IRCT’s Global Report on the UN International Day in Support of Victims of Torture – 26 June 2004

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 published in this report are based on the submission of reports as received from campaign participants.

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Front cover illustration:
Children participating in an event organised by Centre d’Action Sociale, Réhabilitation et Adaption in Turkey.
Preface by Archbishop Desmond Tutu

The UN International Day in Support of Victims of Torture – 26 June – is a very important day for torture victims and for everyone who works to assist them. This day has become an annual Remembrance Day for the victims – those who survived and those who did not.

This report illustrates the resolve and commitment of the global anti-torture movement. Rehabilitation centres and other organisations supporting victims of torture have put tremendous effort into their commemoration of 26 June 2004, and they have managed to raise public awareness in their respective regions. Awareness of the crime of torture is crucial for several reasons: when more people know about the consequences of torture for the victims, their families and communities, more people are likely to lend their support to the fight against torture. Furthermore, when more people have this knowledge, it is increasingly probable that governments which respect human rights will put political pressure on governments that do not, and that this pressure will be accompanied by financial support to individual rehabilitation centres or to the UN Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture. Finally, when governments feel a pressure from their people, they might be persuaded to sign the UN Convention against Torture and the Optional Protocol to the Convention. This is a very significant step in the global eradication of torture and towards a situation where all victims of torture are offered fair reparation for their suffering.

This report and the work which it represents come with my warmest recommendations.

God bless you.

Desmond Tutu
Archbishop Emeritus

Introduction by the IRCT Secretary-General

In 2004, rehabilitation centres and programmes for torture victims around the world once more put great energy and determination into the commemoration of the UN International Day in Support of Victims of Torture – 26 June. The UN Day provides a welcome occasion for speaking openly about a global problem: the continued use of torture by agencies of the state in around 100 countries. This year, some of our colleagues visited prisons, where they spoke to staff about the human rights of prisoners, other colleagues have lobbied for ratification of the very important anti-torture conventions, and others still have celebrated the strength and dignity of torture survivors through music, dance and poetry.

The imagination which centres and programmes show every year on the 26 June is a true indication of the determination with which they carry out their work in support of victims of torture and for the eradication of torture. The treatment methods vary from one country to the other, thereby reflecting different traditions and cultural influences. In this way, torture survivors are given the support they need in order to enjoy life again and to contribute to the wellbeing of their families and communities. This is the ultimate objective of the anti-torture movement: to undo the wrong which was done by the torturers.

We thank all participants in the 2004 global 26 June campaign for their devotion to our common cause. We hope that you will enjoy this report and that you will find inspiration for your 26 June event in 2005!

Brita Sydhoff
IRCT Secretary-General
Albania
The Albanian Centre for Rehabilitation of Trauma and Torture Victims (ARCT) organised a commemorative conference on 26 June, in collaboration with the Albanian Association for Reintegration of Ex-political Persecuted of Shkodra. Approximately 110 people participated in the conference where artists read poems by ex-political prisoners. Several speakers addressed the persecution and its consequences for torture victims and for Albanian society in general. A declaration was made at the conference, highlighting the lack of political will to fulfil with the commitments stated in Albanian and international law. The declaration was addressed to the media, the Albanian Parliament and other authorities. The conference received extensive coverage from Albanian and international media.

Argentina
Equipo Argentino de Trabajo e Investigación Psicosocial (EATIP) organised an international symposium on 26 June in connection with “IV Congreso Internacional de Trauma Psíquico y Estrés Traumático”. There were approximately 60 participants, including people from Argentina, Uruguay and Turkey. The day before, EATIP also organised a debate with health professionals, human rights organisations and representatives from the labour movement. At the end of the meeting, a paper was presented expressing solidarity with victims of torture and renewing the commitment to fight for a country with work, health, education, housing, justice and human rights for all.

Australia
In partnership with Auburn College and with support of Auburn Council, the Friends of the Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors (STARTTS) hosted a community event “Celebrating Survival” with approximately 400 guests, many of whom
were refugees. The event took place in Auburn, home to large communities of migrants and refugees. The programme included music, performance, food and an audio-visual exhibition that highlighted the continuing achievements and contributions of STARTTS’ refugee clients and their communities.

The Friends of STARTTS also called for the Parliament of Australia to reconsider its decision not to ratify the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention against Torture, as ratification would place Australia in a better position to exert influence on other governments to stop torture practices.

**Austria**

*HEMAYAT – Organisation for Support of Survivors of Torture and War* organised a run against torture “Menschenrechtslauf” with some 80 participants. The City Hall of Vienna decided to adopt the idea of a run for human rights every year in the programme for the “Donauinsel Festival”.

HEMAYAT also held a press conference, and both activities were covered by local newspapers, by the radio and by the television programme “Wien Heute”.

**Bahrain**

In Bahrain, human rights and civil societies celebrated the UN International Day with a peaceful rally near the UN House in Manama. Hundreds of people, including victims of torture, attended the rally.

These human rights organisations and civil societies also presented a joint statement “No Impunity for Torturers”, condemning systematic torture, killings and genocide committed by torturers in Bahrain and around the world.

In a statement, the Government of Bahrain was encouraged to fulfil the right of rehabilitation and compensation to victims and their families, and to bring the perpetrators to justice and incorporate the UN Convention against Torture into national legislation.
Bangladesh

The Bangladesh Human Rights Commission (BHRC) organised a human chain, and this was followed by a public meeting. The speakers at the meeting pleaded for a stop to all acts of violence and terrorism and called upon all human rights activists to work for torture victims. They also called for expediting all trials of human rights violators.

Further, branch offices of the BHRC in all districts commemorated the day in different ways, including discussion meetings, seminars, rallies, and an exhibition of posters and publications.

The Centre for Rehabilitation of Torture Survivors (CRTS) held various activities in order to celebrate the UN International Day. On the evening of 24 June, a press conference was arranged with journalists from the national dailies. The CRTS described the importance of 26 June and of the activities carried out by the centre, and subsequently many papers covered the events. The next day, the CRTS placed posters and distributed leaflets and stickers throughout the city, thereby attracting widespread attention.

