26 June 2007
Together against Torture
The IRCT’s Global Report on the United Nations
International Day in Support of Victims of Torture
The International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims (IRCT) is an independent, international health professional organisation, which promotes and supports the rehabilitation of torture victims and works for the prevention of torture worldwide. The vision of the IRCT is a world that values and accepts shared responsibility for the eradication of torture.

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The views expressed in this report can in no way be taken to reflect the official opinion of the above institutions. The country activities portrayed in this report are based on the submission of reports as received from campaign participants.
The United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture – commemorated annually on 26 June – honours the strength and courage of torture victims and reminds the world of our moral, legal, professional, and ethical responsibilities to eradicate torture and other human rights violations.

Victims of torture come from all walks of life. They may have been targeted because of ethnic, political, religious or cultural differences. For some, the threat or consequences of torture are so great that they are forced to seek safety away from their homes. In this regard, a significant number of the world’s refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced persons have experienced physical and psychological torture.

Fleeing one’s homeland in search of a more secure future can exacerbate the trauma of torture. Yet for many refugees and asylum seekers, this trauma goes unrecognised. Torture victims often find it difficult to talk about their experiences of torture with public officials, who, in turn, are often untrained in how to identify signs of torture. Without rehabilitation, torture victims may suffer silently, their trauma in turn affecting their families and communities.

Displacement, too, can increase vulnerability to torture and inhumane treatment, especially among women and children. Those who cannot access refuge through normal asylum channels may resort to irregular mechanisms to reach a safe country, and be exploited and abused at the hands of traffickers and smugglers.

On 26 June, torture rehabilitation centres and programmes, human rights groups and ordinary citizens throughout the world call for an end to this suffering. Through a range of public activities, they speak with one voice against torture and spread the message that rehabilitation is possible.

In 2007, this day also marked a milestone in the fight against torture: the 20th anniversary of the coming into force of the United Nations Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment or Punishment. The Presidential Statement on the 20th anniversary of the entry into force of the Convention, which was adopted unanimously by the Human Rights Council at its 6th session, confirmed the centrality of the Convention for global efforts to eradicate torture. The Convention rests on the fundamental conviction that torture is incompatible with our most basic values and fundamental rights. Its purpose is to protect men, women and children from torture and to ensure torture survivors’ right to rehabilitation and redress. Accordingly, it also prohibits the forcible return of persons to places where they are in danger of being subjected to torture, and thus complements the non-refoulement provision in the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees.

The 26 June campaign demonstrates that across the world there are thousands of citizens determined to do what they can to ease the suffering of torture victims and to erase torture from our world. Torture is an abhorrent crime, but when we gather under the slogan “together against torture” we work to fight torture in all its forms.

Preface by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

António Guterres
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
Introduction by the Secretary-General of the IRCT

Since 1998, the United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture has offered an opportunity to speak out against torture globally. Each 26 June, human rights defenders unite under the common slogan “Together against Torture” and demand that torture survivors’ needs and rights be fulfilled and that torture be eradicated from all societies.

As an umbrella organisation representing the global movement against torture, the IRCT helps to coordinate 26 June activities around the world. And each year we continue to be impressed with the tremendous creativity shown by torture rehabilitation centres and programmes as they spread the anti-torture message. Street parades, press conferences, a picnic, plays, film screenings, letter writing campaigns – these were just a few of the events undertaken in 2007 and highlighted in this report. Event organisers once again were aided in their efforts by a TV-spot emphasising “you can do something to stop torture”. The spot was broadcast on television and radio in 20 countries. Many groups also took advantage of this year being the 20th anniversary of the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. Some called on their governments to be more transparent in investigating and reporting incidents of torture, while others pressed for the ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention.

Underlining the importance of 26 June and the Convention against Torture was a global reading of a statement signed by Manfred Nowak, the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture, and the IRCT. This statement, read out in countries throughout the world, stressed that torture is an affront to human dignity and that the rehabilitation of torture survivors is not an act of charity, but an inalienable right.

Far too many persons who migrate or flee their place of residence in search of protection from torture become exposed to torture once again during their flight. To seek a place of refuge is their right, and it is a moral and legal obligation for the international community to provide adequate treatment for the physical or psychological wounds that so many refugees and internally displaced persons have sustained.

This report presents the IRCT’s annual compendium of 26 June activities, and illustrates the truly international spirit of this day. We hope that it is a useful and inspirational tool in spreading the message that together we can do something about torture.
As in previous years, organisations had access to the IRCT website to a range of campaign tools, including a campaign kit, an idea catalogue, an essay and art competition kit, and various fact sheets. Moreover, the IRCT Secretariat distributed T-shirts, caps, balloons and badges with the campaign’s “T”-logo to XX organisations, thus ensuring a high degree of visual consistency to underpin the campaign’s global scope. And not least, DVDs with a high degree of visual consistency were distributed to organisations that facilitated its broadcasting.

