Together against Torture


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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 statistics displayed under “The IRCT and 26 June in numbers” are based on figures provided by the centres and programmes within the IRCT network.
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In 2008 treatment centres for torture survivors around the world commemorated 26 June, the UN International Day in Support of Victims of Torture.
Foreword from the President

Every year the world marks 26 June as the United Nations Day in Support of Victims of Torture. On this day thousands of dedicated individuals and many dozen organisations campaign in honour of the victims and survivors of this cruel human rights violation and to educate decision-makers and ordinary people alike about the needs and rights of those millions of men, women and children who have survived torture.

As the umbrella for more than 140 rehabilitation centres and programmes in 73 countries, the IRCT annually works with its member centres and other partners to co-ordinate 26 June events around the globe. “Let’s erase torture” was the rallying cry for this year’s 26 June campaign. Taking the message quite literally, the IRCT distributed erasers and pencils with the slogan to dozens of organisations to use in their activities. These materials were accompanied by other new products: a television spot available in six languages and an interactive game on the IRCT’s home page (www.irct.org) whereby players can erase the tools of torture and put torturers behind bars. And the IRCT continued to provide a suite of campaign tools such as fact sheets, sample press releases, a photo book and exhibition, and an idea catalogue as supplementary materials.

This year, too, the IRCT was delighted to have Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu lend his name to support the global movement against torture. In a statement read aloud in numerous countries, Archbishop Tutu emphasised that “speaking out against torture – breaking the silence – is a vital first step to bring perpetrators to justice and to honour survivors’ needs and rights”. The statement also promoted ratification of the United Nations Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, which came into force on 26 June 1987.

Once again in 2008, centres and organisations tailored their activities to suit the contexts in which they work. Prison visits, seminars and conferences, art competitions, film screenings, concerts and musical performances were just a few of the myriad events held to commemorate 26 June. Often torture survivors played an active role in these activities, providing moving speeches and testimonies.

This report presents the events of 26 June as celebrated by 53 organisations across the world. Through their activities they demonstrate that there is hope after torture, and that together we can rebuild the lives of those who have suffered under torture’s cruel hand.

Dr Abdel Hāmid Afana
Campaign material 2008

As in previous years, organisations had access through 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. The IRCT Secretariat distributed t-shirts, caps, balloons and badges with the campaign’s “T”-logo to the participating organisations, thus ensuring visual consistency to underpin the campaign’s global scope.

Alongside a statement that was read out by human rights defenders across the world on 26 June (see page 20), three new campaign tools were introduced under this year’s theme “Let’s erase torture”. The IRCT produced the animation “Let’s erase torture” and the web-based game “Help us erase torture”. Furthermore, pencils and erasers designed with inspiration from the theme were distributed to the participating organisations.

“Let’s erase torture”

This animation invites people to engage in “erasing” torture from the globe and calls for the eradication of torture from our world.

The full animation is available in six languages on the IRCT website, http://www.irct.org
“Help us erase torture”

The web-based game “Help us erase torture” invites players to join forces against torture and learn more about this crime by testing their skills at erasing torture. Play the game online to test your skills at http://www.irct.org
The IRCT and 26 June in numbers

Together against torture we help rebuild the lives of torture survivors and intensify the fight for the eradication of torture worldwide. The IRCT embraces 142 rehabilitation centres and programmes from 73 countries, representing an international movement against torture and in support of survivors. The numbers presented here give an overview of the work carried out by the IRCT member centres worldwide.

Total number of torture survivors treated by region in 2007

Category of victims treated by region
26 June 2008 campaign participation

Over 60 centres took part in the IRCT’s commemoration of 26 June. This is an overview of where that worldwide participation took place. On the following pages you can read about the activities 53 of these centres organised and carried out in the spirit of 26 June.
Campaign activities worldwide

Albania

Albanian Rehabilitation Centre for Trauma and Torture Victims (ARCT)
Using the theme of this year’s 26 June campaign, “Erase torture”, ARCT organised film screenings, peace walks and prison visits. ARCT sought to increase public awareness on torture, and made arrangements with the director of the local prison to realise a joint workshop between ARCT and prison staff under the theme of “Erase torture”. Continuing the activities, open discussions concerning issues with the penitentiary system in Albania were held. These discussions generated recommendations on increasing training of prison staff and strengthening the collaboration between civil society and prison staff. Furthermore, ARCT distributed publications, flyers and campaign posters to promote the importance of 26 June.

