1. INTRODUCTION

DIGNITY’s strategy 2019-2021 establishes the overall strategic framework for the organisation’s activities in the forthcoming years. The strategy is understood as a Version 2.0 of DIGNITY’s strategy 2014-2019.

DIGNITY finalized a substantial process of reform in 2012-2013. The reform was based on a comprehensive analysis of the situation at the time and included a reorganisation of DIGNITY in its entirety. Research and intervention was integrated so as to create more targeted results and a more cost-effective use of the resources. In other words, it aimed at generating greater impact through our work. Simultaneously, the national and the international work was merged in order to create more synergy and learning between the knowledge gathered in Denmark and the knowledge gathered with our Danish and international partners. Today, DIGNITY is organised in three interrelated thematic areas: (1) Prevention of violence in poor urban areas; (2) Prevention of torture in places of detention; and (3) Rehabilitation of victims of torture.

To support the organisation’s three overall themes, new cross-cutting focus areas were likewise established. Finally, the organisation changed its name to DIGNITY thereby creating a sharper profile. In 2015, DIGNITY moved to a new location and its financial foundation was further developed including an emphasis on prioritizing national and international fundraising. DIGNITY Strategy Version 2.0 aims to consolidate and continue the path laid out in Strategy 2014-2019.
2. VISION, MISSION AND VALUES

Our work against torture builds upon respect for human rights, especially the respect for the individual's dignity and integrity, and the universal prohibition against torture. DIGNITY works on the basis of the United Nations (UN) Convention against Torture and its Optional Protocol. At the same time, our work is rooted in the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). DIGNITY focuses particularly on the completion of SDG 3 (health), SDG (equal rights) SDG 11 (sustainable cities and communities), SDG 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions) as well as SDG 17 (strategic partnerships).

DIGNITY’s actions are based upon four values:

CREDIBILITY
We are recognised as credible and professional

COMMITMENT
We are dedicated and seek solutions

COURAGE
We strive to develop and find new ways

COOPERATION
We have appreciative and trusting relations with colleagues, partners and clients
3. WHY IS THE TORTURE CAUSE IMPORTANT?

Torture is one of the most severe types of violations against human beings. Torture is a direct attack on a person’s integrity. The purpose of torture is to reduce an individual’s resilience and destroy their dignity. The primary reason why torture still exists is that it is an effective means to force confessions—true or false—as well as to humiliate, punish and terrorize people so as to practice social control over specific populations and groups.

In DIGNITY, we understand torture as defined in the UN’s Convention against Torture (Article 1):

- **Torture is an intentional act**
- **Torture is the infliction of severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental**
- **Torture is practiced in order to obtain confessions, extract information, terrorise populations or punish victims**
- **Torture is practiced by a public official or other persons acting in an official capacity or with consent from such capacity**

Torture is practiced in more than two thirds of the world, and in many cases, torture is a methodical act. While brutal arrests, ruthless methods of interrogation and other forms of torture and inhumane treatment have been significantly limited in some countries, it is still a daily practice at many police stations and prisons around the world. Torture takes place in societies where widespread corruption and modest respect for the rule of law is present. Moreover, the risk of torture is closely linked to poverty, violence and suppression.

With technological development, new forms of torture have emerged, and torture manifests itself in new contexts. Torture methods and “know how” are vigorously exported across borders. While torture in some countries becomes increasingly more physical and brutal, we also notice an increasing tendency to utilize more refined psychological torture (e.g. threats, mock executions and manipulations). This form of torture is difficult to document, as the methods do not leave a physical trace.

Since 9/11, the support for the absolute ban against torture has been challenged. More broadly, we experience that human rights have come under increased attack. This trend has been strengthened with the influx of refugees and migrants towards both Europe’s and the USA’s borders, combined with recent years’ terror attacks against cities across the world.

This situation imposes new and stricter demands on DIGNITY. It necessitates more documentation and development of knowledge, which can be converted into praxis. Therefore, there is a need to continually test new strategies in order to ensure that DIGNITY creates lasting and verifiable effect of the work it undertakes. Finally, DIGNITY must be a significant presence in the public debate.
DIGNITY’s strategic goal is to create new knowledge and impact, with the aim to improve life for our primary target groups. This takes place in the interplay between direct interventions, capacity building of our partners and norm setting activities nationally and internationally. In these interplays, the knowledge we gain is based on results, experiences and research.

This work can be summarized in our function as a knowledge centre. Here we develop and gather knowledge on torture. This knowledge is disseminated through traditional channels such as scientific and academic publications, by adopting new technological platforms e.g. social media and audio-visual methods as well as through capacity building of our partners.