Further strengthening the 2007 campaign, three new campaign tools were introduced, each focusing on the 20th anniversary of the UN Convention against Torture:

“Torture - do not open”
Highlighting the danger of tampering with the absolute prohibition against torture, this illustration was published in the International Herald Tribune and Metro Xpress on 26 June and made available for download at the IRCT website in electronic postcard as well as poster format.

Renewing Lives
Photo exhibition and book
Collaborating closely with IRCT member centres, the IRCT Secretariat co-ordinated the production of a photo exhibition entitled “Renewing Lives”, illustrating the effects of torture on its victims and showing the positive results of rehabilitation and empowerment of survivors. Photos and captions were contributed by the African Centre for Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture Victims (Uganda), Bangladesh Rehabilitation Centre for Trauma Victims (Bangladesh), Centro de Prevención, Tratamiento y Rehabilitación de las Víctimas de la Tortura y sus Familiares (Honduras), Equipo Argentino de Trabajo e Investigación Psicosocial (Argentina), and the Independent Medico Legal Unit (Kenya).

Global Reading
“Let the 20th anniversary of the United Nations Convention Against Torture remind us all that now more than ever we need to insist on and reinforce respect for the right to freedom from torture so that we may one day reach our common goal: a world without torture.”

Read out by human rights defenders across the world on 26 June 2007 these words concluded a statement signed by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Torture Manfred Nowak, IRCT President Abdel Hamid Afana and IRCT Secretary-General Brita Sydhoff.
Anti-torture TV-spot aired in 20 countries

In 2007 the IRCT collaborated for the third consecutive year with television and radio stations worldwide to broadcast the TV-spot “You can do something to stop torture”. This year the 30-second spot was broadcast by 72 international and national television and radio stations in 20 countries in the weeks leading up to 26 June, and on the day. In most cases the spot was aired free of charge.

About the Director
Spanish film director Isabel Coixet has directed several TV commercials in Spain and internationally. In 2003 she directed a TV documentary for Canal+ España entitled “Life after Torture”. Her international breakthrough came in 2003 with the drama “My Life Without Me”. In 2005 she directed “The Secret Life of Words”, which stars Tim Robbins and Sarah Polley and is based on the IRCT’s work in support of torture survivors.

The IRCT sincerely thanks the following TV and radio stations who broadcast the TV-spot “You can do something to stop torture” in 2007:

Argentina
América
Radio-Télévision Nationale du Congo (RTNC)
Radio Communautaire du Katanga (RCK)
Radio Canal Lubumbashi (RCL)
Radio Phoenix Université Canal de Vie RTNC Bukavu (Radio Télévision Nationale Congolaise)
VSTV Bukavu (Vision Shala Television)

Armenia
AMPTV (Public television)
Channel S
Radio Tarqui
Radio La Luna
Radio Católica del Ecuador
Radio Democracia
Radio Centro Corpae

Bangladesh
Channel I
NTV
ATN Bangla
Channel S
Bangla Vision
Channel 1
Baisakhri
Television
Radio-Télévision Nationale du Congo (RTNC)
Radio Canal Lubumbashi (RCL)

Croatia
RTL

Congo
Radio-Télé Tam Afrique (RAT)
Radio-Télé Mwanga

Egypt
Public Broadcasting

Germany
DW-TV

Greece
Antenna TV
Mega
Net
Channel of the Greek Parliament
Star Channel
Alpha
ERT-ERA1

Greenland
KNR

Honduras
Hondured, Channel 13 (TV)

Kenya
Citizen TV

Kazakhstan

Kenya

Russia
Russia Today

Serbia & Montenegro
RTS (Radio Television of Serbia)

South Africa

Turkey
Gun TV Station

Argentina

América

Radio-Télévision Nationale du Congo (RTNC)

Radio Canal Lubumbashi (RCL)

Radio Phoenix Université Canal de Vie RTNC Bukavu (Radio Télévision Nationale Congolaise)

VSTV Bukavu (Vision Shala Television)

Croatia

RTL

Congo

Radio-Télé Tam Afrique (RAT)

Radio-Télé Mwanga

Egypt

Public Broadcasting

Germany

DW-TV

Greece

Antenna TV

Mega

Net

Channel of the Greek Parliament

Star Channel

Alpha

ERT-ERA1

Greenland

KNR

Honduras

Hondured, Channel 13 (TV)

Kenya

Citizen TV

Kazakhstan

Russia

Russia Today

Serbia & Montenegro

RTS (Radio Television of Serbia)

South Africa

Turkey

Gun TV Station
Albania
Albanian Rehabilitation Centre for Trauma and Torture Victims (ARCT)
In co-operation with the Association for the Former Politically Persecuted, ARCT organised a concert in the city of Shkodra. One hundred survivors of the communist dictatorship participated in the event together with their family members. The event was covered by print and electronic media. Leaflets, publications and pictures of ten thousand victims of torture were distributed to the participants, and the documentary “Wounds” was screened.