Argentina

Equipo Argentino de Trabajo e Investigación Psicosocial (EATIP)
EATIP carried out a training seminar in collaboration with the University of Quilmes in Buenos Aires. The event was organised into two roundtable discussions and later debates in smaller working groups. Two hundred students and health professionals attended the seminar and were trained in both mental health and human rights. The event helped to boost the consciousness of the prevention of torture within the academic community – a crucial element in the defence of human rights. Campaign material provided by the IRCT was exhibited at the university and distributed to attendees.
Armenia

Foundation Against Violation of Law (FAVL)

In commemoration of 26 June, the Foundation Against Violation of Law organised a conference entitled “Say No To Torture” at the Congress Hotel in Yerevan. The conference was attended by the Ombudsman of Armenia, the deputies of national police, heads of various medical institutions, representatives of human rights NGOs, the media and volunteers from the Civil Centres of FAVL. The conference was designed to raise awareness on the issue of torture in Armenia and around the world, with the goal of involving new parties in the prevention of torture and protection of torture survivors. With the assistance of the IRCT, FAVL produced t-shirts, notebooks and balloons sporting the slogan “Say No To Torture”.

Australia

The Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture Inc. - Foundation House (VFST)

On 26 June the Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture arranged an oration with renowned Australian journalist and storyteller Martin Flanagan, who spoke against the use of torture in any circumstance. The speech left a clear and moving message that resonated in the minds and hearts of the 120 people in attendance. In his oration marking the UN International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, Flanagan concluded, “What I know now is that as a human possibility, torture is never far away. There is a battle to be fought for me as a journalist, for everyone, there is always a battle to be fought.”

Bangladesh

Odhikar

Odhikar celebrated 26 June with a seminar held at the National Press Club. At the seminar Odhikar arranged a roundtable discussion entitled “Let’s speak up against the unspeakable”. Politicians, lawyers, journalists, rights defenders, academics, development activists and victims of torture attended the discussion to mark the day on which the United Nations Convention against Torture came into force in 1987. The speakers at the event, who included poet Farhad Mazhar, called on the politicians to make a commitment to uphold the UN convention.
vention and amend the constitution in a way that the nation eliminates any constitutional provisions supportive of torture or inhuman treatment.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Udruženje za Rahabilitaciju Žrtava Torture - Centar za Žrtve Torture (CTV)
The Bosnian Centre for Torture Victims celebrated the United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture with a roundtable discussion under the slogan “Together against Torture”. More than 40 institutions and individuals were invited, such as associations of ex-camp prisoners, the Ministry for Human Rights, various embassies and representatives from the media, all of whom are engaged in issues related to human rights. The participants agreed that positive changes in the regulation of status of torture victims are taking place, but the processes of implementing political change is very slow and insufficient to meet the needs of survivors. The roundtable discussion concluded with a request to the government to take steps to ensure improved treatment and a better future for survivors of torture.

Vive Žene, Centar za terapiju i rehabilitaciju (CTR)
Vive Žene organised an event for children under the 26 June slogan “Together against Torture”, which included creative workshops and a performance by a magician. Over 100 children and other Tuzla citizens were present at the event. The attendees showed their strong commitment against torture and ill-treatment with artistic paintings and drawings produced during the event. The day before 26 June, Vive Žene organised a roundtable discussion on the prevention of torture with significant participation by the local public. The participants were addressed by the director of Vive Žene, the mayor of Tuzla and a representative of the EC Delegation in Bosnia.

Cameroon

Trauma Centre Cameroon (TCC)
TCC marked this year’s International Day in Support of Victims of Torture with several activities at Norbert Kenne Memorial Peace House in Yaounde, with participation of more than 90 people. The activities were aimed at raising awareness on issues related to torture and enhancing the coping capacity of torture survivors. The vice president of TCC introduced the activities with a welcome speech,
and the director of TCC read the IRCT Global Reading (see page 20). Continuing the activities, two torture survivors from the Democratic Republic of the Congo presented their testimonies and more than 60 women vocalised this year’s IRCT campaign slogan “Let’s Erase Torture” in their vernaculars. Furthermore, the TCC launched an art competition and distributed campaign material including t-shirts, erasers and pencils imprinted with the slogan.

Canada

Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture (CCVT)
CCVT organised two events for this year’s commemoration of 26 June, an open house and a party in appreciation of volunteers. Both offices of CCVT opened their doors to the general public with the help of the clients, who took a major role in organising the event. Over 50 guests were welcomed and had a tour of the offices, where they enjoyed an Ethiopian/Eritrean coffee ceremony and chocolate. Furthermore, attendees to the party were treated to Afghan food and entertainment by CCVT staff, clients and local artists. Highlights of the event included a beautiful poem recital by a client, and a performance by Rock Star, a group of children from CCVT’s homework club. Other performers

were Mohammad Ali, a Spoken Word artist; Ushanthy Kirubakaran, a classical Indian dancer; and Shangaza, a Ugandan dance group.