The CRTS also held a seminar and an art competition for approximately 200 children. The chief guest was the superintendent of the police of Tangail, and the seminar led to the establishment of an open collaboration with the police department. At the end of the seminar, prizes were distributed to the winners of the children’s art competition.

Finally, the CRTS organised a cultural programme in the city centre with anti-torture songs and drama performances by four cultural organisations. Most of the national and local newspapers published news about the events.


The GNPT presented a theme paper, stating that the mandate for law enforcement agencies in a modern democracy is to protect human rights, defend the fundamental freedoms and maintain public order and general welfare through policies and practices which are lawful, humane and disciplined. Therefore, international human rights standards concerning law enforcement provide a sound basis for ethical and legal codes of conduct.

The Bangladesh Observer published an article on the round table discussion.
**Bolivia**

The Instituto de Terapia e Investigación sobre las Secuelas de la Tortura y la Violencia Estatal (ITEI) co-organised an out-door exhibition in front of the City Hall in La Paz consisting of 24 panels with pictures and information about torture. Also, informative videos were shown in a big tent, and the event was visited by more than 1,000 people. The mayor of La Paz was among the participants, and the mayor’s office supported the event.

The days prior to the event were dedicated to spreading the message of 26 June “Together against Torture” to the media. The response was very good – nine radio programmes, seven television programmes and seven newspapers covered the message.

ITEI also produced a press release condemning torture and asking the government to sign and ratify the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention against Torture. Further, in co-operation with other organisations, ITEI produced a range of material for the events, such as declarations and bulletins on torture and international law, on the national situation, the UN and 26 June. Similar activities were carried out in Cochabamba.

**Bosnia and Herzegovina**

On 21 June, the Association for Rehabilitation of Torture Victims - Centre for Torture Victims (CVT) organised a one-hour radio broadcast with the Medical Director and the Psychiatrist of the centre together with a representative from the Ministry for Human Rights and Refugees.

The next day, the CVT and the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights held a meeting with the purpose of exploring the situation of torture victims in the country. More than 200,000 people are registered as former camp survivors and they still suffer from a variety of physical and mental complaints. So far, the only adequate assistance to torture victims has been provided by NGOs, although the needs of this population are clear.

The meeting was followed by a discussion and a press conference, and was covered by 12 different media.
Brazil

ACAT in Brazil organised a range of cultural presentations in Praça da Sé to commemorate the UN International Day. Thirteen local music groups played African dances, rap music and samba, with the common theme of torture. In addition, human rights defenders from the 17 organisations that prepared the event arranged a campaign in order to advocate for Brazil to ratify the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention against Torture, and distributed information materials about torture.

Grupo Tortura Nunca Mais do Rio de Janeiro (GTNM/RJ) held a round table discussion and an art exhibition. The GTNM/RJ produced posters and pamphlets and issued press releases to invite approximately 2,000 people to the event.

Bulgaria

The Assistance Centre for Torture Survivors (ACET) issued a media announcement and a declaration on 26 June “In Solidarity with the People who have Suffered Torture”. In the declaration, ACET congratulated the Bulgarian Parliament for its successful work in incriminating torture through the “Law for Alternation and Amendment of the Penal Code”, which caters for adequate punishment for perpetrators of torture. Also, ACET called upon the Bulgarian Government to express its solidarity with torture victims throughout the world by contributing to the UN Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture. The declaration was sent to 80 persons, including members of parliament and government and NGO representatives. ACET was interviewed by Bulgarian national radio on 23 June and by a local radio station on 24 June. Further, on 28 June, the Medical Director was interviewed by a large Bulgarian newspaper.

Cameroon

In collaboration with other organisations, the Centre for Rehabilitation and the Abolition of Torture (CRAT) arranged two activities. On 25 June, they organised a cultural evening with a poetry corner, artwork by refugees, songs on torture in Cameroon, and speeches. On 26 June, a panel discussion on the suffering of torture victims was held with more than 100 participants. Before the discussion started, a video documentary on forms of torture was showed. The CRAT National President appealed to the representatives of the authorities to prioritise the UN Convention against Torture and other international conventions for the elimination of torture: Either the world will destroy torture or torture will destroy the world, he said.

CRAT produced flyers, ribbons and banners for the day, which was covered by two local newspapers.

The International Tort for Torture Victims Center (ITTVC) began the commemoration of 26 June by visits to prisons and police cells. Afterwards, a round table discussion was conducted with approximately 250 people, among these top government officials, representatives of NGOs, private enterprises and religious authorities. T-shirts, fliers, posters and caps were produced for the event.

The ITTVC Executive Director gave a speech in which he reiterated the importance of having...
respect for humanity and pleaded everyone to fight for the betterment of mankind, thus empowering the torture victims. At the round table discussion, it was agreed that the ITTVC would establish branches in order to sensitise and educate police and prison staff. Further, a project is to be set up to redress cases in prisons, and a strategy was formulated on how to empower torture victims and how to raise money for them. In addition, there were traditional dances, debates, sketches, poems, testimonies, and a gala party. National and local press covered the occasion.

Together with other human rights organisations, Friends of the Press Network organised a public lecture on the UN Convention against Torture and its implementation in Cameroon. More than 2,000 people attended the lecture. Friends of the Press Network also arranged a human rights march, visits to detention centres, choral songs, speeches, traditional dances, and a photo exhibition. Further, a two-months radio education programme was initiated and reports and documents relating to the problem of torture were distributed.

On 28 July, the activities ended with a ceremony in which government administrators, prison officers, teachers, students, traditional and religious authorities as well as the police and the military, a journalist, and NGOs participated. The acting Ambassador of the United States in Cameroon also attended the ceremony. Friends of the Press Network dedicated 26 June 2004 to the Lobe Town women who were tortured by troops and to Afu Bernard Werivo, a boy who was set on fire by a policeman on the allegation that he had stolen a bicycle.