Argentina
Equipo Argentino de Trabajo e Investigación Psicosocial (EATIP)
In 2007, EATIP experienced the most extensive visual media coverage since the organisation started celebrating 26 June. A TV spot was made accessible on the organisation’s website. The spot was also aired by news agencies and one TV channel while the audio track was broadcast by several radio stations. Members of the organisation distributed flyers about torture and impunity on the 5th anniversary of the double murder of activists Maximiliano Kosteki and Darío Santillan.

Australia
Phoenix Centre - Support Service for Survivors of Torture and Trauma
Survivors of torture and representatives of participating organisations gathered in the local botanical gardens. A Phoenix Centre representative opened the event by reading the global message of the IRCT (see p. 9) and lit candles. A representative of the local branch of Amnesty International held a speech followed by a representative of Centacare Catholic Community Services, who read a prayer.
Together against Torture

Bangladesh

Bangladesh Rehabilitation Centre for Trauma Victims (BRCT)

Members of the 147 organisations from the BRCT’s network distributed thousands of leaflets, stickers and posters all around the country. Local and national newspapers covered the event. Both on the 15th and 26th of June, BRCT organised a series of meetings with its local representatives to debate on the situation in Bangladesh with regard to torture. BRCT’s cultural network group played a street drama depicting a torture case in Rajshahi.

Centre for Rehabilitation of Torture Survivors (CRTS)

The CRTS and the Women’s Access to Justice project Nagorik Uddyog jointly organised a round table discussion titled “Measures to prevent torture” at the National Press Club. The discussion concluded that the government and NGOs should launch vigorous campaigns in order to increase people’s awareness of torture and repression. Some 45 organisations and 30 journalists participated.

Bolivia

Instituto de Terapia e Investigación sobre las secuelas de la tortura y la violencia estatal (ITEI)

ITEI together with other organisations carried out a large awareness-raising campaign in both Cochabamba and La Paz, disseminating various types of information materials. Members of the organisations seized the opportunity to discuss human rights, torture, impunity and related issues with passers-by. In La Paz a poster contest was organised around the theme “Together against torture”, and three related videos were presented.

Brazil

Grupo Tortura Nunca Mais/Rio de Janeiro (GTNM/RJ)

In partnership with Núcleo de Estudos de Políticas Públicas em Direitos Humanos, GTNM/RJ held a round-debate on the theme “Reparation and Justice: A Necessary Path”. The event was attended by 200 persons. Besides the debate, there was also an exhibition of artworks by torture victims as well as panels displaying photos, posters and texts on the issue. The musical group Harmonia Enlouquece opened the event.

Bulgaria

Assistance Centre for Torture Survivors (ACET)

ACET arranged an essay competition entitled “Torture survivors and memory. My personal point of view”. Moreover, information kits about torture were distributed to students in Shumen. ACET also organised a conference on “The impact of political persecution on the next generations” and issued press release including a translation of the IRCT’s global statement on 26 June 2007 (see p. 9). The event was reported by radio stations and several newspapers.

Burundi

Forum des Personnes Actives Contre la Torture au Burundi (FACT Burundi)

FACT with the collaboration of other five organisations celebrated this day by making available for the local population information about the situation of torture in Burundi, the country’s legal framework, and three victims’ testimonies. The centre also provided medical assistance to several victims of torture. Two TV spots urging a total stop to all forms of torture were aired.

Cameroon

Center for Rehabilitation and Abolition of Torture (CRAT)

CRAT took part in an event organised by the UN in close co-operation with Actions by Christians for the Abolition of Torture and the British Embassy in Yaounde Cameroon. During the event, officials were asked to commit themselves to support the treatment and rehabilitation of torture survivors,
especially among refugees in Cameroon. The IRCT’s global 26 June 2007 statement was presented at a ceremony organised by the Trauma Center. National media relayed the event.

FRIENDS of the Press Network (FEPNET)
The plenary session of a conference organised by FEPNET started with a prayer and a minute of silence, followed by speeches and a performance focusing on the conditions of detention in cells and hospitals in Kumba. The performance was followed by a presentation of related photographs and videos. Moreover, a letter was addressed to the country’s president, requesting permission for human rights organisations to investigate human rights violations in Cameroon.