Chad

Association Jeunesse pour la Paix et la Non-Violence (AJPNV/CRVT)
AJPNV/CRVT commemorated this year’s 26 June with a peaceful demonstration with members of staff, departing from the office of the organisation to a restaurant where a retreat was organised under the theme “Let’s break the silence around torture”. The Secretary-General of AJPNV/CRVT held a speech on the importance of 26 June, while the President of the organisation spoke about the harmful effects of torture. Continuing the retreat, a survivor gave his personal account of torture. A press conference was held, in which an appeal was issued to the Chadian government concerning the dire need for policies on caretaking of victims of torture. The press conference was broadcast live by Télé Chad and Radio FM Liberté.
Colombia

Corporación AVRE - Apoyo a Víctimas de violencia sociopolítica pro Recuperación Emocional (AVRE)

Corporación AVRE is part of the Colombian Coalition against Torture (CCCT), who started a campaign in 2007 with the slogan “May human dignity endure! No to atrocity. No to torture.” As part of this campaign they drafted a report about torture and cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment in Colombia. During the month of June, they publicised 26 June through internet videos (which can be seen on cconstralatortura.idoo.com). CCCT launched the report on 3 July in the National Library in Bogotá, with approximately 200 persons attending. The event included a performance by a theater group, and an act of Colombian folklore.

Congo, Democratic Republic of the

Centre Psycho Médical pour la Réhabilitation des Victimes de la Torture - SOPROP (CPMRVT)

SOPROP organised a retreat in order to spend the day with victims of torture and sexual violence. The long-term goal of the retreat was to support the eradication of torture, focusing on the northern province of Nord Kivu, where torture is a particularly widespread problem. The activities were initiated with an introduction by the regional coordinator of SOPROP and the person responsible for the Woman and Family Programme, focusing especially on female victims of torture and sexual violence. Journalists from Radio Télévision Nationale Congolaise and Radio OKAPI were present. The events continued with singing and dancing by local performers.

Save Congo

In the week leading up to 26 June, Save Congo organised a press conference, a workshop, an essay competition and a women’s race. Members of staff distributed European Commission campaign material to over 200 people in the city of Lubumbashi. Some 150 people from local organisations and members of the press attended a press conference on the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention against Torture. The speaker of the event called upon the Congolese government to support the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture. Furthermore, 380 persons from the police and Lubumbashi University participated in the workshop, which was organised to discuss the role of the local communities in the prevention...
of torture. Fifty-seven secondary school students participated in an essay competition on the topic “Let’s erase Torture”. On 26 June, a radio station and two TV channels aired TV spots produced by the IRCT and the European Commission respectively to disseminate the important message.

**Croatia**

**International Rehabilitation Centre for Torture Victims - Zagreb (IRCT Zagreb)**

IRCT Zagreb organised a seminar for the younger members of the Social Democratic Party of Croatia. The seminar focused on the consequences and long-term impact torture has on families, communities and society, ending with a discussion amongst the participants. Furthermore, a workshop on the importance of 26 June and main methods in working psychotherapeutically with victims of torture was held. Fifteen students from the Department of Psychology from the University of Zagreb participated. Continuing the activities, representatives from the local government and institutions met to discuss the effects of torture and how to prevent it. The animation “Let’s erase torture” produced by the IRCT (see page 6) was broadcast several times during the day on national television.

**Denmark**

**Rehabiliterings- og Forskningscentret for Torturofre (RCT)**

To celebrate 26 June RCT organised an open screening of the Oscar winning film “Taxi to the Dark Side” at a local cinema in Copenhagen. The film was introduced to the audience by Mette Hoffmann Meyer, one of the promoters behind the global project “Why Democracy” (http://www.whydemocracy.net).

**Ethiopia**

**Rehabilitation Center for Victims of Torture in Ethiopia (RCVTE)**

The RCVTE celebrated 26 June with a music and dance performance by local artists. Several torture survivors attended the event alongside representatives of the European Commission Delegation in Ethiopia and representatives of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights as well as local police, lawyers, law students and psychologists. The event attracted wide media coverage by various radio stations and newspapers.
France

Parcours d’Exil

Germany

Medizinische Flüchtlingshilfe Bochum (MFH)
MFH Bochum organised an event where the animation “Let’s erase torture” produced by the IRCT was presented together with campaign material such as flyers and posters. After the presentation, a discussion on the psychological effects of torture took place. Around 50 people attended the event, which was covered by Radio Europa.