Capacity building is carried out through development projects. In partnerships with civil society organisations – or in some cases – official institutions, we seek to improve the situation for individual target groups. In capacity building, the activities aim to result in a sustainable change of praxis.

Expert knowledge is utilized for the development of new norms and standards and to further the implementation of existing laws and rules. The interventions here consist of advocacy and professional partnerships with Danish and international organisations such as the UN, the European Council, Ombudsman institutions as well as universities.

Finally, knowledge is put to use in interventions where DIGNITY’s staff work directly with target groups. This takes place in the Danish rehabilitation clinic and via visits in restricted Danish institutions in cooperation with the Ombudsman and the Danish Institute for Human Rights.
5. THEMATIC APPROACH

DIGNITY works with three themes, which mutually encompasses a joint approach to the torture problem.

1. DIGNITY works with the theme Urban Violence: Protection, Prevention, Security. Densely populated urban areas in poor and unstable societies are hot-spots of violence and torture. There is a need to better understand how to prevent violence and torture, how to protect marginal populations in such settings and how to provide everyday security for them.

2. The second theme, ‘Prevention of Torture in Places of Detention’, is also an important theme. It is within the first 72 hours, when persons find themselves in the custody of authorities, that the risk of being subjected to torture is highest. There is a need to ensure that police and prison personnel are adequately educated and have other - and more sophisticated - means of investigation than torture at their disposal. The legislation must also be acceptable and take into account the rights of those deprived of their liberty.

3. The third thematic area is Rehabilitation. Its focus is for people which have been subjected to torture to have the option of receiving treatment, and that they, through that treatment, can be helped back to living a dignified life.

DIGNITY’s three themes are illustrated in the figure displayed below:
6. DIGNITY’S THEMES

THEME 1: URBAN VIOLENCE: PREVENTION, PROTECTION, SECURITY

The theme’s embeddedness in the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals 2030 (the SDGs)

- SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
- SDG 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
- SDG 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

CONTEXT

The global growth in the number of people living in urban areas is one of the 21st century’s biggest challenges. As cities grow, the pressure on social, infrastructural and political systems increase. Therefore, at present there is a lack of access to democratic representation, security and other basic services. These uncertain circumstances affect especially the poorest and most vulnerable population groups and – together with widespread violent practice – form the basis for torture.

Cities without democratic representation, huge socioeconomic inequality, large-scale corruption and dysfunctional judicial systems, arguably have tenuous social cohesion. These cities are often characterised by the fact that violence is a part of everyday life and that poor city dwellers live without being recognized as legal, political and social individuals. As such, there is a need for developing sustainable interventions that can prevent violence - including violence and torture practiced by authorities - in order to ensure security and protect poor city dwellers.

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREAS 2019-21

- Strategic partnerships. DIGNITY will build closer partnerships with organisations and institutions in the countries we work in, in order to identify interventions that prevent torture and violence in densely populated urban areas. Together with these partners, DIGNITY will generate and disseminate knowledge to key actors on effective tools for preventing violence.

- Research-oriented interventions. DIGNITY will gain a larger understanding of the types of violence that are particularly widespread. DIGNITY will expand its research efforts, so it is further integrated in its intervention activities. The research will focus on the underlying dynamics of violence, and on how these influence populations’ standards of living, their everyday security and their rights.

- Advocacy. Finally, DIGNITY will continue developing its role in global advocacy and knowledge dissemination, with a particular focus on three policy areas: The securitization and increased policing of poor urban areas; the relations and connections between traditional notions of torture and types of urban violence related to e.g. ethnicity, identity, gender and generation; and finally we will continue to contribute with knowledge to the global human rights community, which can describe the prevalence of violence and torture in urban areas.
THEME 2: PREVENTION OF TORTURE IN PLACES OF DETENTION

The theme's embeddedness in the UN's Sustainable Development Goals 2030 (the SDGs)

Goal 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

Goal 17: Revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

CONTEXT

The number of detained is steadily rising globally. The risk of being subjected to torture and inhumane treatment is most significant in the first hours following arrest, when one is in police custody, during pre-trial detention and finally during a custodial sentence in a prison. Therefore, the preventive interventions will continue to focus on places where people are detained, including migrant camps, where people are interned by the authorities.

The integration of research and intervention contributes to a deeper understanding of the institutional and societal causes of torture while strengthening DIGNITY’s interventions. Through a continual investment in a solid evidence-based foundation for its work, DIGNITY will continue to set global agendas in the torture prevention area.