Canada
Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture (CCVT)
CCVT with the help of Citizenship and Immigration Canada organised a one day panel discussion and an evening of cultural shows performed by the Canadian Native Centre of Toronto. Both events were on the general theme “Exile of Trauma and Challenges to the Settlement”. The event intended to facilitate interaction among the different actors involved in addressing the problem of torture.

Mount Carmel Clinic MWP
The persons attending the Mount Carmel Clinic listened to a personal testimony on torture, which was followed by the screening of the powerful film “Outlawed: Extraordinary rendition, torture and disappearances in the war on terror”.

Canadian Mental Health Association, Ottawa Branch.
Network Committee to Assist Survivors of War and Torture (NCASWTT)
NCASWTT held a round-table meeting in order to promote Canada as a peace-building nation, to identify concrete ways that Canadians can seek to prevent torture, and to support torture survivors. Ottawa musicians Teresa Healey and Tom Jurovich also performed several songs that they wrote for James Loney, a Canadian activist who was held captive in Iraq for four months in 2005-6. The local TV channel and newspaper covered the event.

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Chad
Association Jeunesse pour la paix et la Non violence (AJPNV) / Centre de Rehabilitation des Victimes de la Torture (CRVT)
AJPNV/CRVT gathered 150 children in front of its office in N’Djamena to organise a commemorative walk. In front of the parliament a motion was read asking the Chadian Government to pass a law to support children and all victims of torture. In the evening a press conference was organised in order to draw attention to torture victims’ right to rehabilitation and redress. Several radio stations covered the event.

L’Association pour les Victimes de la Répression en Afrique (AVRA)
AVRA organised a walk in memory of the Congolese victims of torture and conflict, especially young women who are subjected to various forms of violence. The same day in the town of Kindu a round table meeting was jointly hosted by AVRA and the UN Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Following the meeting representatives appeared on all major national radio channels.

Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo
ARCHE D’ALLIANCE
ARCHE D’ALLIANCE commemorated the 26th of June by broadcasting a thematic program on the local radio stations of Uvira and Baraka Fizi; by publishing and distributing leaflets; and by organising a seminar in Baraka Fizi on methods of investigation of cases of torture.

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Rural Integrated Development Program of Africa (RIDPA)
In Bukavu, Project Paraclet/RIDPA staged a motorised carnival in collaboration with four other organisations. The carnival aimed to attract attention to those places where torture occurs most frequently. Local TV and radio channels covered the event in their respective main journals. The ending point of the carnival was Place Major Vangu where an open air meeting was held.
SAVE Congo DR
SAVE Congo held a conference in the town of Lubumbashi on the situation of sexual violence in DRC. A special radio and TV program related to the UN International Day in Support of Victims of Torture was aired by Radio Phoenix University. At the church Jesus Alive a speech was held alongside a reading of the IRCT’s 26 June 2007 global statement against torture (see p. 9). Seven local radio and TV channels broadcast the IRCT TV spot “You can do something to stop torture” (see p. 10).

SOS Jeunesse et Enfance en Détresse - Programme de Réhabilitation des Victimes de la Torture (PREDVIT) (SOS JED/PREVIT)
SOS JED commemorated 26 June by organising a conference addressing the problem of torture in DR Congo. After the conference a peace walk took place, stopping by several prisons in a demonstration of solidarity with the inmates.

The Center for Victims of Torture (CVT)
In Pweto, CVT staff co-ordinated a parade that led to its local office. Guests were invited to sign a copy of Article 2 of the UN Convention Against Torture, affirming the absolute ban on torture and State Parties’ obligation to prevent torture. A debate was organised addressing issues such as trauma and healing services. In the afternoon, CVT opened its doors to returnees, allowing clinicians to lead support groups, offer individual counseling and conduct community education on torture.

OASIS Centre for Treatment and Rehabilitation of Victims of Torture and Trauma
OASIS held a press conference during which the organisation’s executive director spoke about the current situation of torture in DR Congo and gave his views about the importance of commemorating the UN International Day in Support of Victims of Torture.

Croatia
International Rehabilitation Centre for Torture Victims - Zagreb (IRCT Zagreb)
IRCT Zagreb arranged a seminar for teachers, mental health professionals and human rights activists, mainly from war-affected regions in Croatia in order to understand the problems at stake, to develop measures to diminish consequences and to fight torture. The IRCT TV-spot “You can do something to stop torture” (see p. 10) was aired on national TV channels. Moreover, a related round table meeting was organised and leaflets on the subject of torture were distributed.

Denmark
Rehabilitation and Research Centre for Torture Victims (RCT)
On the United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture the RCT held a seminar at which staff members presented and discussed the various forms of rehabilitation services provided by the organisation. An audience composed of researchers, public health professionals and others interested in the topic was introduced to the RCT’s three main treatment teams, namely those dealing with individual, group-based and family-based therapy.

