

2024 WARSAW HUMAN DIMENSION CONFERENCE

Warsaw, 30 September to 11 October 2024

Plenary Session 5: Rule of Law I, including:

- Prevention and eradication of torture**
- Exchange of views on the abolition of capital punishment**
- Protection of human rights and fighting terrorism**

Coordination des Association et des Particuliers pour la Liberté de Conscience

Institutional torture can take many forms, and one particularly insidious manifestation is when control and ideology take precedence over human dignityⁱ. The case of the French police's treatment of Romanian yoga practitioners is a stark example of this.

The report submitted by HRWF details how the police, driven by an ideological distortion regarding spiritual minorities, conducted a disproportionate and violent raid on the homes of these practitioners. The practitioners were then subjected to inhumane detention conditions, biased interrogations, and a complete disregard for their rights and due process. This was not palpable, physical torture, but a systemic, institutional abuse conveyed through inappropriate decisions and repeated, applied actions.

A Swiss university report has highlighted the anti-religious bias of the French agency MIVILUDES, which has significant influence over the government's approach to religious minorities. This bias has led to the targeting and persecution of groups like the yoga practitioners, with the police acting as the enforcement arm of this ideological distortionⁱⁱ.

We call on France to urgently review its approach to religious minorities, and to ensure that the training and practices of its police and judiciary are aligned with the principles of human rights and the rule of law. Only then can we truly prevent the institutional torture of vulnerable groups in the name of misguided ideology.

ⁱ <https://www.yapaka.be/page/quentendons-nous-par-maltraitance-institutionnelle>

ⁱⁱ <https://bitterwinter.org/une-critique-suisse-de-la-miviludes-francaise-methodes-opaques-et-donnees-imprecises/>