian, educational or other forms of direct assistance to torture survivors and their family members. These projects should address only the direct consequences of torture. The organisations that may not provide all aspects of the assistance may arrange to refer victims of torture to other organisations for appropriate support.

30. In order to be admissible, organizations must submit five case studies with the direct assistance project application (see Information About Beneficiaries section).

31. Direct assistance rendered to survivors in the form of socio-economic support should be in kind and only in exceptional cases in cash. In cases where assistance may be provided in cash grants (for example, for transportation), efficient monitoring mechanisms should be in place to ensure that the money reaches the beneficiary and is used for the intended purpose. Organizations should provide information in writing on these monitoring mechanisms (see Internal Control Systems of Organizations section).

32. Funding of activities related to the intake process of the beneficiaries and/or to inform beneficiaries of the services provided by the organizations in the context of the project, such as hotline maintenance, leaflets and webpages, is acceptable within reason. Expenses related to the production and distribution of information about the United Nations Convention against Torture and its Optional Protocol, with a view to ensuring access to justice and rehabilitative services to torture survivors, are also acceptable.

33. Activities such as studies, research, lobbying, advocacy and publication of newsletters, are ineligible for funding from the Fund. Activities aiming primarily to prevent torture are also ineligible.

34. The Fund does not provide financial compensation to torture survivors. The Fund will not support litigation seeking capital punishment of perpetrators of torture.

35. Organizations can only submit one application per country of implementation under the same call for applications.

36. Applications should provide information on whether access to aid is available through a State-sponsored or other mechanisms.

b) Emergency grants

37. Under exceptional circumstances, the Fund may award emergency grants at any time of the year for projects to provide direct assistance to torture survivors that meet all the following emergency criteria:

(i) a sudden change in circumstances (for example, a human rights or humanitarian crisis);
(ii) that has caused an extraordinary increase in the number and/or needs of torture survivors and;
(iii) requires an immediate response.

38. On-going applicants subjected to restrictive or retaliatory measures, including reprisals for collaborating with the United Nations, as a result of their project implementation, may also qualify for an emergency grant if additional measures are required to continue to deliver assistance to torture survivors under such circumstances.

39. The Fund may launch a special call to address exceptional circumstances that require an emergency response.

40. Emergency grants do not respond to existing or ongoing patterns of torture or cash flow difficulties that organizations may be experiencing.

41. First-time, returning and on-going applicant organizations can apply for emergency grants. To be considered eligible, applicant organizations must justify the emergency rationale in the project application.

42. In order to be admissible, organizations must submit two case studies with the emergency grant application.

43. Emergency grants may be awarded to the same organization once within a 5-year period.

I. PERIOD TO BE COVERED BY GRANTS

44. Annual grants cover project implementation for a given 12-month calendar year (1 January to 31 December).

45. Organizations must apply every year for an annual grant. Annual grants are not renewed automatically; they are subjected to competitive review and the availability of funds. As part of this process, on-going applicants must have complied with the Fund's Guidelines for the use of all previous grants.

46. As a general rule, annual grants in the same country of implementation can be awarded on a yearly basis for a maximum of ten consecutive years, subject to a satisfactory evaluation of the project and availability of funds. After ten years, applicant organizations can continue receiving direct assistance grants if projects supported provide essential services to victims of torture in areas in which no other organization

offers similar services. In order to prevent dependency on the Fund, the amount of the grant awarded after ten consecutive years of funding will gradually be decreased.

47. On-going applicants whose annual grant has been discontinued after ten consecutive years of funding, are ineligible to apply for another direct assistance grant in the same country of implementation for the following three years.[6]

48. Emergency grant applications can be submitted and awarded at any time during the year. They can cover a period spanning from 6 to 12 months and cannot be renewed or prolonged.

49. Organizations must use all awarded grants within the given implementation period. Under exceptional and unforeseen circumstances, no-cost extensions may be granted by the Secretariat.

III. PROCESS TO SUBMIT PROJECT APPLICATIONS

A. WHEN AND HOW TO APPLY

a) Annual grants

50. The Fund accepts applications for annual grants through an annual call for applications open every year from **15 JANUARY to 1 MARCH**.

51. The Fund's Board may set priorities in the annual call for applications, which focus on i) specific geographic regions, taking into consideration existing patterns of torture, gaps in assistance to survivors and high needs, and/or ii) thematic areas.

