



Project Overview

Enhancing Human Rights
Protections in the Security
Sector in the Asia Pacific
Project

This document was authored in 2015 by Professor Danielle Celermajer, University of Sydney for the project Enhancing Human Rights Protections in the Security Sector in the Asia Pacific. This project was run in partnership with the Centre for the Study of Human Rights at the University of Colombo and the Kathmandu School of Law. It may not be produced, in whole or part, without the explicit permission of the author.

sydney.edu.au/arts/research/ehrp

CONTENTS

- 02** Project overview
- 03** Why this project?
- 04** How we designed the project
- 05** How we conducted our research
- 06** What did we find?
- 09** What did our research imply for our action?
- 10** How are we working with the Human Rights Protection Facilitators?
- 11** What have the Human Rights Protections Facilitators done?
- 12** Learning from the project
- 13** What does the project mean for prevention work in the future?
- 15** Further publications





PROJECT OVERVIEW

Enhancing Human Rights Protections in the Security Sector in the Asia Pacific (EHRP) is a three-year project aiming to discover and test new and effective strategies for preventing torture in police and military contexts.

The project has been a cooperative enterprise between the University of Sydney, the Kathmandu School of Law and the Centre for the Study of Human Rights at the University of Colombo. Our particular approach has been to see how we can assist in building the capacity of personnel within security organisations to effectively prevent and resist violations. To develop and test this new approach, we have focused on two countries in post conflict transitional periods - Sri Lanka and Nepal - and worked in collaboration with the relevant security organisations – (the Nepal Police and Armed Police Force in Nepal and the Sri Lanka Police and Sri Lankan Armed Forces). Through this cooperation, we have been trying to better understand the types of factors that create risks of violations such as torture occurring in these organisations. We are also trying to work out what types of structures and practices within these organisations would be effective in inhibiting such violations and finally how, realistically, such measures might be introduced and sustained.

WHY THIS PROJECT?

Throughout the world, ensuring that police and military organisations protect human rights at the same time as safeguarding security and law and order has proved to be no simple task.

Bringing these two objectives together is only made more difficult in contexts where there is a history of armed conflict, low levels of economic development, deep social division and inequality and weak institutions.

Amongst the range of human rights violations committed by security forces¹, torture represents one of the most grave. Apart from its effect on victims and their families, its use has the effect of undermining communities' trust, increasing their fear, and reducing their willingness to cooperate with security agencies. Torture is ultimately bad for everyone. It damages the rule of law, weakens the prospects for economic development and further divides societies. And yet it has been notoriously difficult to eradicate.

Over the last thirty years, since the first international campaign against torture, there have been many efforts to stem its use by state actors. One of the most prevalent strategies has been to encourage states to sign up to international human rights conventions and then to pass domestic criminal legislation. Other actors have tried to stop torture by setting up bodies to monitor places of detention. The other principal strategy – adopted primarily by civil society organisations – has been 'naming and shaming'. This involves exposing instances where state actors have used, condoned or failed to prevent torture and then trying to get publics and other states to press governments to punish perpetrators, compensate victims and put in place prevention measures.

Despite these extensive efforts, the evidence of success is at best mixed. Many countries have signed on to international conventions and a fair few of them have passed domestic laws criminalising torture. And yet, around the world, few countries have wanted to actively pursue criminal prosecutions against their own military and police personnel.

Monitoring, the second strategy, may be effective in improving the conditions of places of detention, and in ensuring that there is oversight of what would otherwise occur in secret. But it may also have the perverse effect of creating incentives for people to use 'clean' forms of violence that are not easily detected. Naming and shaming seems to work in only some types of situations. Worse still, the hardest cases – those occurring in less developed states with high levels of civil conflict and weak institutions – are the ones where these strategies appear to have had the least impact. In many countries in the Asia Pacific – our region – torture by security and law enforcement personnel remains endemic, systematic and entrenched. Political and legal systems may turn a blind eye to it. Large parts of civil society may be complacent about it. The poor, the poorly connected and the marginalised remain vulnerable and in fear.

