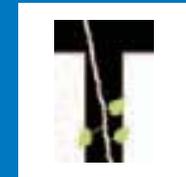


# Together against Torture

26 June 2006

IRCT's Global Report  
on the UN International Day  
in Support of Victims of Torture



Together against Torture: IRCT's Global Report on the United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture – 26 June 2006

©International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims (IRCT)

IRCT  
Borgergade 13  
P.O. Box 9049  
DK-1022 Copenhagen K  
Denmark

Phone: +45 33 76 06 00  
Fax: +45 33 76 05 00  
E-mail: [irct@irct.org](mailto:irct@irct.org)  
Website: [www.irct.org](http://www.irct.org)

ISBN: 87-88882-97-7  
ISSN: 1603 3272

2006

Layout: Synergi 70 27 90 03  
Printed by: Synergi 70 27 90 03

Paper:  
Cover: 250 g/m2 matbestrøget  
Contents: 115 g/m2 matbestrøget

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. Globally the IRCT has 130 member centres.

The IRCT gratefully acknowledges the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Foreign Ministries of Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Germany, Belgium and the United Kingdom, the OAK Foundation, the Sigrid Rausing Trust and the European Commission for their generous support to the work of the IRCT.

The views expressed in this report cannot be taken to reflect the opinion of the above institutions. The country activities published in this report are based on the submission of reports as received from campaign participants.

## List of Contents

Preface by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights .....	3
Introduction by the President of the IRCT .....	4
This Year's Campaign by the Secretary-General of the IRCT .....	5
Campaign Activities Worldwide .....	7
Raising Awareness on Torture .....	20
The Secret Life of Words on 26 June .....	22
Campaign Activities Worldwide .....	24
Status of the UN Convention against Torture .....	40
We encourage you to Commemorate 26 June 2007 .....	42

**Front cover illustration:** *The deputy officer in charge of Shimo La Tewa GK Prison in Mombasa, Kenya, Mr. Wilson Okomba, joins inmates in a traditional dance during a 26 June event organised by Independent Medico Legal Unit. The Kenya Government has so far initiated a Prison Open door Policy that allows stakeholders to visit prison facilities to monitor adherence to International standards.*



## United against Torture

Each year on 26 June a global chorus of voices, reminds governments of their legal and moral duty to never resort to torture, to bring torturers all along the chain of command to justice and to provide full reparation to all torture survivors.

On this day, individuals and organisations across six continents engage in a co-ordinated worldwide campaign to bring attention to the fact that torture is routinely practised by the authorities in more than one hundred countries around the globe, and silently condoned by many more; that every day sees individuals, families and communities torn apart by terrible abuses; that state agents in prisons, police stations and detention camps all over the world torture their fellow human beings with the consent of their governments.

These voices are all the more important in light of the debate in recent years in which influential policy makers and intellectuals have put forward arguments to the effect that torture could be an acceptable means of fighting terrorism. Although it has been promoted by powerful actors on the global stage, this abhorrent idea has all along been opposed by manifold voices of sense and conscience. Voices that have insisted on the legal and moral obligation never to subject anyone to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, be it in a state of war or any other public emergency.

Today I take this opportunity to again exhort governments around the world to contribute generously to the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture, one of the world's most important sources of support

for the rehabilitation of torture survivors. Although some states have consistently supported the fund over the years, the harsh reality today is that these contributions are able to meet only a fraction of the needs of the hundreds of thousands of torture survivors, each of whom is entitled to get all possible support to return to as full and normal a life as possible.

Next year marks the 20th anniversary of the entry into force of the Convention against Torture. It is my hope that this occasion will see a reaffirmation of the fundamental values and principles that shield the individual against the awesome power of the State – a shift toward reinstating the simple notion that torture is a heinous crime and an affront to human dignity.

Ultimately, such a shift is what the IRCT and like-minded organisations struggle to achieve each and every day. Today, as we commemorate 26 June for the ninth consecutive year, it gives me great pleasure to commend the invaluable work of the IRCT global movement to prevent torture and to fight for the rights of torture survivors on all continents. Their work, and the global commemoration of 26 June, is a beacon of hope for the many who believe in justice and in the moral imperative to respect human dignity.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Louise Arbour', written in a cursive style.

Louise Arbour  
United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights



### **A Global Movement with a Common Goal**

“Together against Torture” reads the slogan of the worldwide campaign against torture that takes place each year on the UN International Day in Support of Victims of Torture.

