Together against Torture

26 June 2009

International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims
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.

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.

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STOP PENYIKSAAN
Foreword from the President

"This 26 June, we honour the countless girls and boys, women and men who have been affected by torture. We pay tribute to their strength and courage. And with our collective voice, we stand together against torture."

Those were the words of my predecessor, Dr Abdel Hamid Afana, and IRCT Secretary-General Brita Sydhoff, in a statement issued on 26 June this year.

It was indeed a key date in the struggle against torture. Not only is 26 June the United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture; in addition, the year 2009 marked the 25th anniversary of the UN Convention against Torture.

In the run-up to the big moment, and on the day itself, IRCT member organisations from Argentina to Zimbabwe were making their voices heard loud and clear: parades, demonstrations, public hearings, street performances, exhibitions, direct emails and text messages were just some of the creative ways in which the urged their fellow citizens to become active supporters in the fight against torture.

The following pages provide a compelling overview of this multi-faceted, global campaign. They radiate a fundamental message: That there are thousands of dedicated individuals out there, pursuing the vision of a torture-free world and taking action every day to help torture survivors obtain healing and justice.

I truly believe that this is the way forward for the IRCT and our friends and partners around the world: to make ourselves heard again and again, insisting that there must be justice for survivors; that governments must work actively and concertedly to eradicate torture; and that citizens across the world can play a key role in holding their politicians accountable.

25 years ago, when the Convention against Torture was submitted to the General Assembly, it was said clearer than ever before: torture is a fundamental crime against the inherent dignity of the human person. It can never, ever be justified.

Much has happened since. Some countries have seen a development away from torturing dictatorships toward democratic government. But the ill-named “War against Terror” has shown us that even well-established democracies are in danger of taking the dark path toward endorsing and using torture in the name of “protecting national security”.

What does this tell us?

To me, the message is simple: The struggle to end torture and fulfil survivors’ rights must be pursued vigorously and relentlessly; and it is a struggle that depends very much on bottom-up action where courageous individuals take action on the ground.

That is precisely what the thousands of doctors, nurses, counsellors, lawyers, social workers and others at IRCT member centres do every day: work on the ground, reaching out to those in need and making their voices heard.

The year 2010 marks another 25th anniversary; that of the IRCT. In the span of two-and-a-half decades, our organisation has grown to encompass more than 140 organisations in over 70 countries. This is a strength that places us at the forefront in the fight against torture and for survivors’ rights. It is a position we are proud of and will continue to use in the pursuit our ultimate goal: a world without torture.

Dr. Mohamud Said, President
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. Alongside a statement that was read out by human rights defenders across the world on 26 June (see page 18), the IRCT invited aspiring filmmakers to submit a 30-second TV-spot as part of a competition to mark 26 June.

Three spots were selected by a jury comprising among others Danish filmmaker Jørgen Flindt Pedersen who has himself produced of several documentaries on the subject torture, including “Your Neighbour’s Son” and “My Brother’s Keeper”.

All three spots are available on our website: www.irct.org/news-and-media/multimedia/video.aspx
One in five refugees are torture survivors. But there are people all around the world working to help them to heal their wounds. Join them!

Torture touches us all!

While torture breaks people, it is possible for survivors to rebuild their lives!
Activities worldwide

Argentina

Equipo Argentino de Trabajo e Investigación Psicosocial (EATIP)

EATIP organised two roundtables at the 10th International Congress on Traumatic Stress, held in Buenos Aires from 24-26 June. The first, “Trials of repressors: involvement of complainants, witnesses and the social body”, addressed the clinical effects witnessed in complainants and witnesses involved in lawsuits. The second, “Trauma and collective sorrow”, examined the inter-generational effects of collective trauma. EATIP also promoted 26 June by disseminating its promotional materials at the event, while Dr Dario Lagos read out the IRCT Global Reading.