This state of affairs led us to want to try something new – to try to work out alternative and possibly more effective ways of preventing this type of violence and improve the ability of members of the security sector to both respect human rights at the same time as maintaining security.

One of the main limitations of existing international human rights prevention models is that they have frequently been developed without close attention to the concrete contexts in which they are then applied. Too often, people assume that generic models can simply be applied to vastly different contexts by making minor adjustments. But why assume that what causes or sustains torture in one context will be the same as what causes and sustains it in a very different one? And why think that the strategies that will work in one place will work in another, where the institutional structures, cultural norms and social and political dynamics are again very different? In this project, we insisted that before designing and implementing a new intervention, we first had to conduct detailed empirical research that would help us to understand the nature of the problem in the places where we were trying to address it as well as the resources, strengths, opportunities and constraints for developing prevention strategies.

¹ For shorthand, throughout this report, we refer to both the police and military as belonging to the security sector. We are however conscious that there are important differences between them and have maintained a distinction throughout our research and project implementation.

HOW WE DESIGNED THE PROJECT

Before designing our intervention, we needed to develop a well-grounded understanding of the situation in which we were working.

When you start a project, you already have some firm ideas about what the problem is and how you are going to tackle it. For example, you believe that you know that torture is occurring in a particular place or organisation and why it is occurring. You are also likely to have a theory about what you can do to stop it. These prior understandings about causes and solutions, whether explicit or not, form what we call a 'Theory of Change'. Working on the basis of such a prior understandings and theories is unproblematic in cases where your understanding of the issue is based on sound research about the problem. It is also unproblematic where there is research and evaluation that indicates that the types of strategies you have in mind are effective in bringing about change. But in the human rights field, this is not always the case. Moreover, when we move into particular contexts, our existing knowledge of the problem, our understanding about why it is occurring and the solutions we have in mind may be only partially correct. This is especially likely to be the case when dealing with complex problems that are linked with a much broader set of political, social, economic and cultural factors.

What this means is that to work out what is the case and what might be effective in bringing about change in this context, we need to partially suspend the idea that we already know the answers and make the space to discover. Certainly knowledge developed in other contexts has a role to play in strengthening human rights. It will be most helpful, however, when it is combined with a deep appreciation of the range of factors and of the actors in the specific context where the work is to take place.

When we commenced the EHRP, we had a theory that one of the reasons that existing approaches to human rights protection in the security sector had had a limited

impact was that they did not pay enough attention to the 'situational factors' that underlie institutional violence. By 'situational factors' we mean those characteristics of the situations within which individuals make judgments and take actions. These include, among other things: the physical space, the resources they have available, the dynamics of obedience and conformity, the cultural norms, the content and style of communication and the types of language used to describe different people and different acts, the laws and the political environment.

A large body of research tells us that what determines how an individual acts – whether he or she respects or violates human rights – is only partially shaped by his or her individual disposition, knowledge or attitudes. If placed in particular types of situations – what we might call 'atrocities producing situations' – most individuals are likely to commit violent acts that they would otherwise consider aberrant. In other words, the principal causes of violence do not simply lie within individuals, but are often located at the level of the situations in which individuals find themselves. This implies that if you want to stop human rights violations, it will not be sufficient to only work to change individuals (through training them in human rights law for example, or threatening them with punishment). You also need to change the situational factors.

HOW WE CONDUCTED OUR RESEARCH

To conduct the research, we established two teams on the ground – in Sri Lanka and in Nepal – and commissioned a group of scholars and practitioners with expertise in the questions we wanted to ask.

We asked the group of commissioned experts to consider the following questions and to tell us what the literature from their respective fields (political science, social psychology, criminology, sociology and international law) had to say about them:

- What are the organisational, cultural, political, psychological, legal or other factors that cause, support or provide a permissive environment for torture to occur?
- What types of prevention strategies have been tried in the past? What worked and what did not work and why?
- What types of strategies are available to effect cultural/ situational/ organisational/ attitudinal/ change?
- What strategies are best suited and feasible for addressing risks of human rights violations in the security organisations with whom we are working?