The main 26 June activity of the Volunteers for Prison Inmates (VPI) in Cameroon was a lecture on “How prison authorities can prevent torture” at the premises of the Kumba Principal Prison. This prison has over 200 inmates, 63 of whom are awaiting trial. The Chairman of the VPI, who is a former torture victim, spoke at the lecture, drawing inspiration from the relevant UN instruments on torture and calling on the prison authorities to make sure that torture does not take place in the prison. In his response, the Superintendent of the Kumba Principal Prison thanked the VPI for having chosen his institution for this important event, and he promised to do everything possible for his institution to abide by the anti-torture notion.

At the close of the lecture, the UN Convention against Torture, the UN Charter, the European Prison Rules, the African Charter as well as the 26 June “T” badges were distributed to prison staff.
Canada

The Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture (CCVT) sponsored two special events in honour of 26 June. A panel, with an audience of around 50 people, discussed “The Absolute Prohibition of Torture in the Face of Security Concerns”. In the evening, a cultural event began with presentations by representatives of Rwandan and Burmese communities, talking about genocide in Rwanda and repression in Burma. This was followed by music, songs and dances, performed mainly by clients of the CCVT.

The CCVT also issued a press release reiterating their commitment to the fight against torture and demanding that the Canadian Government condemns torture in Iraq and Afghanistan by US and Coalition forces, and reiterates the Canadian national and international obligations against torture. The CCVT also demanded more resources for rehabilitation of torture survivors in Canada and at the global level by strengthening the UN Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture. Finally, the CCVT urged the Canadian Government to ratify the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention against Torture and encouraged other countries – especially the USA – to do the same.

Chile

The Comisión Etica contra la Tortura (CECT) – which was founded by Centro de Salud Mental y Derechos Humanos (CINTRAS) among others – co-ordinated a series of activities which were carried out between 25 June and 2 July.

On 25 June, CECT arranged a march and handed over signatures encouraging the Chilean Government to sign and ratify the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention against Torture. The next day, a silent march took place as a tribute to torture victims. The march ended at a former torture centre, where a torture victim presented his testimony: when he was 16 years old, he was arrested and tortured in this centre.

On 27 June, CINTRAS – together with la Asamblea Nacional por los Derechos Humanos and CECT – arranged a one-day human rights fair organised by CECT.
fair against torture with informative stands and a cultural-artistic event with music, dance and poetry. Radio, television and one newspaper covered this activity. On 29 June, the book “La memoria como fuerza de la historia” was launched. The book comprises papers presented at a seminar with the same name held by CECT in June 2003. All these commemorative activities culminated on 2 July with a cultural event with outstanding artists and music groups.

**Colombia**

On 24 June, Corporación Avre – Apoyo a Víctimas de Violencia Sociopolítica Pro Recuperación Emocional celebrated 26 June in Bogotá in co-operation with many other organisations which form the Coalición Colombiana contra la Tortura. The celebration started with a presentation of a video “Juntos contra la Tortura” [Together against Torture] produced especially for the event. Afterwards, there was a panel discussion with speakers from different NGOs and UN bodies. The speakers talked about the importance of the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention against Torture, about EU guidelines and programmes on rehabilitation and prevention of torture. The discussion was accompanied by cultural and music groups, and ended with an exhibition of masks. Approximately 120 persons participated in the event.

**Denmark**

The Rehabilitation and Research Centre for Torture Victims (RCT) organised a garden party for clients and their families. Everyone enjoyed the buffet food, the children played and there were games and small prizes. Clowns did magic tricks, and there was music, dancing and acting on a stage. This year’s UN International Day has inspired the RCT to invite clients and their families to a Christmas get-together.

COLOMBIA: Music groups entertained at the 26 June activities in Bogotá.

DENMARK: A little girl has been facepainted at the RCT get-together.
East Timor
On 24 June, the International Catholic Migration Commission’s Survivors of Torture Program co-organised, as part of a steering committee, a radio message and a television talk-show with a torture survivor, speakers from the national police force and the Ministry of Justice. Further, on 26 June a half-day seminar was held with relevant authorities and organisations. The steering committee also arranged a minute of silence, an ecumenical prayer, floral offering at a cemetery and the lighting of candles. In addition, campaign materials such as streamers, posters and booklets were distributed.

Georgia
The Psycho-Rehabilitation Centre for Victims of Torture, Violence and Pronounced Stress Impact (EMPATHY) held a conference “Together against Torture” in Tbilisi, supported by the EU and the Open Society Institute. The conference was held with simultaneous translation in English, Georgian and Russian since international organisations as well as refugees from Chechnya attended. The key presentations focused on the torture situation in Georgia. A declaration “Together against Torture” was elaborated by EMPATHY and presented to the conference participants for approval and signature. The declaration included an analysis of the situation and legislation on torture in Georgia and special recommendations to the government in accordance with international standards. The declaration encouraged the government to ratify the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention against Torture and to create national preventing mechanisms in Georgia. The declaration was sent to the President of Georgia, the Chairperson of the Georgian Parliament and the Prime Minister of Georgia.

At the conference, materials from the IRCT and EMPATHY as well as a press release were distributed in Georgian, English and Russian. The conference was covered by Georgian television channels, which interviewed EMPATHY’s President and Manager as well as other conference participants.

Finally, the Women Prisoners’ Art Therapy works were offered for sale at an exhibition at the same venue. The works had been produced as part of the activities of the Women Colony – a branch of EMPATHY in Tbilisi.

The Georgian Centre for Psychological and Medical Rehabilitation of Torture Victims (GCRT) and the Human Rights Information and Documentation Centre (HRIDC) conducted a joint action, aiming at bringing facts about torture to the public ear.
The GCRT and the HRIDC also submitted an open letter appealing to the Georgian Parliament to start preparatory work regarding the early ratification of the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention against Torture. The letter was signed by the organisers as well as members of the public.