Greece

Medical Rehabilitation Centre for Torture Victims (MRCT)
This year the activities dedicated to 26 June began in early May. A musical performance entitled “Women’s Legend” was organised by singer Maria Faradouri and actor Lydia Koniordou. The concert took place three times and was broadcast by the national TV channels in Greece. More than 3,000 people attended the performances. In addition, a press conference was held on 23 June in collaboration with the European Commission office in Greece. Some 15 journalists from Greek media were present during the event. Both activities received a lot of publicity and several newspapers published articles on the events.

Hungary

Cordelia Foundation for the Rehabilitation of Torture Victims
The Cordelia Foundation for the Rehabilitation of Torture Victims organised a large-scale public event in one of the most popular clubs in Budapest, Gödör Klub. The event was open to everyone
interested, and passers-by were able to drop in and get information about the importance of 26 June and the rehabilitation activities the Cordelia Foundation carries out. Participants were offered to take part in various performances, all aiming to raise awareness and express the phenomenon of torture. The most successful events were a traditional Arabic concert and an exhibition showcasing the photos from the IRCT photo book “Renewing Lives”. Approximately 300 people attended the events, including 50 refugees from reception centres.

Shubhodaya Center for Rehabilitation of Victims of Torture and Violence - SOSRAC (Society for Social Research, Art and Culture) (SCRVTV)
SOSRAC organised several cultural and awareness-raising activities on the occasion of 26 June, including a drawing and painting competition, a sports event, a press conference and a peace march. Torture survivors and their families were invited for the various events, alongside local families and other members of the communities. The drawing and painting competition turned out to be a great success, with both children and adults participating. Also, a number of sports events were organised, where every participant was awarded a small prize. The press conference received massive attention from the media and several of the journalists who attended were given the opportunity to interview the torture survivors present at the event. Articles on the conference were published in several newspapers and televised on almost all the local news channels. The events culminated with a peace march aimed to create awareness among the general public on the rights and needs of survivors and the need to prevent torture.

India

Centre for Care of Torture Victims (CCTV)
To commemorate 26 June, CCTV arranged a gathering, which was attended by several prominent guests. Professor Malini Bhattacharya, Chairperson of West Bengal Commission for Women, inaugurated the programme and delivered a speech in which she put special emphasis on the widespread problem of torture of women. A sub-centre of CCTV held a colourful rally with posters and banners to raise awareness on the importance of the day.
Iran, Islamic Republic of

Organization for Defending Victims of Violence (ODVV)
ODVV hosted and organised a technical panel to mark 26 June. Several dignitaries and experts on various torture related issues were invited to speak at the panel. The director of ODVV made a welcome speech thanking the attendees and stressing the importance of 26 June. The director of the Human Rights Studies Centre of Tehran University briefed the audience on joint human rights projects of the Islamic Republic of Iran and UNDP.

Ireland

SPIRASI The Centre for the Care of Survivors of Torture (CCST)
To commemorate this year’s 26 June, SPIRASI organised a candle-lighting ceremony together with an awareness raising event. The South African Ambassador to Ireland, Priscilla Jana, lit a candle to symbolise the hope for the future of all torture survivors around the world, while members of staff read poems reflecting on torture in general and their own experience working with survivors of torture. The ceremony was completed with a musical performance. SPIRASI staff and volunteers obtained 1,000 signatures during the awareness raising event, which took place in the Irish Financial Services Centre in Dublin. The event urged the Irish government to fulfil its obligations to provide treatment and rehabilitation services for survivors of torture living in Ireland. The signed petition was then handed to the Irish Prime Minister, Brian Cowen.

Israel

The Public Committee Against Torture in Israel (PCATI)
PCATI marked this year’s 26 June with a variety of activities, taking place throughout the week starting 22 June. The events of the week were held to attract the attention of the Israeli public to the issue of torture and ill-treatment as an issue that is relevant to all people in Israel, the Occupied Palestinian Territories and internationally. To start, a report on soldier violence against Palestinian detainees was released. On 26 June, the main conference was held in Tel Aviv. Two videos opened the conference, one of which presented the testimony of a torture survivor. In the course of the events
surrounding 26 June, wide media coverage was achieved, totalling 69 references in the press and media, including newspapers, electronic media and others.

**Italy**

Associazione Italiana Fisioterapisti (AIFI)
This year, AIFI organised a local campaign marking the UN International Day in Support of Victims of Torture and published a presentation on the consequences of torture and ill-treatment on their website.