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREAS 2019-21

- Support implementation of existing standards for confinement. This will be undertaken inter alia by assisting police, prosecutors, courts of law and prison authorities in translating legislation and international conventions into praxis and by establishing formal procedures to protect detained persons from torture etc.

- Capacity building. This will be realised through long-lasting partnerships with the most significant actors in the prevention area. DIGNITY must document, both medically and legally, that torture takes place, and prevent torture through monitoring of those places where persons are detained. In addition, DIGNITY will support partners’ will and capacity to limit the use of pre-trial detention.

- Develop knowledge on police violence and torture. This will be undertaken with a stronger focus on: establishing and implementing basic legal safeguards in police custody; strengthening courts’ rejection of confessions forced through torture; continued development of professional medical and legal recommendations on e.g. early identification of torture victims in prisons and asylum centres; health consequences of the police’s use of force; and, preventing suicide and deaths during imprisonment.

- Continued development and publication of knowledge on torture methods. This will include understanding how torture can most effectively be documented and prevented in various contexts. The purpose is to protect inmates against use of disciplinary methods, which are known to be harmful to their health e.g. isolation and fixation in secure cells, sleep deprivation and other forms of psychological torture.

- Contribute internationally with formulating new standards within the torture area. This will happen inter alia through the memberships in the UN’s and European Council’s anti-torture committees and through advocacy efforts toward central UN organs on human rights- and development issues. DIGNITY will contribute to formulating new evidence-based standards and methods for public institutions inter alia prosecutors, courts and prison health services. DIGNITY will contribute to ensure that Denmark maintains its strong global position in the fight against torture.
THEME 3: REHABILITATION OF TORTURE AND TRAUMA VICTIMS

The theme’s embeddedness in the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals 2030 (the SDGs)

SDG 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

CONTEXT

Rehabilitation is strategically rooted in the organisation’s vision, through its focus on easing torture survivors’ suffering after torture, and on rebuilding their functional level and dignity. Rehabilitation takes its point of departure in the needs of those who have survived torture or similar traumas. With the widespread use of torture and other forms of political violence, the global need for rehabilitation is immense. However, the political will, the resources and the capacity are far from matching such needs.

Therefore, the rehabilitation theme is focused on working on direct provision of treatment and rehabilitation to torture survivors and gathering knowledge on the consequences of torture. Furthermore, DIGNITY sees the need to develop even more effective methods of treatment. These methods can be utilized at all levels, and DIGNITY can help to capacity build partners and thereby contribute to creating the political will and the necessary structures and funding in order to ensure qualified and timely rehabilitation services.

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREAS 2019-21

Integration of Danish and international rehabilitation. The clinic is one of DIGNITY’s most significant assets and at the same time the foundation on which the international work rests upon. Therefore, there will be a continued focus on how synergy can be created between the clinic and the global work with rehabilitation in the international projects.

Development of knowledge. DIGNITY must develop knowledge on torture survivors and strengthen development, quality and documentation of treatment and interventions in rehabilitation, with an emphasis on cost effectiveness and with its point of departure in a well-established monitoring system, a solid basis for data and focused research of effects.

Strengthen embeddedness in relevant sectors. Rehabilitation must be strongly embedded in the health sector. This is pivotal, both to ensure relevance, influence and funds, but also in order to strengthen the development of rehabilitation research and interventions. The embeddedness today is weak, so it must be strengthened. In addition, it is relevant to look at how rehabilitation can strengthen its cooperation with the social sector and whether an embeddedness in this sector is relevant and profitable. This initiative will primarily be centred around the employment- and family sector.

Strengthen the national clinic. The quality of the rehabilitative work in the clinic must persistently be optimized in order for DIGNITY to live up to the obligations it has to the Capital Region of Denmark and the controlling authorities. In the strategic period, DIGNITY will work toward reducing the time patients have to wait for treatment, strengthening the course of treatment and optimized quality and resource expenses, increase patient- and next of kin inclusion and work to -a greater extent – streamlining and describing those methods and approaches utilized in the treatment.

