



## **Research partnerships and collaborations helping to address the sustainable development goals**

Below is an example demonstrating our response to Target 16.1:

*Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere*

Exeter research, in collaboration with colleagues at the University of Bristol on the prevention of torture and misuse of 'less lethal' weapons in places of detention has enhanced the work of the UN Subcommittee for the Prevention of Torture (SPT) and informed torture prevention practice and international norms and standards via the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe.

Abuse in jails and other places of detention can now be recorded with greater accuracy than ever before. A new system for recording weapons and restraints is helping human rights monitors to better independently document and track the use of torture without the need to be reliant on information from authorities. Although many monitors have unrestricted access to places where persons may be deprived of their liberty, and many countries also have national bodies to prevent torture and ill treatment, there is a knowledge gap on how best to record the firearms, less lethal weapons and restraints often found in places of detention. Exeter research insights led by Dr Abi Dymond were translated into resources, co-designed with the Chair of the UN Subcommittee for the Prevention of Torture (SPT) to meet the needs of torture prevention bodies and substantive input from Omega Research Foundation (an influential NGO in this area, who co-authored the resources). The new guide *Monitoring weapons and restraints in places of detention: a practical guide for detention monitors*, was launched at the United Nations in Geneva, with a presentation to the Plenary of the UN Sub-Committee for the Prevention of Torture (SPT) during its 35th meeting.

It is hoped that the guide for monitors will prompt them to assess places of detention in more detail, looking beyond just checking they meet national standards and broadening the scope of what they examine. The guide will equip detention monitors with skills to record cases of mistreatment in more detail, helping them to better recognise if weapons and restraints are being misused. The information helps to corroborate allegations of torture and ill-treatment made by detainees and contributes to fighting torture around the world.

The UN Subcommittee, Omega and others circulated the resources to more than 60 national torture prevention bodies worldwide, as well as to the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe, the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture and other relevant stakeholders, enabling systematic and effective approaches to monitoring weapons and restraints.