In addition, refugees from Abkhazia and the GCRT held a press conference entitled “Future without Violence”.

**Greece**

On the occasion of 26 June, the Medical Rehabilitation Center for Torture Victims (MRCT) organised a press conference in co-operation with the Bar Association of Athens and Amnesty International. The MRCT Medical Director, former IRCT President, Dr. Maria Piniou-Kalli, described the diagnostic and therapeutic methods of rehabilitation centres. A member of the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture spoke about prevention, and an Amnesty International representative gave a picture of the global torture situation. Approximately 50 people participated in the event, which was covered by two national newspapers. Further, the MRCT distributed information materials.
The Gu-Chu-Sum Movement of Tibet organised a campaign on “Together against Torture” and “Stop Torture Now”. They conducted essay and drawing contests and an awareness session in four schools. The Gu-Chu-Sum Movement toured the schools talking about torture and the need to stop it. The Vice-President of the Movement and a former political prisoner shared their experiences with the school children. During the interactions, students posed many questions about torture and the conditions in prisons.

The essay and drawing contests were conducted to encourage children to understand the problems of torture and its impact at individual, family and social levels. Education is the best way to communicate and promote human rights, including the freedom from torture. The ten best essays and drawings were rewarded cash prizes.

On 25 June, the Torture Prevention Center India (Top Center) co-organised an essay and oration competition on “How to Prevent Torture, Terrorism, Violence and War”. A total of 61 selected students from schools all over the state participated in the competition. On 26 June, prizes were distributed to the winners at a public function.

Finally, Top Center released and distributed a booklet on human rights. The booklet contains relevant information on the duties of the police, the Supreme Court of India’s judgement on arrest and detention as well as important addresses and phone numbers of various authorities.

Four newspapers covered the activities.
The Vasavya Rehabilitation Center for Torture Victims (VRCT) organised a one-month programme in two districts of Andhra Pradesh. A campaign entitled “Human rights for all” was organised in different urban slums and rural areas where approximately 5,000 people were reached. The aim of the campaign was to increase the knowledge about basic human rights and torture. The VRCT also arranged an interaction where the police, lawyers, doctors, social workers and the media participated together with 200 torture victims and 100 volunteers and community representatives. The positive outcome of the interaction was to reduce the gap between different stakeholders in the community.

**Iran, Islamic Republic of**
With the co-operation of the Scientific Counselling Association of Iran and the UN Association of Iran, the Organization for Defending Victims of Violence (ODVV) held a one-day seminar at the Welfare and Rehabilitation Sciences University in Tehran. The seminar, which was entitled “Victims of Violence, Prevention and Therapy”, focused on the treatment methods used with torture victims. A number of socio-pathologists, welfare experts as well as trainers and experts from the police attended.

In his speech, the Director of the ODVV said that all governments must observe international conventions and referred to the recommendations of the UN on the reduction of violence, dismantling of illegal detention centres, informing suspects of their rights, and regular medical check-ups of tortured prisoners. Following the seminar, three workshops on support, prevention and treatment of victims of torture were held.
Iraq

The Center for Psychosocial Health – Iraq (CPHI) marked 26 June with cultural events in Baghdad and London. In Baghdad, the activities were curtailed due to the security situation, but the CPHI did succeed in holding a reception with a poetry recital and an art exhibition on the theme of torture. In London, more than 70 people attended a reception where the situation in the CPHI was described, followed by a poetry recital, an account of torture and music played on African drums. A discussion about the centre in Baghdad followed, and finally Mr. Abdul Karim Kasid, a prominent Iraqi poet in exile, read some of his works on the theme of torture.

Ireland

Together with the Irish Modern Dance Theatre and the Project Arts Centre, the Centre for the Care of Survivors of Torture (CCST) marked 26 June with a dance performance focusing on exploring and expressing the dignity and determination of torture survivors. The dance performance was entitled “Fall & Recover”, and was made by the acclaimed choreographer John Scott. Dancers from countries such as Iran and Angola brought their own cultural diversity and interpretation to this collaborative project, in which dance and movement celebrated the power of the human spirit to strike out a new life in a new country in the face of trauma, uncertainty and confusion.

In total, there were six performances of “Fall & Recover” on 25 and 26 June, and the audience totalled some 300 people. The evening performances were followed by discussions. In addition to the performances, dance and movement workshops were held for clients of the CCST. All events were well covered by the press.
Kenya

The Independent Medico-Legal Unit (IMLU) – as part of the Kenya Human Rights Network (KHRN) – organised a one-day symposium on 26 June together with People Against Torture (PAT). With the theme “Ending the Culture of Impunity” the symposium brought together over 250 participants from about 40 different human rights organisations.

The KHRN also visited the police station in Marsabit and held a meeting with the officers in charge. Afterwards, there was a peaceful procession with banners, posters, stickers and special yellow T-shirts for the participants. Another event took place at the railway station in Nairobi where 60 human rights activists boarded a train, handing out fliers, brochures and stickers in order to raise awareness. The main event was an overnight vigil with 50 local participants, where there were torture victims’ testimonies, liberation songs and poetry sessions. Further, a workshop was organised for about 50 women who had been abused by British soldiers.

In Kisii, PAT and the Catholic Justice and Peace Commission marked the day with a workshop on torture, with 80 participants; and in Nakuru, a peaceful street march was organised with more than 300 people. The march included torture survivors’ testimonies, poems and a statement to the government to stop torture in the country. Later, a vigil with prayers and songs was conducted.

In Nairobi, a road show with human rights activists from the KHRN collaborating organisations converged to a peaceful demonstration. A truck was donned with banners and posters and fitted with loud speakers in order to be used as a mobilisation tool to attract public attention. On the truck, artists played drums and other traditional instruments. Later, there were speeches, torture victims’ testimonies, liberation songs and entertainment by acrobats.