52. In order to be admissible, all applications must be submitted to the Fund using the Grant Management System (GMS) by **1 MARCH**. The applicant organization is solely responsible for submitting the application within the deadline. Any application submitted after the deadline is inadmissible.

b) Emergency grants

53. At any time during the year, organizations may submit an application for an emergency grant through the GMS.

B. GRANTS MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (GMS)

54. By applying for a grant, organizations abide by the present Guidelines. Applications should be submitted through the GMS in either English, French or Spanish.

55. Job aids to assist organizations to access and use the GMS[7] and to draft the project applications, including budget proposals, are available in English, French and Spanish.

56. Organizations wishing to apply to the Fund for the first time must submit a request to register through the GMS before they can submit an online application. They will

[6] Grantees are strongly encouraged to diversify their sources of funding during this three-year period.
[7] https://grants.ohchr.org/Default

receive an automatic notification by e-mail of the approval of their registration as well as the link valid for limited time that allows them to create a password to access the online account.

57. To register, organizations must submit below documentation:

    a. Background information about the organization
    b. Copy of the statutes of the organization
    c. Copy of the legal registration of the organization (if available)
    d. Organizational structure (organigram) indicating positions and names of staff involved in project implementation
    e. Banking information of the organization
    f. Two recommendation letters

58. Any application that does not provide the required information in all fields of the project application template, or in any other manner does not comply with the present Guidelines, will be considered inadmissible.

C. UNITED NATIONS PARTNER PORTAL (UNPP)

59. The United Nations Partner Portal (UNPP) [8] is a centralized digital platform used by UN agencies to manage partner registration, conduct due diligence, and facilitate the selection of eligible implementing partners for humanitarian and development initiatives.

60. As part of the requirements to receive a grant from the Fund, organizations must register in the UNPP. Registration in UNPP is a multi-step and distinct process from GMS.

D. INFORMATION AND DOCUMENTS TO BE PROVIDED BY ORGANIZATIONS

61. Information and documentation provided by organizations for the purpose of the grant are for the exclusive use of the Fund and will be treated as confidential.

a) Contact Information and Banking information

62. Applicant organizations must ensure that all contact information (mailing address, contact persons and contact numbers) and banking information is accurate, since it is essential for communication with the Fund's Secretariat and for the payment of grants. Organizations are responsible for promptly updating information in the GMS and the UNPP about any changes as soon as they occur. Failure to do so may lead to the cancellation of a grant.

63. Applicant organizations must provide all banking details (including IBAN and SWIFT if applicable) using the UN banking information form, available in the GMS.

64. Grants are paid in United States dollars (US$) through bank-to-bank transfer and, in exceptional cases, through local UNDP offices (see Admissibility of Projects, F; and Restrictive and Retaliatory Measures sections) the organization's bank account must be

[8] https://www.unpartnerportal.org/landing/register

able to receive foreign payments in that currency. The name of the beneficiary of the bank account must be the same name as the applicant organization. Applications submitted with a bank account in the name of a private individual are inadmissible.

65. Organizations that have received grants in the past must inform the Fund's Secretariat of any change in their banking information by submitting an updated UN banking information form and a bank statement, or any other document from the bank, allowing to crosscheck the information provided. Failure to provide updated banking information may jeopardize the payment of the grant. The Fund will not cover any banking fees originated from delays in or rejection of payments caused by outdated or incorrect banking information.

66. The Fund accepts applications from organizations that have one bank account for all projects with the condition that they have a clear and detailed system to identify expenditure. The Fund however recommends that organizations have a separate bank account for its grant.

b) Financial questionnaire

67. The Fund's Secretariat may request applicant organizations to complete a questionnaire about its financial structure in order to assess the internal financial control systems in place. Organizations must provide a copy of their latest general ledger and their latest audited financial statements. Should the information provided be found to be inaccurate or unsatisfactory, the application will be considered inadmissible.

68. The internal financial control system of the organization will also be verified during monitoring visits (see On-site Visits to Applicant Organizations section).

c) Budget proposal

69. As a general rule, annual grants range between US$ 20,000 and US$ 100,000. Only "on-going applicant" organizations submitting a continuation of a funded project proposal in the same country of implementation may be awarded a grant of more than US$ 50,000. Annual grants for "first-time" or "returning" categories of applicant organizations cannot exceed US$ 50,000.

70. Emergency grants cannot exceed US$ 100,000.

71. In order to be admissible, organizations must submit budget proposals based on realistic costs and salaries. Project applications with over-budgeting will be considered inadmissible.