Armenia

Foundation against Violation of Law (FAVL)

To commemorate 26 June, FAVL organised a conference entitled “Refuse to torture” at the Ani Hotel in Yerevan. After a minute of silence in memory of torture victims around the world, the conference opened with speeches by the Ombudsman of Armenia and the founder of FAVL. Among the participants were representatives from the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Health, various human rights NGOs and the media. After the opening speeches the conference continued with the Global Reading and a screening of the three IRCT-sponsored TV spots, which received an excellent response from the participants.
Bangladesh

**Centre for Rehabilitation of Torture Survivors (CRTS)**

CRTS organised an art competition for children with more than 70 enthusiastic participants. Following the art competition a discussion on the legal rights of torture victims was held at the Tangail Public Library. Bangladeshi poet Mahmud Kamal presided over the discussion, which included a speech from Dr Kamrul Hasan Khan, Executive Director at CRTS. The discussion concluded with a prize ceremony covered by several of the larger news outlets in Bangladesh.

**Odhikar**

Odhikar marked this year’s commemoration with three days of activities. On 25 and 26 June, memorandums were handed over to the Deputy Commissioners and Superintendents of Police, urging the government to lift the reservation on Article 14 of the Convention against Torture and sign the Convention’s Optional Protocol. Odhikar organised rallies and meetings at the district level in the programme areas of Satkhira, Jessore, Kushtia, Sirajganj, Rajshahi, Dinajpur, Tangail, Munshiganj and Sylhet. On 27 June Odhikar organised “Tribunal against Torture” in order to increase public and media awareness about the rapidly deteriorating situation in Bangladesh with regard to torture. The tribunal was followed by a discussion meeting, attended by among others, current and former Members of Parliament, journalists, lawyers, academics, politicians from the governing party and the opposition.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

**Vive Žene**

Vive Žene organised a series of events for children and young people, including workshops and a puppet theatre show called “Fairytales from the chest” performed by Ivana Milosavljevic and Enver Hasic. The events, attended by roughly 200 people, continued with concerts by the rock bands Zgate and Fetus. Vive Žene also held a conference entitled “Contextual approach in the work with torture victims” focusing on improving the status of torture victims in the local region. Three leading TV stations reported on
the events and six radio stations produced short interviews about the status of torture victims in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Brazil

Grupo Tortura Nunca Mais (GTNM)
“Amnesty, forgetting and memory” was the theme of the event GTNM organised on 26 June in Rio de Janeiro. Approximately 500 persons attended sessions presenting the centre’s work, the launch of two books and a roundtable discussion on the social implications of amnesty. The sessions were followed by a public question-and-answer period, as well as personal testimonies from survivors.

Cameroon

Centre for Rehabilitation and Abolition of Torture (CRAT)
CRAT marked the occasion with a conference featuring presentations on the components and effects of torture, the incidence of torture in Cameroon and the importance of ratifying international anti-torture instruments. These sessions were followed by a role play from CRAT staff of the typical scenarios in which torture is commonly practiced in Cameroonian prisons, and an enthusiastic traditional dance and drumming performance by local children. The IRCT Global Reading (see page 18) also was read out at the event, and participants were able to take home many posters and other materials.

Trauma Centre Cameroon (TCC)
To commemorate 26 June, TCC staged three events: a debate, an art competition and group therapy session. Under the theme “Reflections on the concept of torture in Cameroon”, 50 participants debated the ways that torture manifests itself in Cameroon, which was covered in numerous television, radio and newspaper outlets. In a separate event, refugee torture survivors and minors in the Central Prison in Yaounde competed in an art competition, with prizes later awarded for the best works. Finally, TCC organised a group therapy session with refugees to work through their traumatic experiences and express themselves through art.
Canada

Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture (CCVT)

In commemoration of the UN International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, CCVT - in partnership with the National Film Board - hosted a screening of TEZA at the Royal Theatre in downtown Toronto on June 25. TEZA tells the story of a young medical research scientist from Ethiopia who returns home after training in Germany to find a bloodletting authoritarian regime in place of the land of liberty and development of which he dreamed. TEZA covers the issues of dictatorship, emigration, torture, war and the position of women in Ethiopian society during the period. More than 250 community members attended the film screening. The award-winning director Haile Gerima spent time with the audience afterwards, answering questions and giving deeper insight and context to the film. Professor Gerima stressed the importance of collectively addressing the issue of torture and providing support to survivors of torture in the community.

Chad

Association Jeunesse pour la Paix et La Non Violence/ Center de Rehabilitation des Victimes de la Torture (AJPNV/CRVT)

AJPNV/CRVT began their 26 June festivities with a morning march through the capital, from the centre's headquarters to the Palais du 15 Janvier. Some 300 men, women and children participated in the march, which ended with a press conference and presentation of the IRCT Global Reading. Later in the day, the centre sponsored a football match between women and men from the centre. One television and five radio stations covered the events.