**Kenya**

Independent Medico Legal Unit (IMLU)
IMLU adopted this year’s campaign slogan “Let’s Erase Torture” and organised various events, including an interdenominational prayer session, local TV talk shows, petitions and a peaceful procession. The objective of the prayer session was to commemorate the day and to visit one of the best documented torture places in Kenya, whilst calling on the Kenyan government to eradicate torture.

The director of IMLU attended the Citizen TV Breakfast Show talk show programme, while the legal and training officer at IMLU attended a talk show on channel K24. Additionally, IMLU together with other partner organisations wrote a petition to the Prime Minister of Kenya, urging him to address the plight of torture survivors while ensuring that human rights violations were investigated and a law against torture is passed in Kenya.

Mwatikho Torture Survivors Organization (MATESO)
In commemoration of 26 June, MATESO carried out several events, including street processions and theatre and dance performances. All of the events were covered by the local radio station, and campaign material including t-shirts, posters and banners were distributed to the participants.

*The campaign activities continues on page 22*
Global reading

“As concerned citizens we must call upon our governments to ratify and abide by (...) the international conventions, which aim to protect men, women and children from the awesome power of the state. Speaking out against torture – breaking the silence – is a vital first step to bring perpetrators to justice and to honour survivors’ needs and rights.

Today, let us pay tribute to the dignity and strength of torture survivors everywhere. It is in their name that we issue the call “Let’s erase torture” – so that all of us can live in a world where the man-made disaster called torture is wiped away.”

Read out by human rights defenders across the world on 26 June 2008 these words concluded a statement signed by Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu, IRCT President Dr Abdel Hamid Afana and IRCT Secretary-General Brita Sydhoff.

The full statement is available on www.irct.org
Statement
Global Reading on 26 June 2008

Ladies and gentlemen,

For over a decade, the world has marked the 26 June as the occasion of the UN International Day in Support of Victims of Torture. On this day, thousands of individuals and organisations around the globe speak out against torture and insist that torture survivors’ needs and rights be fulfilled.

Among those who raise their voice on this day are the treatment centres and programmes affiliated with the International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims – the IRCT. Today, I am proud to read out this statement, which is being delivered by dozens of human rights defenders in many other countries across the world right now. It is a statement of global solidarity, to show that regardless of where we are, we raise a collective voice to say NO to torture. It is a statement in honour of those who have suffered under torture's cruel hand; and a reminder to us all that no matter where we live or work, there are torture survivors among us. Daily they show extraordinary courage as they attempt to heal from the physical and mental wounds of their experience.

"Let’s erase torture" is the theme for the global 26 June campaign. With this theme, we’re calling upon policy-makers as well as the general public to act to eradicate torture, and to assist survivors toward erasing the scars of torture from their bodies and minds.

Rehabilitation services – such as medical care, counselling, legal aid and social support – are a way to heal those scars. Within the IRCT’s global membership of 139 treatment centres and programmes, each year more than a hundred thousand torture survivors and their families receive such services.

However, in spite of the vital services they provide, many of these centres struggle to find the resources to continue their work, and to extend their hand to those in need. But you can help by ensuring, in whatever capacity you are able, that they can keep their doors open. If you are a policymaker, you can help to prioritise rehabilitation services by passing legislation that...
Kosovo

Qendra Kosovare për Rehabilitimin e të Mbijetuarëve të Torturës (KRCT)
KRCT marked 26 June with a press conference aiming to inform the public about the need to prevent torture and provide rehabilitation services for torture survivors. The conference also raised awareness on the role of state institutions and civil society in providing these necessary services. The executive director of KRCT gave a presentation entitled “Torture Survivors and Human Rights”, which was attended by several prominent personalities and human rights activists. During the press conference various campaign materials were distributed to the attendees. The event received media coverage from television channels and almost all of the newspapers in Kosovo, while the executive director of KRCT was a guest on the national morning show on Kosovo’s national television channel.

Lebanon

Khiam Rehabilitation Center of the Victims of Torture (KRC)
Marking this year’s United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, KRC held several events, including the opening of an exhibition entitled “Draw Your Rights” at the Beirut UNESCO Palace. KRC also held a workshop entitled “ Sectarianism is Torture”, in which human rights activists, NGO representatives and medical specialists participated. TV spots on the events were circulated alongside leaflets, posters and stickers raising awareness on torture.