72. Funding requested from the Fund may cover different types of expenditures clearly linked to the provision of direct assistance to torture survivors. Projects may include a skills-building and/or institutional development component, not exceeding 20% of the budget requested to the Fund.

73. Administrative costs may include only direct costs (those readily and directly attributable to project operations, where a direct link between the cost and the project can be identified). Administrative costs should be limited to the strict minimum and may not exceed 13% of the total cost of the budget requested to the Fund. Indirect costs

(those that cannot be traced specifically to the direct assistance), should not be included. Salaries of professional staff providing direct assistance to victims are not considered administrative costs and can be requested under other types of expenses.

74. The proposed budget must reflect the total cost of the project and not only the amount requested to the Fund. It should indicate in detail the items and sub-items of expenditure to be covered with the grant requested from the Fund. Organizations should explain and provide additional information about each individual budget line, type of expense and calculation behind the cost per unit indicated.

75. Applicant organizations must indicate other confirmed and/or pledged sources of project funding. Where possible, organizations should include proof via their GMS application (for example, copies of applications, pledges, agreements, bank statements of recent contributions). Secured sources of funding must be distinguished from those merely envisaged. Organizations should also indicate the form of the contribution (cash or in-kind). For in-kind contribution, organizations should provide an explanation about its calculation and supporting documents.

76. In order to verify organizations' compliance with the co-funding principle, the Fund's Secretariat may contact other donors to confirm the authenticity of the information provided by applicant organizations without prior consultation.

d) Reference letters

77. Applicant organizations must submit two reference letters from donors, other organizations or experts in the field of assistance to torture survivors, explaining their collaboration.

e) Information about beneficiaries

78. Applicant organizations should provide detailed and comprehensive information about how they identify project beneficiaries and how they ensure their involvement in project design and implementation. In particular, organizations should explain how their project beneficiaries fall within the definition of victim of torture (see Beneficiaries, Definition of Torture and Victims of Torture sections) and describe their in-take and discharge procedures.

79. Applicant organizations must also provide detailed and comprehensive information about the type of direct assistance services they provide to project beneficiaries, that address the effects of torture. They should also explain how they monitor project implementation and evaluate results, in particular the positive impact of services on torture survivors.

80. In order to be admissible, grant applications must include case studies drafted according to the template provided in the GMS. The information included therein will remain confidential and serve only for the Fund's internal use. The purpose of these case studies is to assess, through examples of individual cases, whether the project beneficiaries and the services provided by the organization fall within the mandate of the Fund.

81. The names of beneficiaries may be anonymized and replaced by the internal registration number used by the organization. Organizations should request the free and informed

consent of beneficiaries prior to the transfer of any personal data to the Fund.

82. The case studies must follow the template provided in the online application and include the following information:

    a. Facts of the case (circumstances of the act(s) of torture: what happened, when and where; intentional infliction of severe mental and physical suffering; who was the perpetrator; what was the purpose)
    b. When and how the beneficiary was referred to the organization
    c. Assistance provided to beneficiaries under the project (including nature, duration and frequency of services)
    d. Results expected or obtained

83. Two case studies should also provide a breakdown of expenses.

84. Annual grant applications must include five case studies.

85. Emergency grant applications must include three case studies: for on-going and returning applicant organizations, these case studies should be different from those submitted with the annual grant.

IV. ON-SITE VISITS TO APPLICANT ORGANIZATIONS

86. Members of the Fund's Board and/or UN staff shall conduct on-site visits to applicant organizations for the purpose of project evaluation and/or verification of project implementation. The visits allow for greater understanding about the work of the organization, in particular their project operations and grant's management systems.

87. In principle, visits will be conducted to all (i) first-time applicants (ii) returning applicants and (iii) on-going applicants presenting a different project or a project in a different country of implementation. On-going applicants submitting a continuation of a funded project proposal in the same country of implementation are also subjected to visits on a regular basis.

88. As a general rule, the Fund's Secretariat will inform organizations of the visit in advance. Exceptionally unannounced visits may take place. On-site visits generally last one day. Organizations have the obligation of facilitating the visit, including arranging meetings with project staff, volunteers and beneficiaries, and providing access to administrative and financial files.

89. Occasionally, non-UN staff (for example, auditor, translator, doctor, etc.) may also accompany a visit. All members of the visiting delegation are bound by UN rules of non-disclosure of information and organizations are expected to fully cooperate with them.