Croatia

International Rehabilitation Centre for Torture Victims – Zagreb (IRCT Zagreb)

IRCT Zagreb commemorated 26 June with several different activities. At a roundtable with the Croatian Psychology Association, the centre showcased their activities as well as the impor-
rance of the day. IRCT Zagreb held workshops for young democrats to learn about torture in today’s world and the importance of rule of law, democratisation and the fight against impunity. The centre also held a workshop with Zagreb University psychology students regarding their professional responsibilities in torture prevention and rehabilitation. Media outreach included running TV spots nationally, talking to reporters and translating and disseminating the IRCT Global Reading (see page 18) in Croatian.

**Denmark**

*Rehabilitation and Research Centre for Torture Victims (RCT)*

RCT held an open skills-building seminar for Danish professionals working with traumatised refugee families. A social worker, a physician, a physiotherapist and a psychologist informed the 55 attendees about RCT’s multidisciplinary approach to the rehabilitation of torture victims. At the seminar RCT distributed its annual report 2009 (*Rehabilitating for the future*), several newsletters and the IRCT book *Shedding light on a dark practice – Using the Istanbul Protocol to document torture*.

**Democratic Republic of the Congo**

*SAVE CONGO*

The launch of the UN International Day in Support of Victims of Torture took place on 26 June in Lubumbashi, Katanga. In recognition of the problem of torture in DRC, two members of the SAVE CONGO staff, with Albertien Van Der Veen of the Antares Foundation – Holland, met with Dieudonné Kanyama, Public Prosecutor of Katanga District, who shared with them his experience to release children and other victims of ill-treatment. During a workshop at the SAVE CONGO office, Van Der Veen spoke about the specific needs assessment for psychosocial services for torture victims including organisational development, professional staff development and network activities. The event was covered by print and electronic media. Leaflets and publications were distributed to the local population.
Ecuador

**Fundación para la Rehabilitación Integral de Víctimas de Violencia (PRIVA)**

Under the theme “Torture and the Need for Rati-fication of the Optional Protocol” PRIVA helped to organise academic conferences and public events throughout the country to review the situation and progress of eradicating torture in Ecuador. Quito was the site for a keynote lecture about the importance of 26 June, where it was announced by the Ombudsman’s Office that the President of the Republic is preparing to ratify the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention against Torture. Conferences in other cities emphasised the importance of ratifying this instrument and promoted awareness raising and solidarity with victims of torture.

France

**Parcours d’Exil**

On 26 June, Parcours d’Exil organised a solidarity concert under the sponsorship of M. Zimeray, Ambassador for Human Rights. Patients, friends and the general public enjoyed an evening showcasing the talent of violin soloist Eiichi Chijiwa, accompanied by the Orchestra of Paris and the generous participation of Quatuor Thymos. Five clients of the centre’s art and drama therapy programme also performed excerpts from The Epiphanies of Henri Pichette.

Georgia

**Psycho–Rehabilitation Centre for Victims of Torture, Violence and Pronounced Stress Impact – Empathy**

Empathy organised its fifth annual conference “Together Against Torture” in Tbilisi with more than 70 participants from the government, civil society, and national and international organisations. The conference presented reports on the consequences of war in Georgia, the implementation of the anti-torture plan of action and a review of the situation of the implementation of the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention against Torture. An exhibition sale of artwork by victims of torture and ethnic cleansing also was organised during the conference. The event concluded
with a declaration promoting better implementation of humanitarian law and the Istanbul Protocol in Georgia.

**Germany**

*Medizinische Flüchtlingshilfe Bochum (MFH)*

On 26 June Mr Knut Rauchfuss, one of the founders of MFH, gave a lecture entitled “The trauma of impunity of severe human rights violations” at an international conference on torture at Heinrich Heine University, Düsseldorf. In his speech, Mr Rauchfuss explained how impunity of severe human rights violations obstructs the stabilization of survivors and how a culture of memory, reparation and institutional reforms contributes to the sustainable and complete rehabilitation of survivors.