As the specific objective of our project was to build the capacity of law enforcement and security personnel to address and prevent torture, and training has traditionally been the principal form of capacity building, we also conducted extensive research on human rights training and education for these target groups. In our initial project design, we had anticipated that our intervention would be a modified form of training, so we wanted to have a clear idea of what was out there and what its impact had been. In this regard, we collected training resources developed by international organisations, NGOs and governments throughout the world, interviewed trainers and sent out a self-report survey to police and militaries to find out about the type of training that they conducted.

Our in-country teams conducted empirical research to provide answers to our key research questions in the particular contexts of the organisations with whom and countries in which we were working. They examined the laws and institutional frameworks and practices in Nepal and Sri Lanka regulating human rights in the security sector, examined the types of prevention work that had

been conducted thus far, and studied the types of human rights training that had been developed and conducted with security personnel.

Perhaps most importantly, they conducted primary qualitative research by interviewing members of civil society organisations, government representatives, legal and medical personnel and representatives of security sector organisations. They also conducted observations in police stations. Again, our ability to conduct this research, specifically with security personnel, was dependent on the active cooperation of the security forces.

Here we sought to find out answers to the questions listed above, but also to questions focusing on the context:

- What do people outside security organisations (in civil society, government departments and so on) think are the main impediments to the police or military fully respecting human rights?
- What do security sector personnel think about human rights?
- What are the challenges that they see for themselves in protecting human rights?
- What do the different stakeholders think an ideal military officer or police person would be like? What should the organisation ideally be like?
- What is the day-to-day experience of security sector personnel? What do they care about and what concerns them? Who are their role models?
- What is important to security personnel in terms of their own goals and values?

In other words, our principal interest was not in finding out about human rights violations that had occurred in the past, but in discovering the factors that create risks for such violations occurring and what might inhibit them in the future. We hoped that this unique body of research would help us to gain a closer understanding of the problem and of the groups with whom we would be working. The latter is critical, because no matter how excellent an intervention is in the abstract, unless it is attuned to the realities of the people who will be asked to take it up, it may end up being useless.

WHAT DID WE FIND?

The body of our research is too vast and varied to comprehensively summarise here and to do so would risk oversimplifying our findings and creating confusion. We present the main findings in the Issues Papers series and Review of Human Rights Training. For the purposes of this report, we note some of the most important conclusions that we can draw from our research.

(i) There is no single explanation for torture and we should resist monolithic statements such as 'torture is used to obtain confessions'. In developing countries, those emerging from periods of intense upheaval and/or armed conflict, and in contexts with poorly developed infrastructure and institutions, social and economic factors are likely to be particularly important in understanding torture. Issues such as poverty and entrenched social hierarchies have often been insufficiently included in theories of why torture occurs and not taken into account in prevention strategies.

(ii) The factors that are relevant in understanding why torture occurs operate at different levels. There are individual level factors (e.g. substance abuse); organisational factors (e.g. lack of incentive structures for protecting human rights, cultures of violence within organisations); community level factors (e.g. pressure to quickly identify a culprit); cultural factors (e.g. general acceptance of torture particularly against certain types of people); legal factors (e.g. a corrupt or inefficient criminal justice system); political factors (e.g. political interference) and ideological factors (e.g. discourses about terrorism). All of these levels are relevant and they interact with each other² This systemic or ecological model is illustrated in Figure 1.



Figure 1: A systemic model of causal factors

²For further detail, see *Issues Paper 2: Exploring the Root Causes of Torture*.

(iii) The most effective way to prevent torture would be to address the factors at every level in a coordinated manner. Given that it is likely to be beyond the scope of any single project to bring about this type of ‘multi-systemic’ change, each project should locate its own intervention within a broader systemic analysis and, where possible, coordinate with other actors working at other levels.

(iv) If we focus in on the organisational level, we see that there are a number of ways that security organisations can create risks for torture occurring or can inhibit its occurrence. These can be divided into: (a) organisational processes, which create opportunities for torture to occur; (b) organisational structures, which create incentives or disincentives for personnel to respect or violate human

rights; and, (c) organisational cultures, which establish the norms that shape what personnel take to be acceptable forms of belief and action. Together, these different dimensions of organisations can legitimate, authorise, permit, create opportunities for, incentivise, motivate and normalise torture. The operation of these factors are illustrated in *Figure 2*.