90. A confidential report about the visit will be drafted for internal purposes. Should the result of the on-site visit be unsatisfactory (including inter alia due to limited access to files, staff and/or beneficiaries), the Fund may decide not to award a new grant, cancel a pending grant or request a refund of a disbursed grant.

91. The Fund's Secretariat may exchange information about applicant organizations with representatives of other UN agencies, funds or programmes, in particular those based in the same country of project implementation.

V. FINANCIAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE OBLIGATIONS OF ORGANIZATIONS RELATED TO THE USE OF THE GRANT

92. The Fund's Secretariat informs all applicant organizations about the final decision concerning their grant application (for annual grants, before the end of the calendar year that the application was submitted). Organizations awarded a grant are notified about the approval by e-mail, followed by conclusion of a grant agreement. Upon signing the agreement, the awarded organization agrees to comply strictly with the present Guidelines, the UN Financial Regulations and Rules, and administrative obligations related to the use of the grant. By submitting a revised budget, the organization agrees to comply with any additional conditions outlined in the agreement.

A. BUDGET REVISION

93. Organizations must submit a revised budget adjusted to the awarded amount through the GMS by the deadline indicated in the e-mail or the agreement. Revised budgets must be submitted for all grants, even if amount awarded matches the exact amount requested in the project application.

94. Grants will not be released until a satisfactory revised budget is submitted and approved by the Fund's Secretariat. Organizations will receive a notification once the budget has been approved. Failure to comply will result in the cancellation of the grant.

95. Revisions should be made only to the amounts of the existing budget lines of the project application. Organizations cannot add a new budget line unless otherwise authorized by the Fund's Secretariat. An organization wishing to add a new budget line (for example, for an audit report) must submit the request to the Fund's Secretariat by e-mail with a justification and detailed breakdown of the expense.

B. PAYMENT AND USE OF THE GRANT

96. The Financial Services of the United Nations processes the payments of grants at the request of the Fund's Secretariat. The disbursement of annual grants usually occurs during the first three months of the year of the grant's implementation. Any inaccurate or incomplete financial and banking information provided by the organization will result in the delay of payment (see Contact Details and Banking Information section).

97. Within two weeks upon reception of the grant in their bank account, organizations must return the acknowledgment of receipt form, duly completed, signed and dated, to the Fund's Secretariat. The form is sent to the organization as an annex to the agreement and can be requested to the Fund's Secretariat.

98. The grant must be used in conformity with the project application and the revised budget submitted in GMS. During project implementation, organizations requiring minor budget adjustments have the discretion to redeploy funds within existing budget lines with a tolerance rate of up to 10% overspending on the total cost component without

prior approval from the Fund's Secretariat. Organizations can use the Budget Amendment tab in the GMS to simulate whether a budget redeployment falls within the 10% cost component discretion threshold. For any other changes in the existing budget lines or the creation of new budget lines, organizations must seek authorization from the Fund's Secretariat, prior to incurring the unforeseen expenditure. Any expenditure not previously approved by the Fund's Secretariat will have to reimbursed. The Secretariat will not be liable for any expenditure incurred in excess of the awarded grant. Under exceptional and unforeseen circumstances, organizations may be granted additional discretion to redeploy funds within existing budget lines for up to 20% per cost component, upon an express written communication from the Secretariat to this effect. No budget redeployment shall result in administrative costs exceeding 13% of the awarded grant.

99. Savings on currency exchange rates and interest earned must be reinvested into the project during the ongoing implementation period, in accordance with the approved revised budget.

100. The Fund shall not be held responsible for the cost incurred if an organization is liable to pay tax on the grant received.

C. PENDING INSTALLMENTS

101. In some cases, the Board may decide that certain conditions must be fulfilled before the grant is paid in full. These grants will be disbursed in two instalments. The second instalment will be paid only upon receipt of a satisfactory progress report about the use of the first instalment, submitted by **15 JULY**.

102. A pending instalment may be cancelled if conditions are not satisfactorily met within the given deadline. The amount of the second instalment may be adjusted and reduced by the Fund's Secretariat on the basis of the progress report about the use of the first instalment. Organizations should never pre-pay budgeted expenditures or assume that a pending instalment will be paid.

D. WITHHOLDING OF PAYMENTS

103. Should information concerning over-budgeting, mismanagement or any other misuse emerge after a grant was approved, the Fund's Secretariat can decide, if needed upon consultation with the Chairperson of the Fund's Board, to withhold the payment of a grant or to request the organization not to spend a grant already paid until the situation is clarified.