**Hungary**

*Cordelia Foundation for the Rehabilitation of Torture Victims*

Together with Amnesty International Hungary, the Cordelia Foundation organised three activities for this year’s 26 June. First, the organisations collected signatures on the streets of Budapest for a petition to support the ratification of the UN’s Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture. Cordelia and Amnesty also screened the Errol Morris documentary *Standard Operating Procedure* about Abu Ghraib prison at DocuArt. Finally, the two groups organised a discussion which, unusually, focused on the perpetrators of torture.

**India**

*Centre for Care of Torture Victims (CCTV)*

CCTV utilised its district-level centres to promote awareness of the UN day. Through its Taki sub-centre, CCTV hosted an essay competition at a local girls’ high school, a rally and speeches at
several street junctions, and a medical camp and awareness raising programme. Via its Baharampur sub-centre, CCTV launched another round of street speeches, which were covered by the local media.

Indonesia

Alliance of Democracy for Papua (ALDP)
A peaceful demonstration marked the beginning of 26 June in Papua, where ALDP handed out flowers in three central locations, including in front of a barbed wire police barricade, where centre staff held signs saying “Stop Penyiksaan” (stop torture). In the afternoon and evening, ALDP visited victims at the prisons and held a discussion about torture and state responsibility, which included voicing the IRCT Global Reading.

International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC)
ICMC collaborated with JAPI (Indonesian Anti-Torture Coalition) on a series of activities for the day. More than 26 NGOs were involved in a press conference, distribution of torture advocacy material (flyers, poster and booklets) and flowers (peace sign), a peaceful rally and seminar. One thousand booklets, 1,000 flyers, 100 posters and 100 flowers were disseminated at the commemoration. JAPI also made a formal statement to support the government in ratifying the Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture and further criminalising torture.

Ireland

SPIRASI – The Centre for the Care of Survivors of Torture
On the eve of the 26 June at Trinity College Dublin the President of Ireland, Mary McAleese, opened a public seminar, “Survivors of Torture – the Irish Response” organised jointly with the Irish School of Ecumenics Peace Studies programme. An audience of 180 people listened intently to three speakers, including a survivor of torture who received a standing ovation after his testimony of his torture and recovery. On the morning of 26 June, SPIRASI held a candle lighting ceremony. Senator Norris delivered a speech, then lit the
candle of remembrance, the flame of which was passed from person to person who joined together in a minute’s silence for victims of torture in Ireland and worldwide. Three students recited a poem in the three main languages of the SPIRASI - French, Arabic and English.

Italy

Consiglio Italiano per i Refugiati, VI.TO - Hospitality and Care for Victims of Torture (CIR-VI.TO)
More than 400 people attended a CIR-VI.TO event at India Theatre on the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture. The event began with an introduction on the meaning of the day and the importance of rehabilitation. The day featured various artistic performances and exhibitions: a theatre performance entitled “Voices of Babel”, the final result of the VI.TO theatre rehabilitation workshop; a performance of folk and traditional Italian music; display of a video presenting the testimony against torture that a well known Italian writer, Andrea Camilleri, gave during his visit to the theatre rehabilitation workshop; and related photographic exhibition. Several national newspapers, radio and TV channels reported on the event.

Jordan

Center for Victims of Torture, Jordan (CVT)
CVT Jordan held a competition aimed at the Iraqi refugee community in Jordan to design an art poster in recognition of the UN International Day in Support of Victims of Torture. CVT staff in Amman also designed an office mural with their handprints to reflect the centre’s efforts to work hand-in-hand against torture.

Kenya

Independent Medico-Legal Unit (IMLU)
IMLU kicked off a week of anti-torture activities on 22 June, with a press conference coinciding with the release of its annual report on the situation of torture in Kenya. The next day, the centre hosted the first of two screenings of the documentary My Brother’s Keeper, followed by a panel discussion. An awareness-raising road show,
with dramatic performances, brought human rights education throughout Nairobi. The activities culminated on 26 June with a gathering of torture survivors and the public at Freedom Corner, Uhuru Park, where protests, testimonies, dance, theatre and a tree-planting ceremony marked the occasion.

MATESO - Mwatikho Torture Survivors Organization

MATESO hosted a range of activities in Western Kenya, from radio talk show appearances to an art exhibition on torture and trauma, to a symposium, to performances of film and drama and a candle lighting ceremony. Mounting posters and banners onto a lorry, MATESO brought their anti-torture road show to an estimated 1,200 people.