A medico-legal camp, sponsored by PAT and IMLU, was held on 12 June at Kerugoya Prison for about 400 inmates. The Honorary Robison Githae, Assistant Minster of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, participated.

The Mwatikho National Rehabilitation Centre for Victims of Torture organised a variety of events in connection with the UN International Day. On 20 June, a number of mosques and churches prayed for torture victims and their families. Between 21 and 25 June, camps were held to provide counselling, medical and psychiatric services to torture victims and their families. Finally, on 26 June there was a street march, public address and testimonies from torture victims. More than 8,200 people participated in the many events.
Kosovo

The Kosova Rehabilitation Center for Torture Victims (KRCT) announced a competition for the best essay with the theme “Forgive, but do not forget – in the name of peace and truth” in local newspapers. Furthermore, on 25 June they conducted a seminar with representatives from NGOs, the UN’s Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo, the OSCE and human rights organisations. The participants agreed on a number of recommendations, which were submitted to the local and international decision-making bodies in Kosovo. On 26 June, the KRCT hosted a gathering with guests from civic and political life during which the winners of the essay competition were announced. Local and national newspapers as well as television covered the activities.

Lebanon

The Khiam Rehabilitation Center for Victims of Torture (KRC) participated in a 26 June committee with 30 other human rights organisations. The programme adopted by the committee was announced during a press conference in the Lebanese Syndicate of Press on 18 June.

Upon suggestion from the KRC, the Lebanese Minister of Education, Mr. Samir Al-Jesr, issued a statement among the directors of schools and academic institutions asking them to celebrate the day by devoting one school-hour to human rights education.

On 23 June, a workshop about “The Concept of Torture and Defending Mechanisms” was
organised at the Lebanese Institute of Human Rights. On 25 June, the KRC organised a demonstration for the “Thursday Mothers” in front of the UN office in Beirut; and in Saida, more than 500 Lebanese and Palestinian citizens protested in the Martyr’s Square.

The same day, the Secretary-General of the KRC opened a “House of the Lebanese Detainee” in Deir Serian village. The objectives of the house are to rehabilitate the female ex-detainees and help them reintegrate into society. In Kafar Hamam village, the one-year anniversary of another “House of the Lebanese Detainee” was celebrated together with approximately 520 citizens. In addition, a workshop was held for female ex-detainees.

Further, a free medical day was held in different southern villages, where check-ups and medicines were offered to ex-detainees and their families, totalling some 250. The Lebanese Ministry of Health offered the KRC medicines as a contribution to this occasion. Finally, an Open Day was organised in Al-Sanayeh Garden in Beirut on 27 June. A tent of freedom was set up in the middle of the garden, along with stands with photos of torture from the world and pictures of the detainees. A drawing connecting the torture in the Abu Ghraib Prison in Baghdad to the crucifixion of the Christ was made. In addition, there were bands and entertainment. More than 1,000 citizens participated in this event that developed into a festival where everyone danced, sang and shouted “No Torture”. All local media covered the activities.

The Restart Centre for Rehabilitation of Victims of Violence and Torture organised a seminar in Beirut with national and international humanitarian associations and organisations, human rights activists, doctors, judges and lawyers. A total of 85 people participated. Some of the issues dealt with at the seminar were: the Lebanese legislation, the ethics of the medical profession, the scientific approach in dealing with torture problems, and the role and programmes of UN organisations to fight against torture.

The Restart Centre produced posters, pamphlets and a booklet for the seminar, which was covered by newspapers and television.
**Liberia**

The Prisoners Assistance Program (PAP) organised a range of 26 June activities with the theme “Ratification of the UN Convention against Torture”. Firstly, PAP held two lectures on torture and distributed literature on the effects of torture and treatment. Further, a press conference was organised jointly by PAP and the Action by Christians for the Abolition of Torture in Liberia, where a press statement encouraged the Government of Liberia to ratify the UN Convention against Torture and its Optional Protocol and called on the media to actively report on issues of torture. Special emphasis was put on lobbying the responsible authorities to ratify the UN Convention, and an appeal was presented to the National Transitional Legislative Assembly. Later, an act prepared by the Assembly’s Judiciary Committee ratifying the UN Convention and its Optional Protocol was passed with unanimous vote in plenary, and the next day, the act was signed.

On 26 June, a street parade brought together over 100 people from four schools, five communities, and human rights and pro-democracy organisations. After the parade, a programme was held which included traditional folksongs, drama, prayers, speeches and the testimony of a torture victim.

The campaign was made possible by the support of the Norwegian Human Rights Fund.

**Mexico**

Centro de Estudios Fronterizos y de Promoción de los Derechos Humanos celebrated the UN International Day with a regional meeting with civil organisations in the northern region of the country. During the meeting, the human rights situation in the country and the work of NGOs were discussed. The participants elaborated a statement against torture in the northern region of Mexico, which was presented at a public event. Various media representatives covered the event and listened to the organisations, which comprised the National Network of Human Rights Organisations in the Northern Region.

On 25 June, a new organisation, the Colectivo Contra la Tortura y la Impunidad held a press conference to inform about its existence and its aim of defending survivors of torture from a social and humanitarian point of view.

**Moldova, Republic of**

Together with Amnesty International and the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights, the Rehabilitation Center for Torture Victims “Memoria” (RCTV “Memoria”) organised a press conference with 17 media representatives. The next day the RCTV “Memoria” organised a seminar on physical and psychological consequences of torture and the position of victims in society, where a total of 53 beneficiaries of the centre participated.
Further, on 24 June, an informative meeting was held at the refugee centre, and on 25 June an Open Day was organised at the office of the RCTV “Memoria”. Representatives of international organisations, embassies and beneficiaries of the RCTV “Memoria” participated. As part of this event, an exhibition was organised with crafts, photos and pictures made by patients. The RCVT “Memoria” produced leaflets and informative materials for the event, where some 150 people participated and which was well covered by the press.