E. INTERNAL CONTROL SYSTEMS OF ORGANIZATIONS

104. Organizations must establish and maintain internal control mechanisms to ensure sound management of administrative and financial resources. Among others, they must ensure the existence of and respect for policies and procedures concerning accounting, supply chain matters, handling of cash and cheques, authorization of fund movements and recording of transfers affecting the Fund's grant. Written records and documentation of transactions related to cash and bank accounts must be kept and made available to the Fund's Secretariat at any time upon request. Changes in bank signatories and other

changes in the status of the organizations' officials with signing authority must be reported to the Fund's Secretariat immediately.

105. Regarding the provision of cash assistance, which shall remain limited and exceptional, the organization shall provide the Fund with its written policy and criteria regarding the allocation and monitoring of cash assistance. This includes: minimum and maximum amounts that may be allocated; purposes for which cash may be awarded; system in place for the disbursement of monies and; monitoring mechanisms to ensure the effective use of the grants awarded. Precise and separate records of such payments with the relevant supporting documents must be kept by the organization and be made available to the Fund's Secretariat at any time, upon request.

106. Organizations must use guidelines and procedures to ensure a competitive process in the procurement of goods. Organizations must have guidelines and procedures regarding the purchase, prescription, issuance and storing of medicines and medical supplies financed by the Fund, enabling their tracking from the supplier to the final beneficiary. Such policies must be submitted upon request to the Fund's Secretariat, as well as supporting documents regarding certain purchases.

F. HUMAN RESOURCES

a) Staff and assimilated categories

107. Staff, consultants, collaborators and other assimilated categories, must be recruited on a competitive basis bearing in mind gender balance and following open, transparent and non-discriminatory procedures. Relevant and supporting documents may be requested by the Fund's Secretariat. Staff and assimilated categories, regularly remunerated under the project, and with the Fund's grant, must have written contracts.

108. Adequate records of staff attendance and assignments must be maintained. Any change in the key information on human resources affecting the use of the grant must be communicated immediately to the Fund's Secretariat in writing.

109. Should the staff involved in the project and persons in charge of key functions regarding the financial management of the organization change during the period of implementation of the project, the Fund's Secretariat must be immediately informed of the changes in writing.

b) Volunteers and assimilated categories

110. Volunteers, interns, fellows and other assimilated categories must be recruited following open, transparent and non-discriminatory procedures. Relevant and supporting documents may be requested by the Fund's Secretariat. Organizations that are using volunteers shall have clear and consistent policies and procedures for the use of and payments made to volunteers or assimilated categories.

111. Organizations that are providing any form of payment to volunteers or similar categories of persons must keep records, including names, contact details, assignments undertaken, attendance, date, nature and amount of payments.

G. COMMUNICATION WITH THE SECRETARIAT OF THE FUND

112. In the event of any changes to the designated contact person or the person responsible for the project, the organization must promptly update this information in the Grant Management System (GMS) and notify the Fund's Secretariat accordingly.

113. Any queries may be directed to the Fund's Secretariat via email at ohchr-unvfvt@un.org. Please ensure that email attachments do not exceed 20 MB and are submitted in PDF, Word or JPG format.

VI. REPORTING ON THE USE OF GRANTS

A. GENERAL REPORTING OBLIGATIONS

114. All organizations receiving a grant have reporting obligations. These obligations will be stipulated in the grant agreement. Organizations submitting reports are solely responsible for ensuring that these are submitted within the deadline.

115. All reports must be submitted through the GMS. By submitting a report organizations certify that all the information provided therein is true, complete and accurate.

116. The Fund will consider unsatisfactory any report not submitted within the established deadline; that does not provide the required information in all fields of the reporting template indicating precisely how the grant was used to assist torture survivors; or that does not comply with the present Guidelines in any other manner.

117. Should a report be considered unsatisfactory, the organization will have to submit another report by the new deadline provided by the Fund's Secretariat. Failure to do so will lead to the inadmissibility of a new project application for the following three consecutive years and may lead to a request to refund the grant.

118. The Fund keeps records of organizations which have not complied with its reporting requirements, in particular those requested to refund a grant, and reserves the right to share this information with other donors and/or partners, including through the UNPP.

a) Narrative information

119. Reports must provide comprehensive information about the outcome of project implementation, including information about beneficiaries, type of assistance provided and monitoring process. Emphasis should be placed on the impact that the project has had on the lives of torture survivors and their families. Reports must include two case studies (the template should be downloaded from the GMS) concerning victims assisted by the organization during the project reporting period.

b) Financial information

120. The financial report must be submitted in US dollars (US$). Where the grant funds were converted into local currency upon receipt, the exchange rate applied at the time of conversion must be used consistently throughout the financial report to ensure accuracy.