Kosovo

Kosovo Rehabilitation Centre for Torture Victims (KRCT)

KRCT organised a roundtable in the Hotel Victory in Pristina in order to celebrate the UN International Day in Support of Torture Victims. Its purpose was to enhance the discussion on the importance of independent monitoring of places of detention in the prevention of torture and ill-treatment in Kosovo. Around 50 participants attended, representing different important actors and stakeholders in human rights and justice.
Global reading

“We call on all UN institutions to clearly and even-handedly denounce all states practising torture. And we call on all citizens, communities and grassroots organisations to push for universal ratification of the Convention and to ensure that their States abide by it and end the illegal and abhorrent practice of torture once and for all.

This 26 June, we honour the countless girls and boys, women and men who have suffered this terrible crime – those who paid with their lives as well as those who have survived. We pay tribute to their strength and courage. And with our collective voice, we stand together against torture.”

Read out by human rights defenders across the world on 26 June 2009 these words concluded a statement signed IRCT President Dr Abdel Hamid Afana and IRCT Secretary-General Brita Sydhoff.

The full statement is available on www.irct.org
IRCT global reading on the occasion of the United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, 26 June 2009

Twenty-five years ago, the United Nations Commission on Human Rights submitted a draft document to the UN General Assembly. The aim was to give the world an effective tool to help abolish torture. At the time there already existed several declarations and covenants condemning torture and promoting human dignity and rights. But the UN system lacked legally binding obligations to both prevent torture and provide support to torture survivors.

The document submitted to the UN General Assembly later became the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. The General Assembly adopted the Convention and invited States to sign and ratify it. Three years later, on 26 June 1987, the Convention officially came into force.

At present, 146 states have ratified the Convention, thus sending a powerful political message that torture is illegal and has no place in our world. Momentum is also growing around the Convention’s Optional Protocol. The Protocol obliges its signatories to create effective measures to prevent torture and ill-treatment in any territory under their jurisdiction, and to establish mechanisms for independent monitoring of places of detention – one of the primary places where torture occurs.

The 26th of June has become a moving symbol of our moral, ethical and professional obligations to prevent torture and to ensure the rights of torture survivors and their families. For more than a decade, the world has commemorated 26 June as the occasion of the UN International Day in Support of Victims of Torture. On this day, thousands of individuals and organisations across the globe speak out against torture and demand that torture survivors’ needs and rights be fulfilled.

Right now, treatment centres and programmes that are members of the International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims (IRCT) are jointly raising their voices across the world, reading out this statement.

It is a statement of global solidarity. A statement which shows that no matter where we are and who we are – regardless of ethnic and cultural background, gender or religion – we are united against torture and in solidarity with torture survivors. It is a reminder that every day, people around the world remain silent, with the approval and encouragement of governments. It is a call for an end to the scourge of torture and the unacceptability of the use of torture.

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The IRCT enjoys consultative status with the UN Economic and Social Council and trial status with the UN Human Rights Council.
Lebanon

Khiam Rehabilitation Center for Victims of Torture (KRC)

KRC conducted a series of activities during the days around 26 June to mark the special occasion. On June 25, Khiam Center organised a workshop at UNESCO entitled: “Open national dialogue on the situations of the Lebanese prisoners and the process of forming the National Preventive Mechanism”. The next day, in cooperation with SOLIDE Association, KRC organised a sit-in and exhibition of photos, posters, letters and handicrafts of victims of torture in front of the mothers of the missing people’s tent at Jebran Khalil Jebran Park. On the same day, KRC sent four doctors and two psychotherapists to the Roumieh Prison, where they examined 100 prisoners and distributed booklets on prisoners’ rights. And on 27 June, KRC hosted an event with games and competitions at King Fahed Park in Tripoli for children whose relatives were detained or tortured.

Restart Center for Rehabilitation of Victims of Violence and Torture

A mass public awareness campaign was the highlight of Restart’s activities during the month of June. The centre distributed 5,000 posters and 2,000 booklets across Lebanon, as well as 11,000 text messages and 100,000 e-mails urging Lebanese citizens to be part of 26 June the UN International Day in Support of Victims of Torture and take action to combat violence and torture.