Restart Centre for Rehabilitation of Victims of Violence and Torture
Restart Center conducted an awareness campaign to draw attention to the importance of 26 June, which was targeted at different NGOs, restaurants and the general public. Thirty thousand restaurant placemats and 600,000 prepaid telephone cards with information on 26 June and torture were produced and distributed. This brought the message of the many grave problems that surround the problem of torture to the general public. Continuing the awareness raising campaign, 10,000 posters were distributed to embassies, NGOs, journalists and UN agencies, while a press conference was held in the offices of the EU delegation to maximise media coverage of the campaign.
Mexico

Colectivo Contra la Tortura y la Impunidad A.C. (CCTI)
This year the activities dedicated to 26 June started off with a three-day workshop for 25 health professionals. The workshop was held in collaboration with the Faculty of Medicine of the Autonomous University of Guerrero in Acapulco, Guerrero to raise awareness about torture and the responsibilities of medical doctors and psychologists. Staff from CCTI also took part in a radio programme to raise awareness on torture in Mexico, and a 24-hour vigil was organised in a local park.

Morocco

Association Medicale de Rehabilitation des Victimes de la Torture (AMRVT)
AMRVT organised a medical caravan in Marrakech to commemorate 26 June. The caravan held over 100 consultations. AMRVT also organised a reception with 60 attendees who participated in several events, including a screening of a documentary film about the objectives and activities of AMRVT and the 26 TV spot produced by the IRCT for this year’s campaign. The events ended with children’s activities such as songs and drawings.

Nepal

Yatana Pidit Sarokar Kendra (CVICT)
CVICT organised a programme at its office premises at Bansbari, Kathmandu. The centre also created an expression of solidarity towards all victims of torture through a Rangoli - words written with the use of different colours and flowers.
Palestine

Jesoor - Transcultural Right to Health
In celebration of 26 June, Jesoor organised a seminar aimed at creating mechanisms to eradicate torture and ill-treatment. Around 30 people took part in the discussion, which dealt specifically with the role of mothers and female members of the community in the prevention of torture. Campaign material was distributed to all of the participants.

Treatment and Rehabilitation Center for Victims of Torture (TRC)
TRC and the NGO coalition United against Torture (UAT) organised a conference in Ramallah entitled “Monitoring Human Rights Compliance in Places of Detention”. The series of lectures by national and international organisations and experts examined torture in Palestine and Israel, and discussed the best practices for the prevention of torture.

Philippines

Balay Rehabilitation Center, Inc.
Balay Rehabilitation Center commemorated the 26 June through a weeklong series of activities. The central focus of the events were public awareness raising and encouraging key stakeholders to play a more active role in promoting the right to freedom from torture. Furthermore, the campaign sought to strengthen partnerships between civil society advocates and relevant government institutions in achieving policy reform and structural change promoting torture prevention and fulfilment of the right to freedom from torture. Balay Rehabilitation Center also held a roundtable discussion amongst key national institutions to discuss why torture persists and collectively come up with realistic and practical recommendations and actions. To highlight the importance of the right to freedom from torture and its upcoming activities for the week, Balay held a media briefing that was attended by several broadsheet and tabloid reporters.

Romania

Centrul Medical de Reabilitare a Victimelor Torturii - Iasi (MRCT Iasi)
The Medical Rehabilitation Centre for Torture Victims showed their support for survivors of torture and commemorated 26 June by organising educational, informative and cultural events. Two screenings took place of the documentary “So Close to
As a movie concerned with the survivors of the political prisons of the communist regime and the support these people found after the fall of communism in 1991. To raise awareness, ten volunteers distributed 5,000 pieces of campaign material and put up 300 posters around the city. More than 400 people attended the two screenings of the documentary, which meant the cinema was at full capacity both times as a result of the successful public campaign.

Fundatia ICAR - Centrul Medical de Reabilitare a Victimelor Torturii (MRCTV Bucharest)
ICAR Foundation commemorated 26 June by presenting the documentary “Beyond Torture – the Gulag of Pitești” by American director Alan Hartwick. The screening was followed by discussions among the audience. Founder of ICAR Foundation, Dr Camelia Doru, opened the event by welcoming guests and explaining the importance of 26 June. Members of the National Council for Studying the Communist Archives, the Institute for the Investigation of Communist Crimes, as well as personalities from civil society, the cultural milieu, human rights NGOs and media attended the event. Also present at the event were former political prisoners from Romania and the diaspora and their families, as well as members of the refugee community.