121. In cases where awards are received from national or international courts as a result of successful litigation, legal fees paid by the Fund do not need to be reimbursed, in accordance with the conditions for grant allocation. The Fund encourages organizations to use such awards for continued assistance to beneficiaries and to keep the Fund's Secretariat informed about how they intend to use these awards.

B. PROGRESS REPORTS

122. Organizations receiving an annual grant must submit a progress report by **15 JULY** reflecting the first six months of project implementation.

123. Organizations receiving an emergency grant also have to submit a progress report, reflecting the first half of the project implementation period.

C. FINAL REPORTS

124. Organizations receiving an annual grant must provide a final financial and narrative report on the use of the grant for the calendar year 1 January to 31 December. Organizations must submit the final by **1 MARCH** every year, unless otherwise authorized by the Fund's Secretariat.

125. Organizations receiving an emergency gran must provide a final financial and narrative report on the use of the grant within two months of the end of the project implementation period.

D. AUDIT REPORTS

126. All grants of US$ 50,000 and above must be audited by a certified external auditor on the use of the annual grant paid by the Fund for the calendar year 1 January to 31 December. As a general rule, all first-time and returning organizations are also subject to an obligatory audit.

127. Organizations whose annual grants are below US$ 50,000 may be randomly selected to be audited on the use of the annual grant paid by the Fund. As a general rule, all grantee organizations shall be audited at least once every three years. The Fund reserves the right to request an audit report retroactively on any on-going or past grant (see Records of Expenses section).

128. The audit report must be performed by an independent qualified auditor, in line with the International Standards on Auditing or Generally Accepted Auditing Standards. The audit report must be presented in USD, specifically issued for the grant awarded by the Fund and reflecting each budget line as per the Fund's approved budget (rather than for overall financial statements of the organization). The audit report must be dated and signed by the auditor and include an opinion showing that the grant was received and that it was used for the purpose approved by the Fund. The audit report should contain at least the following elements: title indicating the auditor's independence (ex. "Independent Auditor's Report"); addressee; introductory paragraph; management's responsibility for the financial statements; auditor's responsibility; auditor's opinion on compliance with the terms of the Fund's grant; a full breakdown of expenses against the approved project budget; description of the information presented in the financial

statement; description of the financial reporting framework under which the financial statements have been prepared and; any other reporting responsibilities. Where applicable, the audit report is to be accompanied by a management letter issued by the auditor. For annual grants, the audit report and the management letter must be submitted to the Fund's Secretariat by **1 AUGUST** of the following year, unless otherwise authorized by the Secretariat of the Fund. For emergency grants, if and where applicable, the audit report and the management letter must be submitted to the Fund's Secretariat by the date specified in the agreement.

129. Audits must cover the implementation period of the grant and not the fiscal year of organizations, which differs from country to country. Audits are not performed by the Fund. It is the responsibility of the organization to hire directly an external auditor.

130. The Fund reserves the right to select or oversee the selection of the external auditor. The costs relating to the audit may be covered by the grant up to 8% of the total amount awarded. If the audit report is not drafted in one of the official languages of the United Nations, an English translation must be provided.

E. RECORDS OF EXPENSES

131. Organizations are required to maintain internal records of expenses documenting how on-going and past grants are used, including:

1. Financial records (all receipts/ invoices, including three suppliers' quotations for any purchase exceeding US$2,500)

2. Beneficiaries' files with information about the specific assistance provided in the context of project expenses. Individual files must include direct or indirect records (i.e. reference to coded receipts/documents kept elsewhere) on the following:

   a. Personal details of beneficiaries (name and surname, date of birth, photocopy of ID, contact details);
   b. Personal history of beneficiaries (including details of the torture suffered)
   c. Medical records, as relevant (diagnosis, list, dates and minutes of sessions with staff, receipts of medicines provided or prescribed, prescriptions, copies of laboratory reports, etc.);
   d. Legal records, as relevant (complaints lodged to tribunals, powers of attorney, receipts of honoraria/legal fees for external or internal lawyers, receipts for expenses related to the case such as documents translation, forensic or ballistic expertise, etc.);
   e. Social assistance records, as relevant (receipts of travel grants/transport tickets for beneficiaries, copies of receipts for any purchase made on behalf and for the beneficiaries, telephone cards, clothes, food, rental payment, etc.);
   g. Any other relevant information.

