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## PRESS RELEASE

# “Investigating allegations of torture”: Kick-off for regional torture prevention project

*Westcliff Hotel, Johannesburg, 23-24 April 2013*

**GENEVA 18 April 2013.** Torture and ill-treatment is still a widespread problem in most parts of the African continent – and perpetrators often go unpunished. On 23-24 April, representatives of National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) from more than 30 African countries will gather in Johannesburg for a training course on how to investigate suspected cases of torture.

To effectively prevent torture, the institutions in charge of protecting human rights need to have the skills, knowledge and resources to properly investigate and document suspected cases of torture. This is something that the Swiss-based Association for the Prevention of Torture (APT), in partnership with the Network of African National Human Rights Institutions (NANHRI), wants to address through a regional training course on “*Investigating allegations of torture*”. Host for the meeting is the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC).

The Training takes place in the wake of reports on continued acts of torture and other ill treatment in Africa. In South Africa there have been allegations of police brutality in Daveyton, East Rand with the murder of Mido Macia. In addition, the training follows hot on the heels of the 10th Anniversary of the Robben Island Guidelines which adopted the [Johannesburg Declaration](#). One of the conference resolutions focuses on training for NHRIs on aspects related to law enforcement and torture.

This training started in early April with an online distance learning module. The Johannesburg workshop will now bring participants together to further discuss the concept of torture prevention and concrete techniques of investigating allegations of torture.

The training kicks-off a 3-year project to strengthen the role of African NHRIs in the prevention of torture. The joint APT/NANHRI project, “*Reinforcing the role of African National Human Rights Institutions in the prevention of torture*”, focuses on important role that national human rights commissions and ombudspersons can play in protecting the rights of people deprived of their liberty. These institutions are for example often the first – and sometimes the only – direct point of contact for torture victims and are therefore in a key position to investigate allegations of torture and ill-treatment.

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For more information [www.appt.ch/africa](http://www.appt.ch/africa) • [www.nanhri.org](http://www.nanhri.org) or contact:

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