Liberia

Rescue Alternatives Liberia (RAL)

RAL and its partners observed 26 June with a series of activities, including a parade through the principal street of Gbarnga, a live radio and TV broadcast debate among students, the delivery of statements and speeches, and a screening of the anti-torture documentary – My Brother’s Keeper – in the street of Gbarnga. Some 300 persons attended the programme. The commemoration centred on the theme “Making Torture a Crime in Liberia”, and was geared towards creating public awareness and consensus on issues of
torture that will culminate in Liberia making torture a crime under its criminal procedure laws.

Morocco

Association Medicale de Rehabilitation des Victimes de la Torture (AMRVT)
AMRVT held a meeting at the headquarters of the Unified Socialist Party in Casablanca on 26 June, attended by over 200 human rights activists, former victims and supporters. After several speeches, the attendees viewed a video clip about detention centres, the phenomenon of torture and the various activities AMRVT and medical caravans organised in several provinces of Morocco in the past year. Various television and press agencies covered the event.

Nepal

Centre for Victims of Torture (CVICT)
On the occasion of the UN day, a forum comprising of civil society organisations (including CVICT), the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) urged the government to criminalise torture and reaffirm its commitment to fight against torture and impunity for the perpetrators. For the first time in Nepal, the Prime Minister called civil society for a meeting on ending impunity and for the protection of human rights. During the interaction at the Prime Minister’s Office, civil society groups recommended that the Prime Minister consult with the NHRC before introducing human rights related legislation in the parliament. In reply, PM Madhav Kumar Nepal said the government was committed to rule of law and human rights and that ending impunity and maintaining law and order were its priorities.

The Netherlands

Centrum ’45
De Evenaar, Centrum voor Transculturele Psychiatrie Noord Nederland
De Gelderse Roos
Psychotrauma Centrum Zuid Nederland
In the Netherlands the four IRCT member organi-
Organisations together organised, for the first time, a 26 June meeting about mental health care for refugees and asylum seekers. The meeting generated attention after these four organisations signed a covenant concerning good mental health care for asylum seekers and refugees, with special attention for tortured persons. About 60 policymakers and health care workers attended, and a bulletin on the event was circulated to all mental health institutions in the Netherlands.

**Pakistan**

*SACH – Struggle for Change*

SACH led three activities in observance of the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture. First, the centre launched its book *Breaking the Silence*, a series of case stories about torture survivors treated by SACH. Second, SACH held a national seminar in Islamabad where representatives from civil society, international organisations and the government discussed the consequences of torture and ways to end the practice in Pakistan. Finally, SACH organised the signing of a banner for persons to sign their name to encourage ratification of the UN Convention against Torture and show support for victims of torture.

**Palestine**

*Gaza Community Mental Health Programme (GCMHP)*

This year, GCMHP cooperated with the UN High Commissioner Office for Human Rights in Gaza and local human rights organisations to commemorate 26 June with a workshop entitled “Palestinians between the Hammer of Occupation and the Anvil of Internal Division”. The workshop took place in Gaza with the participation of approximately 130 community figures, civil society representatives, human rights activists and interested individuals, and was covered by the local and international media. The event concluded with recommendations to establish more rehabilitation programmes for victims of torture, and to promote the rights and duties of citizens to end the phenomenon of torture.
Treatment and Rehabilitation Centre for Victims of Torture (TRC)
TRC, in conjunction with the High Commissioner’s Office for Human Rights in the Palestinian territory, launched its annual conference entitled “Towards a better life for Victims of Torture”. The conference sought to shed light on the suffering of victims of torture, their families and their communities. It presented two main panels, the first stating cases of torture and its effects, the second highlighting the importance of monitoring and investigating torture in detention centres.

The Philippines

Balay Rehabilitation Center
Medical Action Group (MAG)
As part of the United Against Torture Coalition (UATC), Balay and MAG participated in the third “Basta! Run Against Torture”, whose message this year focused on the passage of a national anti-torture law. Some 250 individuals from the UATC and 100 others ran through the streets of Manila. The run ended with a public ceremony in which several organisations read out anti-torture statements (including the IRCT Global Reading (see page 18)) and re-enacted the torture suffered by the Abadilla 5 – imprisoned for almost two decades despite the overwhelming evidence their confessions were extracted through severe torture. More than a dozen local and national media covered the activity.