Ecuador
Fundación para la Rehabilitación Integral de Víctimas Violencia (PRIVA)
PRIVA arranged a well-visited three-day conference at Universidad Central del Ecuador both to sensitize students and teachers on issues related to torture.
Together against Torture

France
Parcours D’Exil
Parcours d’Exil organised a round table discussion on victims of torture and corporate social responsibility, which took place within the French Senate in Paris on the 26th of June. An exhibition was held in the buildings of ESSEC Management Education school, of 30 black and white portraits under the title “Tortured, Rejected, Integrated” to underline the importance of a long-term effort in the process of socially integrating victims of torture.

Georgia
Human Rights Information and Documentation Center (HRIDC)
HRIDC together with the Georgian Centre for Psychosocial and Medical Rehabilitation of Torture Victims, GCRT, organised a traveling performance staging both how the police harasses inmates and the type of “weapons” that are used in pre-detention places. The performance was held by jail no. 5 and finished at the ombudsman’s office. Several media covered the action. The IRCT TV-spot “You can do something to stop torture” (see p. 10) was aired on national TV.

Germany
EXILIO
EXILIO made two presentations about torture and trauma, one for high school students and one for voluntary workers at the Kulturbrücke, an intercultural centre in Lindau. The presentations were followed by screenings of the Bosnian movie “Grbavica” (awarded the Golden Bear at the Berlin Film Festival in 2006), which exposes the scars of post-war Bosnia.

Ghana
The Coalition of Africa NGOs Against Torture (CANAT)
CANAT arranged a one-day seminar in commemoration of the UN Day in Support of Victims of Torture. The event was covered by several local and national media.

Greece
Medical Rehabilitation Centre for Torture Victims (MRCT)
MRCT organised an information meeting addressing the problems faced by vulnerable groups in Greece and the work done by the organisation to support these groups. The documentary “Human Traces” was screened. The IRCT TV-spot “You can do something to stop torture” (see p. 10) was aired, and its diffusion led to a round table discussion. MRCT’s medical director was interviewed by a local TV channel. In Cyprus, the local branch of MRCT also commemorated the day while all local media covered the events.

Guatemala
Oficina de Derechos Humanos del Arzobispado de Guatemala (ODHAG)
ODHAG co-hosted a press conference with three like-minded organisations. The theme of the event was actions needed to eradicate torture. Later in the day, representatives from local organisations took part in a panel discussion to raise awareness about the general situation in Guatemala with regard to torture and the available means to prevent further torture from taking place.

Honduras
Centro de Prevención, Tratamiento y Rehabilitación de las Víctimas de la Tortura y sus Familiares (CPTRT)
CPTRT was instrumental in ensuring the simultaneous broadcasting of a series of TV-spots and interviews on several national TV and radio channels in connection with the United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture on 26 June.
thus reaching a large part of the country’s citizens in the effort to raise awareness about the situation of torture victims in Honduras.

**India**

Torture Prevention Center India Trust (Top Center India Trust)

Top Center India Trust organised an elocution competition on torture in which students from 35 schools participated. 20,000 leaflets were distributed to the population in Cochin City. 180 persons attended a full day seminar and rally.

Centre for Care of Torture Victims (CCTV)

Dignitaries, journalists and victims of torture were invited by CCTV to talk at a press meeting in Kolkata. On the same day in Murshidabad, campaign materials were distributed to passers-by.

The Society for Social Research Art and Culture (SOSRAC)

SOSRAC organised a painting and drawing competition for torture survivors and their family members while the survivors organised an exhibition of handicraft products produced by themselves.

**Iran**

Organization for Defending Victims of Violence (ODVV)

ODVV organised a conference comprising several presentations on the subject of torture. Following the conference a workshop on psychotherapy of victims of torture was held followed by a workshop on how to treat cases of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.

**Israel**

The Public Committee Against Torture in Israel (PCATI)

Together with Amnesty International, PCATI organised a protest vigil on 25th of June 2007 in order to protest torture perpetrated in the Jerusalem police headquarters at the city’s Russian Compound. Participants distributed flyers that documented torture in Israeli places of detention. The event received nationwide exposure in national and local newspapers.

**Italy**

VI.TO - Hospitality and Care for Victims of Torture, Consiglio Italiano per i Rifugiati (CIR)

Under the direction of the CIR a cast composed of 35 torture survivors performed a theatre piece entitled “The Dreams from Exile” and inspired by the Fernando Pessoa novel “The Sailor”. A back-stage video relating the significant moments of the play was subsequently released.

