

Foreword

One of the most significant events in the global movement against torture in recent years took place in Berlin on 9-10 December 2006, where the IRCT – with the generous support of numerous governments and foundations and in collaboration with the Berlin Center for the Treatment of Torture Victims (BZFO) – hosted a scientific symposium on torture. Nearly 400 health, legal and other professionals from 88 countries attended the two-day event, which was organised around the themes “Providing Reparation and Treatment, Preventing Impunity”.

The symposium addressed important challenges and opportunities facing the movement in foremost the health and legal arenas. From a health perspective participants explored the relationship between medical/pharmacological treatment and classical psychological treatment, and considered ways to enhance standards of up-to-date evidence-based medical treatment for conflict and torture survivors suffering from anxiety disorders, depression or post traumatic disorders. The symposium also focused on the need to find better ways to deal with secondary trauma and burnout and to provide care for caregivers.

From a legal perspective, best practice examples and case law were discussed with regard to addressing impunity at the international and national level with a focus on obtaining reparations for victims.

This special issue of Torture journal has been assembled as a way to share information from the symposium with a wider audience. The IRCT believes that the synergy at the symposium between the medical, psychological, social and legal sciences holds great potential for the continued advancement of the prevention of torture and rehabilitation of torture victims.

I hope you will enjoy reading this special edition and that it will provide a useful insight into the main findings of the symposium.

Yours sincerely

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Committee, Member of Board, BZFO Berlin