Achieve greater outreach. Taking into account the global needs for rehabilitation, the international rehabilitation team must work to reach more torture survivors. This will be realised by getting further funding, identifying the possibilities of humanitarian sector interventions, developing more low-intensive and more cost-effective methods, standardizing methods and approaches, working to incorporate torture rehabilitation in existing health service structure and finally exhausting those possibilities related to utilizing new technological solutions.
7. COMMUNICATION, ADVOCACY AND FUNDRAISING

CONTEXT

The absolute ban against torture, which has been a cornerstone in international human rights, has been under pressure since the terror attacks on the 11th September 2001, and due to the increased influx of refugees and migrants. The fear of terror has become an integral part of the public consciousness and the refugee and immigration debate has become increasingly present on the national and international agenda. Many politicians speak into this agenda, which results in a harder political stance, where human rights and international conventions are challenged, while we increasingly only take care of our own. Traumatized refugees in Denmark become increasingly marginalized and more than ever there is a need for a “watch dog” which ensures that the torture issue is put on the agenda in Denmark, as well as internationally.

The possibilities to fundraise for the torture issue is also under pressure. The EU is moving away from a focused support to the torture issue, and there are fewer funds for rehabilitation of torture victims. However, DIGNITY is far from the only actor in the field.
8. THE ORGANISATION

CONTEXT

It has never been easier to move people, resources, knowledge and technology around the globe, and the labour market has become increasingly more international. The future generations will be much more agile (movable) which necessitates that DIGNITY also becomes a far more flexible work place. There will be a greater need for development of competencies and learning, so that DIGNITY as an organisation can keep up with new trends and maintain the most competent staff for as long as possible.

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREAS 2019-21

- A strong organisation. DIGNITY will use the coming years to clarify how it maintains and develops its position as the strongest organisation within its field in this new globalised reality. DIGNITY must ensure that it becomes an organisation with a stronger international profile while at the same time preserving its solid national base. DIGNITY must be the preferred work place for the relevant national and international profiles, and it must be easy to work in DIGNITY no matter the country of origin of its employees. DIGNITY must utilize its strong vision, mission and values and make it attractive for the most qualified candidates to work in DIGNITY, where there are opportunities for development and a prosperous career.

- An up-to-date organisation. DIGNITY must ensure that it can keep up with the technological development. The digital platforms must support DIGNITY’s diversified work base and DIGNITY must explore new avenues, where technologies and digitalization can benefit the increased focus on national and international partnerships. This will enable an easier and more cost-effective work-flow across borders and organisations. DIGNITY should be a work place that accommodates all employees across their professional and technical skills if they are competent and determined to work in collaboration with others.

- A reliable organisation. DIGNITY must, to a higher degree, emphasise individual accountability and value for money in our project design. It must prioritize achieving the largest possible impact from the resources at its disposal. Finally, risk management must be an integral part of all project formulation, development and implementation. DIGNITY’s administrative platform must continue to be geared to establish, drive and streamline internal processes so that they continuously correspond to new requirements.
9. DIGNITY’S MAIN AMBITIONS 2019-21

DIGNITY faces five critical challenges, which all have significant impact on the realization of the strategy. The challenges are grouped in five categories.

### Those we help

- We must develop a program that prevents and develops knowledge on police violence and torture including documentation of the extent of the problem.
- We must identify the possibility for a specialised humanitarian intervention in “near-areas” based on DIGNITY’s documented rehabilitative intervention.

### Those we work with

- We must incorporate the SDG’s in all relevant interventions and thereby increase DIGNITY’s relevance and embeddedness in the international development agenda.
- We must prioritize DIGNITY’s advocacy / public affairs to ensure that DIGNITY has a significant public profile, which clearly impacts the political agenda. DIGNITY must be the primary go to organisation regarding torture.
- We must expand DIGNITY’s international strategic partnerships and alliances inter alia in relation to the Torture Report (see below) with the purpose of creating increased impact.

### What we deliver

- We must focus on systematic data collection from project and other activities with the purpose of ensuring quality.
- We must emphasise creating impact in DIGNITY’s projects inter alia by ensuring a higher amount of evidence-based interventions.
- Based on existing data we will publish a report (the Torture Report), which will document the global extent of torture. The report must promote DIGNITY globally as the leading centre of knowledge.
- We must ensure accountability and compliance at all levels across the organisation.

### Who we are

- We must emphasise maintaining and developing DIGNITY’s position as a strong knowledge-based national and international organisation that attracts and maintains the most competent staff. Good management, effective HR-processes, flexibility and utilization of technological possibilities will ensure that staff at DIGNITY continuously become more skilled and qualified.

### The financial platform we work from

- We must prioritize income generating activities through national and especially international fundraising as well as have a continued focus on a cost-effective project organisation. DIGNITY must be able to adapt to any financial reality and become both scalable and agile, and in collaboration with partners, utilize outsourcing to an even higher degree.