TOOLS OF TORTURE: THE USE OF ELECTRIC SHOCK EQUIPMENT IN DETENTION

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INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL FRAMEWORKS

International level

- UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (UNCAT)
- Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (OPCAT)

Regional level

- African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights - *Banjul Charter*
- Guidelines and Measures for the Prohibition and Prevention of Torture, Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment in Africa - *Robben Island Guidelines*
- Guidelines on the Conditions of Arrest, Police Custody and Pre-Trial Detention in Africa - *Luanda Guidelines*
UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (UNCAT)
Definition:

Article 1
“[A]ny 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 or other person acting in an official capacity. It does not include pain or suffering arising only from, inherent in or incidental to lawful sanctions.”
MONITORING/OVERSIGHT VISIT UNDER THE OPCAT

International Level

UN Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture (SPT)

National Level

1. Specialised Institutions
   e.g. Burkina Faso, Nigeria and Senegal

2. National Human Rights Institutions
   e.g. Mali, Mauritius, Mozambique and Togo
## AFRICAN STATES’ COMMITMENT TO INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL ANTI-TORTURE FRAMEWORKS

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<th>State Party</th>
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<td><strong>UNCAT</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Banjul Charter</strong></td>
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USE OF FORCE

UN Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials (1990)

Proportionate – General Provision 5(a)

Necessary – use of force only when “strictly necessary” and to the “minimum extent necessary”

Minimum – General Provisions 2, 3 and 5(b)

Lawful – General Provision 1

Accountable – General Provision 7, Reporting and Review Procedures (22-24)
ELECTRIC SHOCK EQUIPMENT

Direct contact electric shock

Projectile electric shock
DIRECT CONTACT ELECTRIC SHOCK

Stun guns

Stun batons

Source: Omega Research Foundation
DIRECT CONTACT ELECTRIC SHOCK

Stun shields

Body-worn stun devices

Source: Omega Research Foundation
PROJECTILE ELECTRIC SHOCK WEAPONS

Source: Omega Research Foundation
# PHYSICAL AND MENTAL EFFECTS ASSOCIATED WITH ELECTRIC SHOCK EQUIPMENT

<table>
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<th>Technology type</th>
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| **Body-worn electric shock equipment** (e.g. stun belts) | • Placed around the subject’s body; delivers an electric shock by remote control.  
  • Commonly marketed as a tool | • Incapacitation for up to 15 minutes  
  • Muscular weakness for 30–45 minutes  
  • Immediate and uncontrolled urination or defecation  
  • Welts on the skin that can require up to six months to heal  
  • Heartbeat irregularities and greater risk of cardiac arrhythmia  
  • Seizures  
  • Mental anguish (e.g. anxiety and fear)  
  • Risk of secondary injuries caused by falls |
| **Direct contact electric shock equipment** (e.g. stun shields, stun batons and stun guns) | • Delivers an electric shock when placed directly against the subject.  
  • Does not incapacitate but works through pain compliance.  
  • Provides little tactical | • Application of stun shields to the spine can cause injury  
  • Damage to sensitive areas (e.g. eyes, genitals and open wounds)  
  • Burn marks  
  • Risk of secondary injuries caused by falls  
  • Death |
“[The] deceased [was] brutally assaulted by officials with batons, electric shields and booted feet [who] then failed to provide adequate and timeous medical attention.”

“Allegedly tortured (shocked) with an electric anti-riot shield.”

“Officials used batons, crutches and an electric-shield even when [the inmate was] mechanically restrained.”

“Inmates…repeatedly shocked with electric shields, including to the head and genitals.”
OMEGA RESEARCH FOUNDATION RESOURCES

- Mispo.org – photo database of equipment
- Arms company database
- Visual glossary of equipment