DOCUMENTING TORTURE WITH THE
EYEWITNESS TO ATROCITIES APP

To hold a perpetrator accountable, a complete investigation seeks to gather evidence showing:

- **What** crime was committed?
- **How** was the crime committed?
- **Where** was the crime committed?
- **When** was the crime committed?
- **Against whom** was the crime committed?
- **By whom** was the crime committed?
- **Why** was the crime committed?

Using the eyeWitness to Atrocities app to document torture can help you answer some of these questions and increase the reliability of your footage. Below are examples of photos, videos, and audio recordings that can help you collect relevant information for your investigation into torture allegations, if possible and security permits.

WHAT?

Anything that can help establish the infliction of severe pain or suffering upon the victim and its circumstances

If you are at the scene during the alleged event:

- ☐ Conditions of detention or custody (bedding, ventilation, lighting, heating, hygiene, food, medical care…)
- ☐ Physical torture (beatings, burns, cuts, electric shocks, suffocation, drowning, food deprivation…)
- ☐ Psychological torture (threats, intimidation, humiliation, simulated executions, prolonged isolation, sleep deprivation, sensory deprivation…)
- ☐ Videos showing length of torture
- ☐ Multiple videos showing repetition of torture
- ☐ Victim's reaction (screams, cries, shakings, mutism, prostrated posture…)

If you are NOT at the scene during the alleged event:

- ☐ Physical injuries (size, shape, type) as soon as possible and at recurring intervals
- ☐ Scars
- ☐ Mapping of physical injuries and scars on a sketch

HOW?

Anything that can help establish the means used by the perpetrator

- ☐ Conditions of detention or custody (bedding, ventilation, lighting, heating, hygiene, food, medical care…)
- ☐ Tools and instruments (type, make, model, serial numbers…)
- ☐ Restraints (handcuffs, rope, gags…)
- ☐ Weapons
- ☐ Methods (suffocation, drowning, suspension, beatings…)
- ☐ Physical injuries (size, shape, type) as soon as possible and at recurring intervals
- ☐ Scars
- ☐ Physical evidence at the scene (body fluids, blood stains, hair, papers, records…)

WHERE?*

Anything that can help establish the location of the crime

- ☐ Type of premises (detention centre, warehouse, vehicle…)
- ☐ Features of the premises (walls, flooring, pipes, sounds, writings…)
- ☐ Mapping of the premises (exterior and interior) on a sketch showing floors, rooms, doors, windows, furniture…
- ☐ Landmarks, signs, and sounds in the area
- ☐ Physical evidence at the scene (papers, records…)

WHEN?*

Anything that can help establish the date and time of the crime

- ☐ Patterns (perpetrators, victims, locations, timeframe…)
- ☐ Physical evidence at the scene (papers, records…)

AGAINST WHOM?

Anything that can help establish the identity of the victim

- ☐ Number of victims
- ☐ Victim's name and relatives' names (if relevant and security permits)
- ☐ Contact details
- ☐ Appearance (height, weight, scars, tattoos, birthmarks…)
- ☐ Victim's body
- ☐ Victim's face

BY WHOM?

Anything that can help establish the identity of the perpetrator and the chain of command

- ☐ Number of perpetrators/guards at and around the scene
- ☐ Perpetrators' and guards' names (if known)
- ☐ Voice (language, accent, tone…)
- ☐ Appearance (face, height, weight, scars, tattoos, birthmarks…)
- ☐ Clothing (uniform, insignias, badges, plain clothes…)
- ☐ Vehicles (make, model, number plate, colour…)
- ☐ Weapons (make, model, serial number…)
- ☐ Scars
- ☐ Routine and work shifts
- ☐ Discussions and orders given (in person, through the radio…)

WHY?

Anything that can help establish the intent of the perpetrator

- ☐ Reasons given for arrest and detention or custody (if any)
- ☐ Discussions and orders given (in person, through the radio…)
- ☐ Papers, records, or documents present at the scene
- ☐ Patterns (perpetrators, victims, locations, timeframe…)

*The eyeWitness to Atrocities app helps you gather important metadata to show where and when the footage was captured. Nonetheless, it may be helpful to collect additional information (street name, house number, landmarks…) to corroborate the metadata in case there is no GPS reading.

Technical tips

Some tips to keep in mind when using the eyeWitness to Atrocities app to document:

Safety first! Only film if it is safe to do so

The app automatically records the date, time, and location of the footage. Turn on location services for the app to record the location information

Hold your phone sideways to capture a wider angle and obtain a better image

Hold your phone with both hands and press your elbows against your body to stabilise the shot

Videos are preferable to provide an overview of what is happening/has happened and show movement on the scene. Move the camera slowly and try to stop at different angles for at least 10 seconds while still filming

Photos are better for capturing close-up details. When looking at injuries, photos are less invasive and allow for better focus and framing

For details, take photos at a 90-degree angle and remember to use a measuring tape, ruler, or other means (bottle with litre indication, pen…) to show the scale on the photo

Make sure you have obtained the informed consent of the victim when photographing injuries, scars, or other identifying features as well as when recording their identity

Other evidence

Capturing photos and videos with the eyeWitness to Atrocities app will bring you one step closer to bringing perpetrators to justice. Other types of evidence should be gathered independently, without the eyeWitness to Atrocities app. This can include:

- Victims' statements
- Victims' identification, medical records and other medical information
- Relatives' statements
- Witness statements
- Perpetrators' statements
- Physical evidence
- Open-source information
- Satellite imagery