Serbia

International Aid Network Centre for Rehabilitation of Torture Victims (IAN)
On 25 June, IAN organised an open debate entitled “Treatment of persons in closed institutions – therapy or (and) torture”, where speakers shared examples of good and bad practice, and problems and challenges in the treatment of persons accommodated in different closed institutions such as detention centres, prisons and psychiatric hospitals. On 26 June IAN held a press conference on the presence of torture in Serbia and the rehabilitation work of the centre, which also featured the IRCT Global Reading. That same evening, the British band The Singing Loins and five local bands performed a concert.
More than a dozen media outlets reported on the events, which included airing of a radio jingle, TV spot and distribution of anti-torture flyers.

**South Africa**

*South African No Torture Consortium (SANToC)*

SANToC, housed at the Centre for Study of Violence and Reconciliation and comprised of numerous anti-torture groups and rehabilitation centres, gathered 100 South African and refugee torture survivors, service providers, community-based organisations and government representatives for a commemoration at the symbolic Constitution Hill where torture occurred during Apartheid. Survivors gave their testimonies of pain and survival. A Rwandan dance group and Zimbabwean poetry group uplifted the crowd with vibrant performances, and attendees also got to view the documentary film *My Brother’s Keeper*. Representatives of different survivor groups lit a candle honouring service providers and survivors themselves, then placed flowers next to the candles announcing messages of hope. On 25 June, a roundtable was held with 13 service providers, who shared lessons from their experience, to document this knowledge so that it can inform the current work of rehabilitation organisations.

**Sudan**

*Amel Center for Treatment and Rehabilitation of Victims of Torture*

This year, 26 June coincided with the ten year anniversary of the Amel Center’s work to support torture survivors in Sudan. In a press release, the centre described how despite challenges to its ongoing operations, it continues to encourage all persons to work to ratify the Convention against Torture and its additional protocol in Sudan, and to build organisations that can assist with the rehabilitation of survivors of torture and enlighten the society on the need to address the damage done to them.
Turkey

Human Rights Foundation of Turkey (HRFT)
HRFT designated the main theme of 2009’s International Day in Support of Victims of Torture as “counteracting the attempts to spread and legitimise torture in Turkey and all over the world with various aims and methods”. HRFT organised activities in its five rehabilitation centres, inviting related organisations. These activities included: joint public statements, distribution of leaflets and publications, participation in a TV programme, a press conference and the screening of a documentary film in Kurdish entitled Torture and the Rights of Torture Survivors.

SOHRAM - Centre of Social Action, Rehabilitation and Readjustment (SOHRAM-CASRA)
Children were a primary focus of SOHRAM-CASRA’s 26 June activities. Children released balloons with the “T” logo into the sky from the shores of the Tigris, whilst at the centre a volunteer lawyer held a workshop on the rights of children. Also at the centre, a psychologist conducted an open seminar on violence, torture and what can be done for trauma survivors, while a volunteer doctor provided free information on women’s health.

Uganda

African Centre for Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture Victims (ACTV)
For the 4th year running, ACTV spearheaded activities to commemorate 26 June in collaboration with the Coalition Against Torture (CAT) and the Uganda Human Rights Commission (UHRC). Led by a band from the Uganda Police Force, CAT and UHRC representatives marched on the streets of Kampala to highlight torture to members of the public. ACTV organised a mobile clinic where people alleging torture could be counselled and others could receive publications from CAT and UHRC. Speeches and poems were read out, and there was a presentation of contemporary dance, monologues and dialogues. The dance so touched one torture survivor that he pledged to give money won during a court case to a Torture Victim Fund.
United States

Center for Survivors of Torture (CST)
CST Texas hosts its annual 26 June event to not only join the rest of the voices who speak out against torture, but also to celebrate the strength and milestones its clients have gained after coming to CST. This year’s program included entertainment by a DJ, food from clients and local restaurants, as well as a representative speaker from Congresswoman Eddie Bernice Johnson’s office. As one client emphasised when talking about the importance of CST’s services, “Starting our lives all over is difficult for my children to understand. And to know there is a place my children can go where someone will play, talk and spend time with them. That gives me hope as a father.”

