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On the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture we call once again to stop torture in all its form and to respond the plight of all those that have been exposed to this terrible and inhumane practice, and of their families and loved ones. Our thoughts also go to all those who engage tirelessly in combatting torture, raising awareness and caring for its victims, sometimes putting their own safety and lives at risk. Listening to the victims of torture makes us understand better how to fight it.

Torture is unequivocally prohibited under international law, under all circumstances and without exceptions. Still the fight to eradicate it is far from won. The EU's firm commitment to fight torture and ill-treatment wherever it occurs is enshrined in the Charter of Fundamental Rights and reconfirmed and outlined in the EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy of 2015-2019. To achieve this objective, the EU is actively building coalitions with partners and civil society. Only Last December we marked Human Rights Day organizing the 2016 EU-NGO Human Rights Forum with a focus on preventing, prohibiting, and redressing torture globally.

Fighting torture is not only about raising awareness, it is about effective action. The EU continues to work towards promoting victims' right to rehabilitation and to other means of redress; introducing safeguards at all stages of deprivation of freedom, opening up all places where people are detained for monitoring; investigating allegations of torture effectively and independently and bringing perpetrators to justice. The European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) is a leading source of funding for rehabilitation of victims and the prevention of torture worldwide. In 2017, it will finance several new civil society projects devoted to the fight against torture and ill-treatment for an overall amount of EUR 13.5 million.

Today, we also want to express the EU support for the work done by the UN Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture, by the UN Special Rapporteur and the Council of Europe's Committee for the Prevention of Torture and urge partners to contribute to their work. The EU promotes the objective of the Convention against Torture Initiative to achieve global ratification and implementation of the UN Convention against torture by 2024, aiming at the full eradication of torture.

It's our conviction that respect for fundamental freedoms and rights, promotion of inclusive societies and support to open and vibrant civil societies is the only way to guarantee sustainable stability and security. The EU will continue to work together with our international and regional partners to make torture a thing of the past and to be at the forefront of the global and united efforts to eradicate torture.