Senegal
Victimes de Violences Rehabilitées, le Centre de Soins du CAPREC (VIVRE/CAPREC)
VIVRE/CAPREC celebrated the UN International Day in Support of Torture Victims with several activities, which were initiated with a welcome speech by the centre’s programme manager, who made a brief presentation about VIVRE/CAPREC’s work and the significance of 26 June. Some one hundred people attended the activities, which included presentations of relevant reports and partnership programmes. Concluding the celebrations, local women performed a theatrical sketch visualising the medical and psychological effects of torture.

Serbia
IAN Centar za rehabilitaciju žrtava torture (IAN CRTV)
In commemoration of 26 June, IAN CRTV organised a range of activities including a press conference and a public performance, which was covered by several national TV networks and newspapers. During the press conference, various items designed to raise awareness about torture and its
consequences were shown on screen, including the IRCT photo presentation “Renewing Lives”. Continuing the events IAN CRTV joined the global reading of the IRCT-issued statement against torture (see page 20). Folders containing a press release and information about 26 June, facts and figures about torture and implementation of the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture in Serbia, together with promotional material, were handed out to the journalists and others attending the press conference.

Sierra Leone

Community Association for Psychosocial Services (CAPS)
Roughly 450 people took part in the 26 June commemorations in Koidu City, Sierra Leone. The participants were led by a marching band and paraded through the streets of Koidu to the main hall in the school compound. In the hall, the CAPS programme co-ordinator gave a brief background about the significance of the day, which was followed by Muslim and Christian leadership prayers for the occasion. Representatives from the military, the local government, Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children’s Affairs, Gbense and Tankoro chiefdom authorities, and some members of the NGO community and representatives from the UNDP human rights section all spoke on the importance of supporting survivors of torture and combating torture.

Sweden

Svenska Röda Korsets behandlingscenter för krigsskadade och torterade, Skövde (RKC Skövde)
The Swedish Red Cross Center for Victims of Torture and War in Skövde, together with the Swedish Red Cross region West and two local voluntary Red Cross branches, invited the public to take part in a joint event for torture victims around the world. Together with the chairperson of the local Red Cross branch for Human Rights and Refugees; the Red Cross local co-ordinator of human rights issues; and the head of the Red Cross Center for Victims of Torture and War, a public discussion was held on the topic of torture, redress and rehabilitation. Furthermore, the IRCT 26 June global statement (see page 20) was read out. The attendees participated actively in the discussions and an article was published in the local newspapers a few days later. IRCT campaign material such as pencils and erasers were handed out to visitors and some will
also be used for school information visits during the autumn school term.

Turkey

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

On 26 June the Human Rights Foundation of Turkey in Istanbul, Izmir and Diyarbakir commemorated the day with several events. In Istanbul, the central event organised by the HRFT took place at Bilgi University. The event started with speeches from one of the founders of HRFT and the president of the HRFT, and continued with a dance show about torture. HRFT prepared a short documentary on torture to be displayed on this day. The documentary, called “Tolerance to Torture”, was screened during the event for the first time. There were numerous participants, from political parties, NGOs, labour unions, journalists, students and various human rights activists. The documentary and speeches were followed by a stand up show and a concert.

In Izmir, a joint press conference was organised together with the Contemporary Lawyers’ Association and Human Rights Association on 26 June. On June 27, an event was organised at the Konak Municipality, which was attended by 100 people composed of applicants to the HRFT, volunteer physicians, lawyers, and human rights organisations. A joint press conference was organised in Diyarbakir together with Human Rights Association, Mazlum-Der, Diyarbakir Bar Association, Health Workers’ Union and Diyarbakir Medical Chamber. In addition to these events, HRFT contacted many organisations and people, prepared posters and distributed them in Izmir, Istanbul and Diyarbakir in order to raise public awareness on the importance of the UN Day In Support Of Victims of Torture and to invite everyone to the activities of the HRFT.

United Kingdom

Refugee Therapy Centre (RTC)

The Refugee Therapy Centre organised an open house to commemorate 26 June. It was attended by clients, therapists and friends of the centre. There were several presentations about work at the RTC, followed by a multicultural food and dance celebration.
Center for Victims of Torture, The (CVT)
The Center for Victims of Torture commemorated June 26, 2008 in Minneapolis, Washington D.C., Sierra Leone, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In Minneapolis, CVT staff, clients, volunteers and supporters attended a celebration that included West African food, a short play performed by members of staff, a keynote speech by Birhan Abebe (former legal advisor of Ethiopia to the UN), with a musical performance concluding the events. In Washington D.C., CVT launched a major advocacy campaign, the Campaign to Ban Torture (www.campaigntobantorture.org), which includes a “Declaration of Principles for a Presidential Executive Order on Prisoner Treatment, Torture and Cruelty”.