Figure 2: Causal or risk factors for torture.

³ For further detail, see *Issues Paper 5: Organisational and Cultural Change*.

(v) Bringing about organisational change is a complex business and requires careful planning and sensitivity to the existing dynamics and structures of the organisation. To effect deep and sustainable change, it is particularly important to address the organisational paradigm, or the basic and usually implicit assumptions about 'how we do things around here', 'who we are' and 'who is against us'. Organisational change cannot occur without buy-in from the inside, including that of the leadership and the rank and file. To achieve this, it is important for personnel throughout the organisation to see how the changes will benefit them and for those changes to be introduced in a way that can be assimilated by the organisation and taken up by personnel. Finally, changes need to take place at a number of levels of an organisation (recruitment practices, standard operating procedures, resources, training, leadership styles, reward and punishment procedures, promotions, symbols etc.) so that they will reinforce each other.⁴

(vi) Most human rights training for security personnel has comprised the transmission of information about human rights laws. The prevalence of lecture style delivery, combined with fairly generic content that is adjusted for context by adding local laws or examples often leaves participants disengaged and results in a failure to shift their attitudes and behaviours. Moreover, human rights training is often relegated to a peripheral and low status space in the overall social geography of the organisation. It is not sufficiently integrated either with the operational training of personnel or with other dimensions of the organization such as incentive structures and on the job training. As such, the messages of human rights training are frequently marginalised and at worst undermined.⁵



⁴ For further detail, see *Issues Paper 2: Exploring the Root Causes of Torture*, and *Issues Paper 5: Organisational and Cultural Change*.

⁵ For further detail see *International Review: Current Approaches to Human Rights Training in the Law Enforcement and Security Sectors*.

WHAT DID OUR RESEARCH IMPLY FOR OUR ACTION?

The next and most difficult step of the project was to translate this body of research into an intervention. In doing so, we wanted to draw on what we had found, but we also needed to work within our scope conditions.

In concrete terms, this meant that we were limited to working at the level of the security organisations themselves. Even though we had found that the causes for torture were located at a number of other levels - within the criminal justice system, in general societal attitudes and at the political level – the practicalities of this project meant that affecting substantive change at these levels was beyond its reach. This was undoubtedly a serious limitation because, as stated above, the most effective intervention would be one that operated at different levels of the system in a coordinated manner. As external actors we also had to respect the priorities and requirements of the organisations with which we were working. As noted earlier, one of the most important aspects of this project was building relationships between the project partners and the security organisations with whom we were working to develop an environment of cooperation and trust. Once we understood that one of the most important paths to strengthening human rights in the long term is to bring about changes to the structures, processes and cultures of security organisations themselves, we also appreciated that supporting their ownership of and commitment to this process was critical to long term success.

Our research also indicated, importantly, that conventional ‘training’ alone would not be an appropriate form for our intervention. Recall, we had envisaged that our project would comprise a modified form of training that would take into account the importance of situational factors. Examining the scope of the training model, we concluded that however much it was modified, training alone would not be an adequate container for working on the situational factors that we had found to be so central in bringing about and sustaining torture. Where we could adapt the training idea, however, was in designing workshops and resources that would build the capacity of security personnel to first identify and then work on situational factors.

At the same time, we recognised that training that was designed and delivered in a manner that engaged with the contextual realities within which security personnel operate, and provided them with practical guidance as to how they could apply human rights principles in their own working situations, could contribute to strengthening human rights protection in security organisations.

With this in mind, we established our Theory of change.

1. Torture is the outcome of the operation of a system that comprises various levels and the components and dynamic of this system can be shifted through strategic intervention.
2. Certain identified actors within the system can intervene effectively and strategically to bring about those shifts.
3. They can do so most effectively if they have certain knowledge, attitudes, skills, resources and leadership capacities.
4. The project team can best facilitate the development of these capacities by providing the identified actors within the organisations with structure and resources.