**Kenya**

Independent Medico Legal Unit (IMLU)

IMLU together with other organisations arranged a series of events under the theme Wanted: Law Against Torture. IMLU held a symposium in Nairobi as well as parallel events, such as a theatre play on human rights and a bicycle race during which information material was distributed. In addition, in collaboration with Amnesty International IMLU developed a petition to be presented before the minister for constitutional affairs.

Mwatikho Torture Survivors Organization (MTSO)

In connection with the UN International Day in Support of Victims of Torture MTSO arranged a series of events over a period of four days in order to draw attention to the needs and rights of torture survi-
The events included a camp, a football match, a donkey cart procession and a candlelight vigil.

**PREPARED SOCIETY**

In Mombasa PREPARED SOCIETY marked the UN International Day in Support of Victims of Torture by holding a protest march against torture of hawkers by municipal council askaris.

**Kosovo**

**Kosova Rehabilitation Centre for Torture Victims (KRCT)**

On the United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, Justice Minister Januz Salihaj signed a permission allowing KRCT to pay monitoring visits to Kosova’s detention facilities (see picture at top of page). Besides this important event KRCT arranged a bicycle race in connection with which various information materials were distributed to bystanders. Finally, outlining the situation of torture victims in Kosovo the organisation’s director gave interviews to several media.

**Kyrgyzstan**

**Klyym Shamy Human Rights Foundation**

Klyym Shamy Human Rights Foundation organised a march in support of victims of torture. Stickers were handed to passers-by, and posters were put up in several places. A round table discussion was held during which the participants signed a joint statement to the Kyrgyz parliament requesting ratification of article 22 of the UN Convention Against Torture and the Convention’s Optional Protocol in order to provide for independent inspections of the country’s detention facilities. The TV-spot “You can do something to stop torture” (see p. 10) and footage from the march were shown on national TV channels.

**Spravedlivost**

On the 26th of June, Spravedlivost raised public awareness on the fact that the Kyrgyz parliament has not ratified the UN Convention Against Torture by making their intention broadly visible in the local, national and international means of communication. The organisation also held some meetings at the Uzbek and Russian national minorities’ centres about the CAT.

**Lebanon**

**Khiam Rehabilitation Center of the Victims of Torture (KRC) and Restart Centre for Rehabilitation of Victims of Violence and Torture**

KRC and RESTART jointly commemorated the 26th of June by celebrating the launching of the project “Torture Prevention and Monitoring in Lebanon”. The KRC also organised a press conference, an inauguration ceremony in connection with the opening of its new branch in the south of the country, a workshop on torture and various entertainment events. The campaign was aimed to encourage the Lebanese government to sign the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention against Torture. On 29 June RESTART together with other organisations held a conference attended by 55 persons on “The rights of victims in the context of mechanisms and international instruments for human rights”. A variety of media covered all the events.

**Liberia**

**Prisoners Assistance Program (PAP)**

In order to create maximum attention to the United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture PAP arranged a street parade and a children’s art exhibition. The very vocal parade included a tour of PAP’s rehabilitation centres as well as speeches and prayers. The march ended with traditional dance troops performing acrobatic displays. Moreover, PAP disseminated banners, leaflets and posters.
The Center for Victims of Torture (CVT) - Liberia
Several marches, prayers, songs and speeches were organized by CVT throughout the country. A minute of silence honoured those who did not survive their torture. The events concluded with a movie segment about human rights violations in South Africa during apartheid. The event was covered by national and local radio stations.

Malawi
Centre for Human Rights Education Advice and Assistance (CHREAA)
CHREAA was allowed to celebrate this day inside the walls of Chichiri Prison. Some prisoners performed a drama, wrote poems, made speeches and gave testimonies. The same day, listeners of the capital radio could take part in a discussion about torture.

Mexico
The Colectivo Contra la Tortura y la Impunidad (CCTI)
CCTI marked the United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture by arranging a workshop titled “Resisting torture” during which torture survivors gave testimony of their ordeal. On the same day, CCTI inaugurated its new office in Acapulco.

Morocco
The Association Medicale De Rehabilitation Des Victimes De La Torture (AMRVT)
AMRVT organised a reception to inaugurate its new departments of psychotherapy and re-education. Dignitaries, doctors and victims gave speeches. The event was covered by national TV.

Moldova, Republic of
Medical Rehabilitation Center for Torture Victims “Memoria” (RCTV - “Memoria”)
On 20th June RCTV “Memoria” held a press conference jointly with Amnesty International Moldova, the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights and Lawyers for Human Rights. The numerous journalists present at the conference spread the word about the United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture in particular and about the needs and rights of torture victims in general.