For the first time, CVT staff in Sierra Leone commemorated the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture in Freetown. First, staff and community members gathered in Calaba Town for a peaceful march, followed by an indoor event. It included a screening of a video of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Sierra Leone, the announcement of the results of a CVT school competition and some sketches by students. CVT staff in the Democratic Republic of the Congo held a motor caravan honouring June 26th. This was followed by a forum and discussion bringing together community leaders, CVT staff and various NGOs.

Florida Center for Survivors of Torture - A Program of Gulf Coast Jewish Family Services, Inc. (FCST)
In partnership with the University of Miami’s School of Law, the Florida Center for Survivors of Torture hosted an event in recognition of June 26. Service providers, students and advocates throughout South Florida were invited to a screening of the film “Breaking the Silence: Torture Survivors Speak Out”, followed by a discussion led by the co-director of Florida State University, Terry Coonan.

Rocky Mountain Survivors Center (RMSC)
At RMSC more than 200 staff, volunteers, interns, family members and other members of the community celebrated 26 June. The formal programme was preceded by a soccer match between the RMSC Volunteer Soccer Team and RMSC Participants. Food and refreshments, as well as face painting, African rainstick-making, and other child-friendly activities were appreciated by children and parents.
alike, both before and during the programme. The formal programme included a “walk of nations” in which past and present RMSC participants dressed in traditional clothing and introduced themselves to the audience. Between musical performances, poetry readings and participant speeches, dignitaries expressed their support of RMSC and their commitment to the abolition of torture. Wrapping up the programme, the Lost Boys of the Sudan and the Lost Girls of the Sudan performed traditional dances.

Survivors International (SI)
On 26 June, Survivors International travelled to Sacramento along with other members of the California Consortium of Treatment Centers. Here they spoke with legislators representing the San Francisco Bay Area about the needs of torture survivors and how to support the work benefiting the survivors. Afterwards, several of the legislators followed up by sending in documents to support the inclusion of survivors of torture in local planning for distribution of funds for the Mental Health Services Act being enacted in California.

Additionally, Survivors International presented the first Annual California Human Rights Champion Award to the family of Honorable Tom Lantos, who passed away in February 2008. Representative Tom Lantos was the only Holocaust survivor elected to the U.S. Congress and was, for 27 years, a champion of human rights. Representative Lantos put human rights at the top of his agenda throughout his congressional career and was a tireless advocate on behalf of torture survivors.
## Ratified

*States which *have* ratified the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment*

*145 states as of November 30, 2008*

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<th>Afghanistan</th>
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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 30, 2008

Angola
Bahamas
Barbados
Bhutan
Brunei Darussalam
Central African Republic
Comoros
Dominica

Dominican Republic
Eritrea
Fiji
Gambia
Grenada
Guinea-Bissau
Haiti
India

Iran
Iraq
Jamaica
Kiribati
Korea, Democratic People’s Republic of Laos
Malaysia
Marshall Islands

Micronesia, Federated States of
Myanmar
Nauru
Oman
Pakistan
Palau
Papua New Guinea
Rwanda

Saint Kitts and Nevis
Saint Lucia
Samoa
San Marino
Sao Tome and Principe
Singapore
Solomon Islands
Sudan

Suriname
Tanzania, United Republic of
Tonga
Trinidad and Tobago
Tuvalu
United Arab Emirates
Vanuatu
Vietnam
Zimbabwe
Join the 26 June 2009 campaign

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 2009, as in the previous years, the IRCT will seek to collaborate with as many anti-torture organisations as possible. If your organisation would like to participate in the 2009 campaign you are very welcome to contact us.

In the weeks leading up to 26 June 2009 the IRCT's website, www.irct.org, will feature an overview of planned activities worldwide.

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

Address
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Borgergade 13
P.O. Box 9049
1022 Copenhagen K
Denmark

Phone +45 3376 0600
Fax +45 3376 0500
E-mail irct@irct.org
Website www.irct.org
How to support the IRCT

The IRCT needs your help to rebuild the lives of torture victims and fight for the eradication of torture worldwide. The recovery of torture victims is greatly impaired if their treatment is suspended due to limited or uncertain funds. Unfortunately, there are still many parts of the world where treatment or support continues to be scarce or completely unavailable.

By contributing to our work, you can help ensure that torture survivors and their families receive the help they need.

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 our address (opposite page).

By bank transfer

Danske Bank
Holmens Kanal Branch
Holmens Kanal 2
1090 Copenhagen K
Denmark
SWIFT/BIC: 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