**Morocco**

In collaboration with the Moroccan Forum for Truth and Justice, the Centre d’Accueil et d’Orientation des Victimes de la Torture organised a public meeting which brought together around 100 persons comprising representatives from human rights organisations, victims of torture and their families, health professionals, and journalists.

A book exhibition was held in connection with the meeting, and an ex-prisoner and torture survivor presented his book, which is a personal description of 10 years of detention and systematic torture.
Nepal

The Centre for Victims of Torture, Nepal (CVICT) and the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) jointly organised an interaction programme at the NHRC premises on 26 June. A paper on “Torture in Present Situation and Questions Raised by Impunity” was presented for discussion. Among the speakers was Dr. Bhogendra Sharma, President of the IRCT. Important issues were raised during the discussion, which had more than 120 participants and was well covered by the press.

In the main market of Biratnagar, the sub-centre of CVICT, together with representatives from Amnesty International, local journalists and human rights organisations, distributed stickers and posters with messages against torture. They also distributed pamphlets with messages of awareness to passers-by, security personnel and shopkeepers. In order to promote awareness of torture among students, a painting competition on torture issues was conducted for secondary students at the sub-centre’s premises. On 28 June, an interaction programme among torture victims and CVICT staff of Biratnagar was also organised, where a total of 35 torture victims shared their views and feelings, and discussed what steps should be taken in the future in order to rehabilitate torture victims and eliminate torture. More than 85 people attended the event.

CVICT’s sub-centre in Nepalgunj organised an essay competition for school children with the topic “Torture and Conflict can Affect Education in Nepal”. Students, parents, teachers, lawyers, human rights activists and journalists participated. In addition, an interaction programme on the UN Convention against Torture was organised with the participation of legal practitioners, government officials, journalists, human rights activists, students and members of civil society.

CVICT’s partner organisation, the Human Rights Forum in Ilam district, organised an interaction programme, where the participants included the Chief District Officer, a former campus chief, journalists, representatives from the district court and district police station, the secretary of the Nepal Bar Associations, members of local political parties, other human rights activists and members of civil society groups. Approximately 80 people attended, and the local media covered the event.

NEPAL: The sub-centre of CVICT distributed stickers in the main market of Biratnagar on 26 June.
**Pakistan**

*Amnesty International – Pakistan (AI-Pakistan)* arranged a “Together against Torture” football match between the Sindh police and Baloch Union. The match and its theme were highly publicised in the national and local media, and a number of banners brought attention to the theme. The fact that the Sindh police agreed to play and that the two teams pledged publicly and in front of hundreds of spectators to help stop torture and violence against women, made the match very significant. Some of Pakistan’s well-known football coaches and former players were also present. Before and during the match, the importance of the theme “Stop Violence Against Women” and “Stop All Forms of Torture” were announced over the loudspeakers, and the AI-Pakistan Director declared that “until and unless all of us, men, women, police, sportsmen and people from all walks of life stand up against violence and torture, these crimes against humanity will not stop”. After the match, prizes were distributed to the winners, runner-up and “man of the match”.

The *Human Rights Commission*, together with Amnesty International and the Human Rights Education, arranged a seminar in commemoration of the UN International Day. Almost 100 people from civil society participated in the event, where all speakers condemned torture all over the world.

*Rahat – Voice against Torture (VAT)* launched its website, www.voiceagainsttorture.org.pk, on 26 June. The website will be aiming to bridge multiparty organisations working for human rights, and current news and updates concerning torture and other human rights issues from around the world will be available. VAT services are described and regular quarterly publications can be subscribed to and are available for downloading.

*SACH – Struggle for Change* observed the UN International Day with a seminar together with the UN Information Centre (UNIC). The Federal Interior Minister of Pakistan, Mr. Faisal Saleh Hayat, participated as the chief guest together with human rights organisations, relevant government departments, police officials, health professionals, media representatives and students. The Federal Interior Minister said that the fight against torture is an uphill struggle and that the Government of Pakistan is fully aware of the seriousness of the issue and appreciates those human rights activists who are raising the torture issue, putting their lives at risk. The media provided extensive coverage of the seminar and the issue of torture.

On 26 June, SACH also inaugurated a rehabilitation centre for victims in Adiala Prison, Rawalpindi. Among the participants were the Director of the UNIC, representatives from the media as well as the senior superintendent of Adiala prison and the prison doctor. A total of 280 people participated in the event, which was covered by all the local and national newspapers.
Palestinian Authority

On 27 June, the Human Rights Committee of the Gaza Community Mental Health Programme (GCMHP) organised a workshop, attended by more than 60 representatives from various governmental and non-governmental organisations. The first presentation was on the “Effects of Preventing Torture on the Mental Well-Being of the Individual and Society”. Mr. Mazen Shagoura, from the Palestinian Independent Commission for Citizens’ Rights, presented the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention against Torture, and afterwards a member of the Palestinian Legislative Council gave a speech on “National Monitoring Strategies and their Role in Reducing Torture”.

At the end of the workshop, recommendations were made for creating a preparatory committee that would work on developing national strategies for preventing torture. The GCMHP will steer the committee.

Information materials were given to the participants, including a copy of the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention against Torture in Arabic.

The Treatment and Rehabilitation Center for Victims of Torture organised a workshop to commemorate the UN International Day. There were several speeches at the workshop, which began with a moment of silence for the Palestinians suffering under the Israeli occupation.
At the closure of the workshop, the participants agreed on a demand for international, regional and local institutions to strengthen their role in preventing torture by documenting the testimonies of ex-detainees and victims of torture through the establishment of a museum documenting Palestinian suffering. Also, they recommended a strengthening of the co-operation between human rights institutions, making the issue of torture in Israeli prisons an international responsibility and conducting scientific research to document violations, thereby raising public awareness.