In other words, we concluded that our actual intervention should consist of a set of processes that would support these ‘identified actors’ on the inside to intervene strategically. We called them Human Rights Protection Facilitators (HRPFs).

The ‘strategic interventions’ were ones that would target particular and local organisational processes, structures, and cultures that create risks of, or inhibit torture. In order to identify specific and relevant risks or inhibiting factors within their immediate work environment, the HRPFs conducted needs analyses, building on the general research already conducted by the project team but now identifying the risks, inhibiting factors, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats at the local level. This allowed them to then develop targeted strategic projects designed to reduce the risk factors and/or strengthen the inhibitors of torture within the area in which they were working.

It was at this point that the cooperation with the security organisations became most critical to the success of the project. It was the Nepal Police and Armed Police Force and the Sri Lankan Police and Armed Forces who had to identify the personnel who would act as HRPFs, to support the projects they proposed to undertake, and those personnel themselves who had to dedicate their time and energy in leading the implementation process.

HOW ARE WE WORKING WITH THE HUMAN RIGHTS PROTECTION FACILITATORS?

The next step in the project was to assist the HRPFs to develop the skills, attitudes and capacities that they would require in order to ‘intervene strategically.’ To do so, we ran a series of workshops and developed a number of resources to support them to (a) identify the problem areas they would work on; (b) design a well-targeted and feasible project; and (c) carry out that project.

Their first task was to decide upon the specific aspect of their work environment on which they would focus their project. For example, it might be that poor relationships with the community, or high levels of stress amongst personnel, combined with long working hours and poor conditions, badly designed reward and punishments systems and inadequate training in or resources to conduct investigations created risks of personnel using torture. To find out what the issues and the risks were, they were asked to return to their workplaces and, with the support of the project team, conduct a needs analysis with their colleagues and, if relevant, with members of the community. By conducting the needs analysis themselves in collaboration with other stakeholders, they would not only identify a specific issue but also enrol others in the process.

Once they had specified the focus area, they then had to design a project that would address that issue. The main work for the project team at this stage was to assist the HRPFs to design actions that were oriented to producing SMART results (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-bound). We also encouraged the HRPFs to focus on results first and only then to work out the actions they needed to take in order to produce those results. Once they had decided upon their actions, they then had to develop an action schedule, a budget, and importantly think through how to enrol their colleagues as allies in the changes they wished to bring about as well as how they would deal with possible resistances. Our capacity building with them thus involved a combination of:

- Strengthening their commitment to and confidence in leading initiatives for protecting human rights in their organisations;
- Developing the skills to analyse the situational factors that create risks of torture;
- Developing the specific set of skills required to design and implement a project to improve their work environment;
- Developing the communication and advocacy skills to advocate for human rights within their organisations.

Details of the processes that we followed and resources we used are described in *Issue Paper 6: From Structural Analysis to Structural Intervention* and the manual, *Preventing Human Rights Violations: A How-To Guide to Delivering A Prevention Program*.

WHAT HAVE THE HUMAN RIGHTS PROTECTIONS FACILITATORS DONE?

Inviting the HRPFs to be central actors in this novel approach to protecting and promoting human rights was both challenging and exciting.

Challenging because it demanded that the HRPFs develop and apply a new set of skills and take on board a new approach at the same time as carrying out their normal duties. Exciting because it placed them in the lead and affirmed that they could be responsible for improving their organisations in ways that would make them more honourable and effective and that would make a real contribution to the human rights situation in their countries. For this reason, high-level organisational support for their effort remains very important.

The projects that they actually designed varied according to their organisations and their ranks and roles within the organisation. Here we describe just a few.