3. Records on the management of administrative and other resources.

132. With due regard to any domestic legal restrictions, this information must be available at the organizations premises for a period of five years after receipt of the grant for

inspection by the Fund's delegation conducting the on-site visit. Organizations shall provide full access to their financial records at any time for a period of five years following the receipt of the grant.

VII. MISMANAGEMENT, FRAUD AND MISUSE OF FUNDS OF THE GRANT

133. For the purpose of these Guidelines, mismanagement, fraud and misuse of funds are defined as: the engagement of the organization in proscribed practices including, but not limited to, corruption, coercion, collusion, or any other unethical conduct; any other use of the funds of the awarded grant in activities different from the ones foreseen in these Guidelines and the agreement, or incompatible with the aims and objectives of the United Nations or the Fund's mandate to ensure the protection of their beneficiaries, staff and other persons of concern; the use of the grant, all or in part, in expenditures other than those mentioned in the proposal submitted to, and approved by the Fund; the submission of false information in the documentation requested, including but not limited to, the finance questionnaire; and failure to provide satisfactory supporting documents for the financial management of the grant(s) when requested.

134. In cases where the Fund receives allegations or otherwise learns about possible fraud, mismanagement or misuse of funds by a grantee, the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees will be informed. The Fund reserves the right to take actions oriented to determine the situation, including but not limited to: request clarification from the organization; contact other donors and partners; request an audit of the concerned organization, including its financial and administrative data; conduct an on-site visit to the organization at either short or no notice; and refer the case to the United Nations Office of Internal Oversight Services.

135. Where it is established that the organization mismanaged, embezzled or misused the grant, the Fund reserves the right to take any appropriate measures in the circumstances, including but not limited to: cancelling the grant; estimating the amount mismanaged, misused or embezzled and requesting a refund, cancelling the organization's UNPP registration and/or using relevant legal procedures. No further application shall be accepted from the organization during the ten years following the refund or satisfactory settlement of the matter.

VIII. ENSURING PROTECTION FROM SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE, AND FROM CHILD SAFEGUARDING VIOLATIONS

136. The Fund adheres to the United Nations policies and protocols on Safeguards against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and the organizations that it supports are expected to have internal policies and practices to prevent such practices.

137. The Fund is also governed by the United Nations' zero tolerance policy on prohibited conduct. This policy requires that organizations cooperating with the United Nations adhere to the zero-tolerance policy on prohibited conduct[9] and commit to taking adequate action if faced with allegations of prohibited conduct. The United Nations requires an effective response to any report of possible misconduct, from receiving a

[9] Prohibited conduct is the collective term for discrimination, harassment (including sexual harassment) and abuse of authority: https://hr.un.org/page/what-is-prohibited-conduct

complaint to ensuring that appropriate disciplinary action is taken.[10]

138. In particular, the Fund adheres to the zero-tolerance policy towards sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA), defined as follows:

a) Sexual exploitation is any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust, for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another.

b) Sexual abuse means actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive condition.

139. The Fund does not cooperate with entities that fail to address SEA through appropriate preventive measures, investigation and corrective action. Such failures shall constitute grounds for the termination of the grant awarded by the Fund.[11]

140. United Nations staff are required to report allegations of SEA to the Secretary-General. It is the responsibility of the organizations supported by the Fund to report promptly allegations of SEA to the Fund's Secretariat, as part of their reporting obligations, and to investigate those allegations.

141. The Fund's Secretariat reserves the right to refer any SEA allegation involving an organization receiving a grant and its associated staff to the responsible United Nations institutions for investigation, notwithstanding any related investigations undertaken by the organization or national authorities. Where the United Nations does not conduct the investigation directly, the Fund reserves the right to seek further clarification and relevant information and to obtain the results of any investigations undertaken, in order to determine whether the organization has taken appropriate investigative and corrective actions including guarantees of non-repetition.

142. In the event of credible SEA allegations made against an employee(s) or associated staff and volunteers of the organization supported by the Fund and a failure of the organization to take adequate measures to prevent, investigate or correct SEA, including taking measures to avoid the repetition of these acts,[12] the Fund reserves the right to request a full or partial refund of any grant awarded to the organization. The Fund will also identify a number of conditions and corrective measures that need to be taken by the organization for any future grant applications to be considered in line with the UN policies and protocols on Safeguards against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, notwithstanding the reparations and remedies resulting from judicial or non-judicial procedures undertaken by national authorities.