The East Jerusalem YMCA Rehabilitation Program organised an interactive discussion programme on a local Palestinian television station on the evening of 25 June. There were questions from the facilitator and interactively from the television audience watching the programme at home. From 23 to 25 June, three youth groups, one for each day, painted and drew images and experiences of torture on big white sheets of paper. The first group comprised 25 children from the YMCA sport centre summer camp. The second group consisted of young clients from the rehabilitation centre, who had either been shot, wounded or badly tortured in prisons. The third group comprised 10 children who were receiving psychological treatment through the rehabilitation programme. On 26 June, the groups watched a short film about a boy and a girl who were arrested and tortured, and afterwards they discussed torture and its effects. The rehabilitation centre disseminated gifts to all children and youths who participated in the drawing exercise and wished them a happy life without torture.

**Peru**

The Centro de Atención Psicosocial (CAPS) held an international solidarity-fair in Lima on 27 June. The purpose was to highlight the interaction between the state and civil society in connection with different themes, such as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the Free Trade Area of the Americas and the fight against corruption. From the early morning, hundreds of people came by to hear about these themes. Besides the many stands, there was a group, which read stories for the children, six workshops, a round table with experts, and a music festival with 14 artists and groups. In total, more than 2,000 people participated in the fair which was covered by five radio stations, three television channels and two newspapers.
Philippines

The Balay Rehabilitation Center, in co-operation with other member organisations of the United Against Torture Coalition (UATC), marched to Plaza Miranda to hold a rally to demonstrate solidarity with torture victims. The Iraq Solidarity Committee and the Free Burma Coalition also supported the UATC rally, where streamers, press statements and flyers were distributed. Congressman Mr. Mario Joyo Aguya delivered a speech and reiterated his commitment to work for the passage in Congress of an anti-torture bill filed by the UATC.

During the rally, the UATC organised a portrayal of torture, and the participants joined a painting activity where they signed their names and messages to end torture and impunity on a piece of cloth. The cloth, together with a petition letter, was sent to politicians to expedite the passage of the anti-torture law.

Eight major newspapers, two television stations and one radio station covered the event.

The Xavier University Center for Legal Assistance (XUCLA) held a film showing dealing with a local version of torture. After the film, there was a lecture on torture. Participants were volunteers, law students and undergraduate students of XUCLA. Further, a motorcade was arranged in the morning around Cagayan de Oro City.

PHILIPPINES: Around 200 people joined a rally co-organised by the Balay Rehabilitation Center.

PHILIPPINES: XUCLA drove around the city with banners raising awareness of 26 June.
**Russian Federation**

On 26 June, the *Humanitarian and Charitable Center “COMPASSION”* sent a letter with the heading “Russian Government refuses to help victims of torture” to the members of the Russian State Duma and to the members of the Russian Parliament. In the letter, “COMPASSION” pointed out that one of the laws subject to change is the “Federal Law on the Rehabilitation of Victims of Political Repression”, and that the proposed amendment of the law is inconsistent with the UN Convention against Torture, which Russia has ratified. The proposed amendment of the Russian law demonstrates that the federal government distances itself to the international community, to survivors of torture, and to the memory of the millions killed in Stalin’s genocide.

**Senegal**

*Victimes de Violences Réhabilitées, le Centre de Soins du CAPREC* organised a public conference under the heading “Torture and ill-treatment during periods of war seen from the viewpoint of international law”. The conference included various presentations followed by a debate among the audience, in which also a number of torture survivors of different nationalities shared their personal stories. In order to attract public attention to the commemoration, a large banner was displayed for three days outside the town hall of Thies. The conference was covered by several newspapers, and centre staff appeared in a live broadcast on a local radio station.

**Sudan**

The *Amel Center for Treatment and Rehabilitation of Victims of Torture* celebrated the UN International Day in co-operation with the Ministry of Law and Justice, the human rights administration and the UN. There were several speeches highlighting the critical situation in the country and the importance of the Ministry of Justice signing the agreement on human rights in Sudan. A representative from the Advisory Council of Human Rights thanked the UN, non-governmental and governmental organisations and companies concerned with human rights and confirmed that the government needs civil society in the effort to eradicate torture.
Turkey
In the days leading up to 26 June, the Centre d’Action Sociale, Réhabilitación et Adaption organised a series of public meetings on torture related issues, such as legal rights of torture victims, methods of rehabilitation, etc. As in 2003, a group of children released balloons from the wall of the Fortress of Diyarbakir as a protest against torture, and afterwards they visited a number of organisations distributing brochures and invitations for the meetings. Altogether, approximately 75 persons took part in the meetings, including eight journalists. The 26 June events ended with a small party for around 50 torture victims and their families and friends.

Uganda
The African Centre for Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture Victims (ACTV) celebrated 26 June in collaboration with a number of other human rights organisations.
Banners as well as 4,000 posters and 100,000 leaflets were distributed in various parts of Uganda inviting people to participate in a planned street march. A band played during the march. A petition was drafted and distributed nationwide calling upon people to sign and protest against torture. A total number of 6,285 signatures were collected from all districts of Uganda within a period of two weeks, and they were handed over to the Speaker of the 7th Parliament in connection with a press conference. Moreover, statements signed by all human rights organisations on the organising committee were sent to all heads of security organs in Uganda, reminding them that Uganda has a legal obligation to guarantee the right to freedom from torture.

The activities received good press coverage, and were supported by the Danish International Development Assistance both financially and with guidance.

The Uganda Forum Against Torture and Organised Violence (UFATOVE) issued a mission statement on the occasion of 26 June. In the statement, which was sent the UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, UFATOVE explained that its mission is to provide the services which are lacking because the state and other players fail in providing adequate services. Further, UNFATOVE described its commitments to fulfil what is outlined in the UN Convention against Torture.