Nepal
Yatana Pidit Sarokar Kendra (CVICT)
On the occasion of the United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture CVICT distributed blankets for all the mentally ill prisoners living in miserable condition at Dhulikhel Prison in Kavre. Simultaneously CVICT organised free mobile health clinics in a prison in Dhading where sixty prisoners benefited from the service. The event was attended by journalists from various national newspapers.

Nigeria
Medical Rehabilitation Centre for Torture Victims (MRCTV)
MRCTV organised, together with three other local associations, a series of activities including the screening of a TV-spot, two soccer matches and a basketball match. The events were covered by regional media.
Pakistan

Struggle for Change (SACH)

On the United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture SACH held a seminar on the issue of torture during which seven key speakers presented their views in front of an audience of some 124 people. The seminar enjoyed extensive media coverage.

Palestine

The Treatment and Rehabilitation Centre for Victims of Torture (TRC)

TRC organised a rally in downtown Ramallah in commemoration of the United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture. The same day TRC held a conference attended by families of prisoners. Moreover, a TV-spot produced by TRC was broadcast by local, regional and international TV channels.

Paraguay

The Centros de Alternativas en Salud Mental (ATHYA)

ATHYA invited farmers from the region of Santa Rosa to join them to celebrate the United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture. Songs, a play and folkloric dances were performed. Finally, victims of torture testified in front of an audience of 150 people.

Romania

The Medical Rehabilitation Centre for Torture Victims (MRCT)

MRCT distributed pennants and flyers in the streets of the town of Iasi, and the documentary “Beyond Torture” was shown. The same day, MRCT’s branch in the town of Craiova organised a campaign of medical services. Booklets and documentation were handed out to passers-by, the event receiving extensive media coverage.

Fundatia ICAR - Centrul Medical de Reabilitare a Victimelor Torturii (MRCTV Bucharest)

The ICAR Foundation commemorated the United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture by launching a documentary in which torture survivors testify about their experiences before imprisonment and after their release. The screening of the film was followed by a press conference and debate session.

Russia

Nizhniy Novgorod Regional NGO Committee Against Torture

On 26 June 2007 the Nizhniy Novgorod Regional NGO Committee Against Torture held a rally during which victims of torture and parents of victims told their story. Dozens of citizens signed a petition to appeal to local authorities to consider the gravity of the torture situation in the federal district. Six local and federal channels and five newspapers covered the event.

Senegal

Victimes de Violences Rehabilitées, le Centre de Soins du CAPREC (VIVRE/CAPREC)

VIVRE/CAPREC arranged an open-house day in order to share the result of its work with local representatives, professionals from other NGOs and torture survivors. Following the discussion five survivors went on stage and told their story to the audience. The commemoration concluded with a debate on the necessity to ratify the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention against Torture. National newspapers covered the event.

Serbia

IAN Centar za rehabilitaciju žrtava torture (IAN CRTV)

IAN CRTV commemorated the United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture by holding a press conference in order to present its work as well as to raise public awareness about torture-related issues. The IRCT TV-spot “You can do
something to stop torture” (see p. 10) and the photo presentation “Renewing Lives” were shown at the beginning of the press conference. The event was covered by regional as well as national media.

Sierra Leone

Community Association for Psychosocial Services (CAPS)

CAPS commemorated the United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture in the Kailahun and Tombodu districts where torture and other cruel and inhuman treatment were widespread during the country’s recent civil war. 300 participants wearing T-shirts and carrying posters with anti-torture messages joined in a march. Speeches, sketches, poetry and prayers were all part of the event. A tree was planted as a symbolic gesture to give peace and remembrance to the dead. The events were covered by several newspapers.

Center for Victims of Torture (CVT)

CVT gathered hundreds of people in Tombodu, a site of mass killings, to commemorate the United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture. The participants carried signs and sported T-shirts with anti-torture messages. Sketches, poetry and songs denouncing torture in Sierra Leone were performed. The crowd then gathered for a procession to pay its respect at the War Memorial. The commemoration ended with a video produced by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Sierra Leone.

South Africa

The Trauma Centre for Survivors of Violence and Torture (TCSVT)

Partnering with the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, TCSVT organised a guided tour through the “Castle” in Cape Town, a former prison from 1652. Sixty-five visitors attended a presentation about the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention against Torture and where South Africa stands in adhering to the ratification of the Protocol. Following the presentation torture survivors performed, playing music and reading out poetry.

Turkey

Sosyal Hizmetler Rehabilitasyon ve Adaptasyon Merkezi (SOHRAM-CASRA)

SOHRAM-CASRA commemorated the United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture by releasing balloons and kites above the wall of Fort Diyarbakir. The organisation also arranged a open-house day and a seminar to discuss approaches to preventing torture in Turkey. In the evening, victims of torture gathered at the centre for a get-together with drinks and snacks.