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[10] Secretary-General's bulletins ST/SGB/2019/8 and ST/SGB/2003/13.

[11] For details on the entities cooperating with United Nations, please refer to the United Nations Protocol on Allegations of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Involving Implementing Partners

[12] As a minimum, the organizations supported by the Fund that are facing credible SEA allegations should take the following steps:
a) Ensure the that appropriate actions are taken regarding staff of the organization involved in perpetrating SEA, including termination of the staff contract and/or referral for criminal accountability, if appropriate;
b) Withhold further cash and/or supply transfers to the organization, if appropriate;
c) Share information on the allegation with relevant authorities as appropriate, upon a protection risk assessment and in line with informed consent;
d) Immediate referral of the victim to safe and confidential victim assistance, including legal assistance, where available, based on their needs and consent.

143. The Fund further adheres to the zero-tolerance policy towards child safeguarding violations, which is defined as conduct by the employee(s) or associated staff and volunteers of the organization supported by the Fund that actually or likely causes significant harm to a child,[13] including any kind of physical, emotional or sexual abuse, neglect or exploitation.

IX. REFUND OF GRANTS

144. In addition to the cases of mismanagement, fraud or misuse of funding indicated above, the Fund's Secretariat or the Board of Trustees may request organizations for a total or partial refund of a grant when:

a. Organization did not fully implement the project
b. Organization spent the grant on expenditures other than those declared in the approved revised budget
c. Organization failed to comply with its reporting obligations
d. Organization subject to an on-site visit receiving a negative evaluation
e. Any other reason that may justify such refund according to the Fund's Guidelines and/or which contravenes the aims and objectives of the United Nations
f. Additionally, unspent amounts equal to or above USD 150 must be refunded by the organization

145. If the organization does not refund the grant within the time limit indicated by the Fund's Secretariat, no new application from the organization concerned will be accepted and its United Nations Partner Portal (UNPP) certification will be cancelled.

X. RESTRICTIVE AND RETALIATORY MEASURES

146. The Fund is able to fulfil its mandate to channel direct assistance to torture survivors when there is a safe and enabling environment for civil society organizations to operate. Restrictive or retaliatory measures (including reprisals due to collaboration with the United Nations[14]) may limit or even prevent grantees to deliver assistance to torture survivors.

147. To fulfil its mandate, the Fund has set a priority to address restrictive and/or retaliatory measures, including reprisals, against organizations, their officials and/or beneficiaries, which prevent them from receiving and/or fully providing assistance to torture

[13] For the purposes of the present Guidelines, a child means every human being below the age of eighteen years. Sexual activity with any person less than 18 years of age, regardless of any laws relating to consent or age of majority, shall constitute the sexual exploitation and abuse of such person. Mistaken belief in the age of a child shall not constitute a defence under these Guidelines.

[14] Based on Human Rights Council resolutions 12/2, 24/24 and 36/21, acts of intimidation and reprisal are defined as: All acts of intimidation or reprisal against those who:
(a) Seek to cooperate or have cooperated with the United Nations, its representatives and mechanisms in the field of human rights, or who have provided testimony or information to them;
(b) Avail or have availed themselves of procedures established under the auspices of the United Nations for the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and all those who have provided legal or other assistance to them for this purpose;
(c) Submit or have submitted communications under procedures established by human rights instruments, and all those who have provided legal or other assistance to them for this purpose;
(d) Are relatives of victims of human rights violations or of those who have provided legal or other assistance to victims.

survivors. Organizations can submit allegations of intimidation and reprisals as a consequence of project implementation supported by the Fund. The organization may provide consent to inform the Fund's Board of Trustees and relevant United Nations human rights mechanisms as appropriate, on retaliatory measures including reprisals. Organizations requiring additional support to continue to ensure service-delivery to torture survivors in such contexts may exceptionally submit an emergency grant application (see Emergency Grants section).

XI. USE OF THE FUND'S LOGO AND TITLE

148. As a general rule, the Fund's logo or title should not be used in any publication or material produced by grantees.

149. Should organizations wish to mention the Fund's support or use the Fund's logo during the period of project implementation, they shall contact the Fund's Secretariat for written permission and instructions on how to proceed.

150. Organizations supported by the Fund must not use the United Nations or the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights logo for any purpose.

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