- A number of the projects started from the observation that the processes for rewarding and punishing behaviour at the local level were not sufficiently oriented around human rights standards and as such did not create the right incentive structure. Accordingly, they developed projects to put in place systems that would explicitly and directly reward personnel who carried out their jobs in a manner that respected human rights and who actively promoted human rights, and to punish those who had committed or been complicit in violations.
- Along similar lines, other HRPFs observed that within their workplaces, there were a number of factors that led to frustration amongst personnel, which in turn created risks that they would act violently. Their projects thus involved actions that would improve workplace cultures by, for example, improving transparency, reducing stress levels and ensuring the respectful treatment of junior personnel.
- HRPFs who worked more directly with interrogation designed and undertook actions that would build the capacity of, and encourage more personnel to use methods of interviewing that precluded the use of force and torture but were effective in obtaining information (for example the PEACE Model).
- A number of the HRPFs who worked in the training sections of their organisations identified a range of weaknesses in the existing trainings. Specifically, they noted that training that consists of the transmission of information about laws through lectures is relatively ineffective in altering attitudes or conveying the importance of respecting and promoting human rights. They also observed that the focus on theory within much of the human rights training did not adequately equip trainees with the skills needed to apply human rights in the actual situations they were likely to face.
- These HRPFs undertook a number of actions to develop the capacities of trainers to employ pedagogic methods and develop resource materials that will be accessible and effective for their target groups.
- Some of the HRPFs specifically focused on gender issues and the ways in which their organisations, which had traditionally been led and designed by men, created risks for women. Women crossing borders or women coming into police stations to lodge complaints, for example, were at risk of degrading treatment and even sexual torture. They thus chose actions designed to ensure that processes for detaining or searching suspects or processing women in police stations ensured that women were protected from violence, harassment or intimidation and that personnel were sensitised to the specific risks for women.
- As well as being a member of the armed force, one HRPF was also the Vice Principal of a secondary school. He observed that attitudes to the acceptability of violence often emerge and are reinforced in childhood experiences of corporal punishment. He therefore chose to conduct a workshop with teachers in which he challenged them to rethink ways of achieving discipline and order without resorting to violence.

LEARNING FROM THE PROJECT

The value of an experimental project of this type lies only in part in the direct work that it does to strengthen human rights protections in the organisations where it is working and within the life of the project. It also lies in how well we reflect upon and disseminate what we discover and learn and how these ideas and approaches are taken up in the long-term.

Indeed, viewed against the intractability of the problem of ensuring the protection and promotion of human rights within the context of law enforcement and security and the complex contexts in which violations occur, any project with an official duration of a mere three years is unlikely to show immediate results. We have therefore thought of the success of our project in terms of three types of positive outcomes.

The first concerns our research and research model. The research that we have conducted on the root causes of torture and the research methodology we adopted, combining different disciplinary perspectives and

including qualitative empirical research at the sites of the intervention, can provide others both with knowledge about the causes of torture and ideas about how to research torture in their own contexts. The second concerns the impact that the project has on personnel within our Associate organisations in Nepal and Sri Lanka. A positive outcome would be the development of sustainable skills and ideas that they can continue to draw on to improve the respect for human rights in their own contexts. Third, the project is intended to stimulate innovative and ‘out of the box’ thinking and robust debate amongst scholars, NGOs and other organisations working in the area of the prevention of human rights violations in a range of contexts. To fully exploit the project for the lessons it potentially provides, different types of evaluations of different aspects of the project are being undertaken. These are intended to help us to understand how the distinct components of the project worked. They will also point to where they might be revised in the future for better results. In particular, we are evaluating:

- Our research methods and findings;
- The translation of our research into a Theory of Change and intervention design;
- The effectiveness of our capacity building activities with the HRPFs;
- How well the HRPF projects went in actually addressing risk factors for torture in their organisations.

For more on evaluation, see *Issues Paper 8: Measuring Change: Evaluating a Torture Prevention Project*.



WHAT DOES THE PROJECT MEAN FOR PREVENTION WORK IN THE FUTURE?

We would certainly not claim that this project has identified a failsafe method for preventing torture. It does, however, suggest some new possibilities for prevention work in the field of human rights. By seeking to identify and then directly address structural or systemic root causes of a human rights violation like torture, our model provides ideas for the development of deep and sustainable strategies aimed at combatting this and other serious human rights violations.

