The work of forensic scientists plays a key role in helping States address impunity for acts of torture and other ill-treatment by bolstering their efforts to fulfill their obligation under international law to investigate, prosecute, and punish all such acts. Forensic medical evidence is one of the most powerful tools available to victims to corroborate allegations of torture and ill-treatment, and is crucial to States’ efforts to meet other legal obligations ranging from the exclusion of torture-tainted evidence during proceedings to non-refoulement and the provision of reparations and rehabilitation to victims.

Based on the latest thematic report by Special Rapporteur Juan E. Méndez (SRT) on the role of forensic and medical sciences in the investigation and prevention of torture and other ill-treatment (A/69/387), the side-event seeks to sensitize member States to the important role played by forensic science in the fight against torture and ill-treatment, and to ways, in which they can contribute to supporting improvements in the quality of investigations by effectively documenting torture in full compliance with the standards contained in the Istanbul Protocol. The side-event also intends to highlight the importance of establishing standards for the effective use of expert forensic evidence in legal investigations, including procedural safeguards, and of sharing of scientific knowledge and technological advances.

The panel will discuss practical challenges and the recommendations of the Special Rapporteur’s new report and participants will have a valuable opportunity to provide input on both the substantive and the advocacy levels, offering strategies for member States, UN mechanisms, and civil society organizations on how to best raise awareness regarding the essential role of forensic sciences and the reinforcement and implementation of the Istanbul Protocol.

Representatives of Member States, UN agencies and civil societies are cordially invited

Light refreshments provided

THE EVENT WILL BE BROADCASTED THROUGH “LIVE WEBCAST” AT http://webtv.un.org

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON THE EVENT PLEASE VISIT THE ANTI-TORTURE INITIATIVE’S WEBSITE AT: www.antitorture.org