Rocky Mountain Survivors Center (RMSC)
More than 250 survivors of torture, community members, leaders, staff and supporters of RMSC Colorado came together on 27 June to take a stand against torture. An interfaith invocation by local Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jewish and Muslim leaders opened the event. A programme of poems, songs, dances and speeches was presented by torture survivors served by RMSC. Along with the programme, attendees enjoyed traditional foods prepared by survivors from the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Liberia, Nepal, Togo and Sudan. Soccer games and hula hoop making provided entertainment for all.

Survivors International
In order to bring together the California Bay Area Community in the UN Day Against Torture, Survivors International launched a Week of Healing. The week started with an annual picnic for refugees and asylum seekers, followed by a day of arts workshops and a musical performance. On 21 June, Survivors Int’l collaborated with Asian Americans for Community Involvement (AACI) to host a picnic, healing art activity, and drumming circle for their clients. The centre also collaborated with the Arab Cultural and Community Center to conduct an art therapy workshop with women from Yemen. Four activities marked 26 June itself: a potluck dinner with clients and staff, a film screening and discussion of Torture on Trial, a cultural event with AACI comprised of presentations and dances in honour of World Refugee Day, and a panel discussion and conference “Torture is a Moral Issue”.

Sierra Leone United States of America
States which *have* ratified the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

146 states as of December 8, 2009

Afghanistan  
Albania  
Algeria  
Andorra  
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  
Costa Rica  
Côte d’Ivoire  
Croatia  
Cuba  
Cyprus  
Czech Republic  
Democratic Republic of the Congo  
Denmark  
Djibouti  
Ecuador  
Egypt  
El Salvador  
Equatorial Guinea  
Estonia  
Ethiopia  
Finland  
France  
Gabon  
Georgia  
Germany  
Ghana  
Greece  
Guatemala  
Guinea  
Guyana  
Holy See  
Honduras  
Hungary  
Iceland  
Indonesia  
Ireland  
Israel  
Italy  
Japan  
Jordan  
Kazakhstan  
Kenya  
Kuwait  
Kyrgyzstan  
Latvia  
Lebanon  
Lesotho  
Liberia  
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya  
Liechtenstein  
Lithuania  
Luxembourg  
Madagascar  
Malawi  
Maldives  
Mali  
Malta  
Mauritania  
Mauritius  
Mexico  
Monaco  
Mongolia  
Montenegro  
Morocco  
Mozambique  
Namibia  
Nepal  
Netherlands  
New Zealand  
Nicaragua  
Niger  
Nigeria  
Norway  
Panama  
Paraguay  
Peru  
Philippines  
Poland  
Portugal  
Qatar  
Republic of Korea  
Republic of Moldova  
Romania  
Russian Federation  
Rwanda  
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines  
San Marino  
Saudi Arabia  
Senegal  
Serbia  
Seychelles  
Sierra Leone  
Slovakia  
Slovenia  
Somalia  
South Africa  
Spain  
Sri Lanka  
Swaziland  
Sweden  
Switzerland  
Syrian Arab Republic  
Tajikistan  
Thailand  
The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia  
Timor-Leste  
Togo  
Tunisia  
Turkey  
Turkmenistan  
Uganda  
Ukraine  
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland  
United States of America  
Uruguay  
Uzbekistan  
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)  
Yemen  
Zambia
Not ratified

States which have *not* ratified the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

*48 states as of December 8, 2009*

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
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

![Map of ratified and not ratified states. Red indicates not ratified. Green indicates ratified.](attachment:image.png)
Join us next year

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 2010, 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 2010 campaign you are very welcome to contact us.

In the weeks leading up to 26 June 2010 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.

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Website www.irct.org
Torture breaks people. Your support helps us rebuild lives and fight torture.

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. 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.

Online
Please visit out website, www.irct.org/donate, to make a credit card donation, or visit our new community at www.togetheragainsttorture.org.

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

www.irct.org/donate
THE GOVERNMENT MACHINERY SHOULD PREVENT TORTURE IN THEIR INSTITUTIONS.

THANKS TO TORTURE TREATMENT AND REHABILITATION CENTRES WORLDWIDE.

TORTURE WILL NOT BE USED ONLY AGAINST THE GUILTY.

IN SOLIDARITY WE CAN STOP AND PREVENT TORTURE.