United Kingdom

The Coalition of African NGOs Against Torture (CANAT) issued a press release in which it was stated that since the declaration of the war against terror, a number of governments have increasingly ignored their obligations under international law on the pretext of increased anti-terrorist security measures. CANAT also expressed its alarm over the human rights abuses by United States and British troops in Iraq, and stated that torture is the strongest tool against democracy.
United States of America

The Asian Americans for Community Involvement – the Center for Survivors of Torture used the occasion to organise a series of actions. These included initiatives aimed at more awareness-raising on the issue of torture, and attempts at educating the US Congress on the issue. An editorial was printed in the largest San Francisco Bay Area newspaper, concerning torture in the Abu Ghraib Prison in Baghdad. Further, a letter was sent to members of the US Judiciary Committee, which is investigating the Abu Ghraib incidences and the question of US torture.

In this way, the activities on 26 June were the first in a series of ongoing events.

The Falun Dafa practitioners from Kansas and Missouri held a press conference and a photo exhibition on 26 June. The events were held at Plaza, Mill Creek Park, Kansas City.

On 26 June Survivors of Torture, International warmly welcomed the Honourable Judge Baltasar Garzón of Spain to San Diego, California. He was introduced at a special event held by His Excellency José Luis Dicenta Ballester, the Consul General of Spain in Los
Angeles. Judge Baltasar Garzón gave a speech entitled “No Impunity for Torturers”. After his presentation, the audience gathered for a reception where approximately 200 guests attended.

**Uruguay**

On the occasion of 26 June, Servicio de Rehabilitación Social, Amnesty International and other human rights organisations, founded the Comisión Nacional contra la Tortura with the aim of supporting torture victims and promoting initiatives to eradicate torture. At a press conference, they stated that torture still takes place in Uruguay and that it is the obligation of the state to investigate and punish all acts of torture. The Comisión Nacional contra la Tortura urged the State of Uruguay to create a commission to investigate crimes of torture in the past, to ratify the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention against Torture and to offer reparation to the victims.

**Uzbekistan**

The Legal Aid Society (LAS) launched an awareness campaign on the UN International Day. LAS invited a large number of people to join the memorial in support of torture victims. To support the action, people were asked to light candles in their windows at 9 o’clock in the evening of 26 June. LAS was pleased by the positive feedback and with the fact that people from different countries participated in the action. LAS also wrote an open letter to the President of Uzbekistan calling for the Government to sign the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention against Torture. Furthermore, they encouraged the international community in the country to put similar pressure on the Government.
States which have RATIFIED or acceded to the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

138 States as at 25 October 2004

Afghanistan  
Albania  
Algeria  
Antigua and Barbuda  
Argentina  
Armenia  
Australia  
Austria  
Azerbaijan  
Bahrain  
Bangladesh  
Belarus  
Belgium  
Belize  
Benin  
Bolivia  
Bosnia and Herzegovina  
Botswana  
Brazil  
Bulgaria  
Burkina Faso  
Burundi  
Cambodia  
Cameroon  
Canada  
Cape Verde  
 Chad  
Chile  
China  
Colombia  
Congo  
Congo, Democratic Republic of the  
Costa Rica  
Côte d’Ivoire  
Croatia  
Cuba  
Cyprus  
 Czech Republic  
 Denmark  
 Djibouti  
Ecuador  
 Egypt  
 El Salvador  
Equatorial Guinea  
Estonia  
Ethiopia  
Finland  
France  
 Gabon  
Georgia  
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Ghana  
Greece  
Guatemala  
Guinea  
Guayana  
Holy See  
Honduras  
Hungary  
Iceland  
Indonesia  
Ireland  
Israel  
Italy  
Japan  
Jordan  
Kazakhstan  
Kenya  
Korea, Republic of  
Kuwait  
 Kyrgyzstan  
Latvia  
Lebanon  
Lesotho  
Liberia  
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya  
Liechtenstein  
Lithuania  
Luxembourg  
Macedonia, the former Yugoslav Republic of  
Malawi  
Maldives  
Mali  
Malta  
Mauritius  
Mexico  
Moldova, Republic of  
Monaco  
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Morocco  
Mozambique  
Namibia  
Nepal  
Netherlands  
New Zealand  
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Peru  
Philippines  
Poland  
Portugal  
Qatar  
Romania  
Russian Federation  
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines  
Saudi Arabia  
Senegal  
Serbia and Montenegro  
 Seychelles  
Sierra Leone  
Slovakia  
Slovenia  
Somalia  
South Africa  
Spain  
Sri Lanka  
Swaziland  
Sweden  
Switzerland  
Syrian Arab Republic  
Tajikistan  
Timor-Leste  
Togo  
Tunisia  
Turkey  
Turkmenistan  
Uganda  
Ukraine  
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland  
United States of America  
Uruguay  
Uzbekistan  
Venezuela  
Yemen  
Zambia
## States which have NOT RATIFIED the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

56 States as at 25 October 2004

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We encourage you to commemorate 26 June 2005

For the fourth consecutive year, the IRCT has published this Global Report on the UN International Day in Support of Victims of Torture. The report gives a good overview of the many different types of events held on 26 June 2004, as part of the IRCT’s “Together against Torture” campaign.

We encourage you to use this report as inspiration when considering what type of event to plan for 26 June 2005. We also encourage you to collaborate with other organisations in your country which contribute to the fight against torture. You may find that you can learn from each other’s experiences or that you can plan your 2005 event together.

The IRCT is planning to organise a 26 June campaign in 2005 and hopes to collaborate with as many rehabilitation centres and anti-torture organisations as possible. Worldwide commemoration of 26 June will once more raise awareness of the problem of torture and the achievements of the global movement against torture. In the months prior to 26 June 2005, the IRCT website (www.irct.org) will provide a forum through which you can share your plans for this important day with other campaign participants.

For more information on how to join the 26 June 2005 campaign, please visit our website or contact:

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DK-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
How to support the IRCT and future 26 June campaigns

**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
DK-1022 Copenhagen K
Denmark

**By bank transfer**
Our account details are
Danske Bank
Holmens Kanal Branch
Holmens Kanal
DK-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: 3785-041941
IBAN: DK32 3000 3785 0419 41
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