The Rehabilitation Centers of Human Rights Foundation of Turkey (HRFT)

HRFT organised a large-scale information campaign taking place simultaneously in five Turkish cities: Istanbul, Ankara, Izmir, Adana and Diyarbakir. Speeches, release of balloons, readings and movies were among the activities HRFT’s branch centres held. The centres also held press conferences at which various information materials were distributed.

United Kingdom

The Refugee Therapy Centre (RTC)

RTC combined its annual Open Day (23rd June), with the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture and the World Refugee Day (20th June). The movie “The Secret Life of Words”, which is based on the work of the IRTC, was screened, followed by a brief discussion. Afterwards staff members of the organisation presented their work and spoke about the need to protect human rights of sanctuary seekers in the UK.

United States of America

The Liberty Centre for Survivors of Torture

The Liberty Centre for Survivors of Torture celebrated the 26th of June by holding a number of speeches. A church choir and a theatre troupe gave a performance for an audience of forty persons.
The Florida Center for Survivors of Torture program (FCST)
FCST held a conference during which the organisation’s founder Michael Bernstein and IRCT founder Inge Genefke gave keynote presentations to an audience of 125 medical, legal and mental health professionals. The conference was followed by a panel presentation by three torture survivors currently served by FCST.

The Program for Torture Victims (PTV)
Partnering with two other organisations PTV held an information campaign in order to educate the general public on the issue of torture and how survivors find healing. The event featured a panel discussion on the issues of US torture and asylum law, torture and healing, and justice for survivors. In addition, a poet and survivor from Argentina shared her poems with the audience.

The Rocky Mountains Survivors Centre (RMSC)
The RMSC arranged a picnic at the memorial for victims of the Babi Yar genocide and the Holocaust. The event was followed by a presentation including speeches by dignitaries, prayers from three religions, and an international cultural presentation prepared by torture survivors. RMSC’s members prepared a candle-lighting and a moment of silence to remember the victims who did not survive. Finally, the participants performed African music.

Survivors of Torture International
Survivors of Torture International led the California Consortium of Torture Treatment Centers at the California State Capitol in Sacramento. A joint legislative resolution authored by 13 legislators and recognising the tenth anniversary of the United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture was presented to each consortium member on the assembly floor of the Capitol building. The consortium also received a June 26 proclamation from Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger. The day ended with a reception.

Venezuela
Red de Apoyo por la Justicia y Paz
In connection with the United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture Red de Apoyo por la Justicia y Paz raised public awareness on the plight of torture victims in the country by organising a march in the streets of Caracas. A total of eleven media covered the event and the declarations made by relatives of victims as well as by the members of the organisation. The preceding day the organisation held a press conference to bring attention to the planned event.
States which have ratified or acceded to the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

145 States as of November 1, 2007

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Tuvalu
United Arab
Emirates
Vanuatu
Vietnam
Zimbabwe

Not ratified
States which have not ratified the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
49 States as of November 1, 2007
The worldwide commemoration of the United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture is key to raising public awareness of the problem of torture. In 2008, as in the previous seven years, the IRCT will seek to collaborate with as many anti-torture organisations as possible. If your organisation would like to participate in the 2008 campaign you are very welcome to contact us.

For further information please visit our website or contact us at the below address. We look forward to hearing from you!

International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims (IRCT)
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P.O. Box 9049
1022 Copenhagen K
Denmark
Phone: +45 33 76 06 00
Fax: +45 33 76 05 00
E-mail: irct@irct.org
Website: www.irct.org

NB: In the weeks leading up to 26 June 2008 the IRCT’s website, www.irct.org, will feature an overview of planned activities globally. Moreover, if you would like to join the campaign you have the possibility of applying to the IRCT Secretariat for limited financial support for campaign materials.

By credit card
Please visit the IRCT website (www.irct.org) to make a credit card donation.

By cheque
Please send a cheque that is made payable to:
International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims (IRCT)
Borgergade 13
P.O. Box 9049
1022 Copenhagen K
Denmark

By bank transfer
Danske Bank
Holmens Kanal Branch
Holmens Kanal 2
1090 Copenhagen K
Denmark
S.W.I.F.T. DABADKKK
USD account:
Registration No: 3001
Account No: 4310-005029
IBAN: DK18 3000 4310 0050 29

DKK account:
Registration No: 3001
Account No: 4310-821152
IBAN: DK90 3000 4310 8211 52

EUR account:
Registration No: 3001
Account No: 3001-957171
IBAN: DK69 3000 3001 9571 71

Join the 26 June 2008 campaign!

How to support the IRCT