Beyond the ideas it puts forward for working at the level of security organisations themselves, the research we have conducted confirms that human rights prevention work will be best served where it encompasses a range of approaches. Indeed, the multi-systemic model of problem analysis we have adopted indicates that strategies need to be developed at all levels of the system where factors that potentially cause, sustain or permit violations operate. This should include approaches that work on strengthening laws and legal institutions; those that press for political reform; those that seek broad cultural change in favour of human rights; and those that conduct monitoring. The basic model proposed here, which combines root cause research and analysis with the design of a systemic intervention, not only allows for, but also actively encourages interventions at a number of levels. Indeed a key aim of disseminating the findings of our work is to help establish coordination and collaboration between organisations and interventions.

Meanwhile a critical lesson of this project that applies to any of these strategies for preventing human rights violations is that they will be most effective where they are developed on the basis of sound, multidisciplinary research conducted at the sites of intervention. Torture may seem like a universal phenomenon, but it is always

located and embedded in particular contexts with their own political, cultural, social and economic dimensions. Recognising and addressing context specificity will always lead to better outcomes than will dropping down generic solutions. We therefore hope that our research will be helpful in supporting other existing projects and potentially identifying others for the future.

Conducting a collaborative project such as this is a challenging endeavour for both human rights advocates and security organisations. For the former, there is always the fear that we will be used to provide a cloak of legitimacy for organisations that are not in truth committed to protecting human rights and preventing torture. Meanwhile, for the latter, it takes a great deal of trust and something of a leap of faith to allow outsiders – especially those who may be quite critical – into the organisation and engage with them in manner that is open and not defensive.

In attempting to manage this tension we have made a number of important findings that we believe others should bear in mind.

- First, there is no reason to assume that security organisations are monolithic and that no one within those organisations has a commitment to transformation. Indeed, our experience indicates that within security organisations there is significant diversity and the presence of people committed to human rights protection.
- There is also no reason to assume that the human rights sector is monolithic. While human rights advocates may often adopt a fairly harsh, critical line this does not mean that they are universally unsympathetic to the difficulties faced by security organisations. Many human rights actors we spoke with, particularly at the local level, described very good personal relationships with individual members of security organisations. They also expressed a desire to better understand and respond to the challenges faced by these personnel, reflecting that this was a necessary aspect of making human rights truly universal.

- Within security organisations, certainly there needs to be a baseline level of authentic support for change, but this support does not need to be universal. At the same time, ultimately, unless organisations undergo a process of transformation from the inside, efforts from the outside will meet resistance or, perhaps even worse lead to cosmetic changes that provide the appearance of change but thereby only serve to legitimise ongoing abuses.
- Ultimately, unless organisations undergo a process of transformation from the inside, efforts from the outside will meet resistance or, perhaps even worse lead to cosmetic changes that provide the appearance of change but thereby only serve to legitimise ongoing abuses.

At the outset of this report we noted that to date, and despite extensive efforts from a range of actors, efforts to stem torture have had limited impact.

This is particularly true in contexts where norms of violence are deeply entrenched and where systems of governance and accountability are weak. The creation of societies and institutions that truly live up to their human rights obligations is an extremely difficult task. Experience across the world also tells us that this is nowhere more the case than in contexts that have experienced intense social upheaval and conflict, where division and inequality remain deeply entrenched and within institutions charged with maintaining security. There are no easy solutions to be found for preventing violations such as torture and we do not presume to suggest otherwise. The ultimate success of this project will lie in its ability to plant seeds for new ideas and innovative strategies in the human rights field: strategies that attend to the deep and complex systemic factors that hold violations and the actors who commit them in place and impede change. Our principal hope is that others who read about what we have done will be inspired to test our ideas and claims and, in the process, develop approaches that move beyond normative moral claims towards the creation of concrete conditions for the promotion and protection of human rights.



FURTHER PUBLICATIONS

This report forms part of a set of publications about the *Enhancing Human Rights Protections in the Security Sector in the Asia Pacific* project.

These reports include:

- A series of *Issues Papers* describing our research, our approach and our project work in detail;
- A report describing and critically analysing human rights education and training conducted with police and military internationally, *International Review: Current Approaches To Human Rights Training in the Law Enforcement and Security Sectors*; and
- A manual of the systemic approach to human rights violation prevention, *Preventing Human Rights Violations: A How-To Guide on Delivering a Prevention Program*.