And working collectively against torture is precisely what the IRCT is about. Every day, the IRCT member centres and programmes around the world do their utmost to relieve the plight of individual torture survivors and their families. But they do more than this. Drawing on the inherent strength of a membership that comprises 130 treatment centres and programmes worldwide, the IRCT has both the knowledge and the clout needed to impact regional and global policies and to advocate forcefully for all governments to meet their obligation to ensure all torture survivors’ right to rehabilitation and redress.

The worldwide 26 June campaign against torture is among the most efficient tools for this purpose. After all, one would have to make a deliberate effort to ignore the united voice of many thousand people in more than eighty countries speaking out in unison against the heinous crime called torture.

Our efforts to bring the campaign and our cause in general to the world’s attention was greatly assisted by the screening of Spanish director Isabel Coixet’s excellent film “The Secret Life of Words” in cinemas across the world. The film, which portrays a Bosnian torture survivor’s inner suffering and is dedicated to the IRCT, has left

a vivid impression on thousands of policy makers and ordinary people. For instance, in Canada the film led existing donors to double their contribution to the Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture and persuaded new donors to support the work against torture.

Moreover, Coixet’s TV-spot “You Can Do Something to Stop Torture” was aired in 22 countries, reaching an audience of many millions. It is therefore with great pleasure that I extend a special word of thanks to Isabel for her continued and invaluable support to our movement.

My heartfelt thanks also go to the staff and volunteers at all IRCT member centres and programmes for their relentless effort to help torture survivors realize their inalienable right to rehabilitation and redress.

I wish the reader a pleasant journey through the present report’s compelling look into this year’s global 26 June campaign and its wealth of exciting events with a common message: Stop Torture Now!

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Afana', written in a cursive style.

Abdel Hamid Afana  
IRCT President

## Torture Survivors' Right to Rehabilitation

On 26 June 1945 the United Nations Charter was signed, obliging States to uphold and encourage respect for human rights. Exactly 42 years later, on 26 June 1987, the UN Convention against Torture came into force, consolidating the international community's consensus that torture is a crime and a human rights violation that can never be justified.

Today, 26 June marks the UN International Day in Support of Victims of Torture – a day when the world says a loud and clear NO to torture; where torture survivors and staff at treatment centres worldwide are joined by thousands of concerned citizens in a global campaign to end torture and to support torture survivors.

This year's campaign focused on torture survivors' right to rehabilitation. In parliaments, treatment centres and packed

university halls, in streets, on rivers and at open sea, the message was conveyed in lectures, speeches and public vigils and through music, dance and theatre.

An important sub-theme was the need for adequate and sustainable funding to the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture (UNVFVT), which celebrated its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary on the very day of the campaign. Only surpassed by the EU the Fund is the world's second largest source of financing for existing treatment centres and programmes. Moreover, it is an essential source for enabling the initiation of new projects in countries where rehabilitation services are scarce or unavailable. Centres and programmes – particularly in the South – are thus highly vulnerable to any reduction in the Fund's budget. Concretely, every year the UNVFVT receives requests for a total amount equalling

## INTRODUCTION

twice its available budget. In 2005 treatment centres and programmes worldwide requested a total of USD 14 million while the Fund had just USD 7.3 million available.

During the campaign several IRCT member centres chose to focus directly on the need for increased support to the Fund, among them India, Bulgaria, Cameroon, Congo, Nigeria and Romania. Moreover, the campaign as a whole contributed to raising the awareness of politicians, the press and the public about the urgent need for financial support to establish new treatment centres and to prevent otherwise well-functioning centres from closing down, leaving their clients without the possibility for receiving professional treatment.



The campaign reinforces, and is reinforced by, a project currently being implemented by the IRCT Secretariat with the aim of encouraging governments – particularly OECD members – to support the UNVFVT as well as national rehabilitation facilities. The project focuses on raising awareness and lobbying amongst policy makers and the media about the crucial importance of governmental contributions for ensuring the financial stability of treatment centres and programmes for torture survivors in the South as well as in the North.

### **IRCT secretariat support to member centres and programmes**

In support of the campaign the IRCT General Secretariat prepared information materials in five main languages which was made available to all participating centres and programmes. The materials comprised background papers, press releases, a TV spot and statements emphasising the need to support rehabilitation of torture survivors in general and the UNVFVT in particular. Included in the package was a statement by UN Special Rapporteur on Torture Dr. Manfred Nowak, which was disseminated by many cen-

tres and subsequently quoted in local and national media.

Moreover, local centres together with the IRCT Secretariat had arranged screenings in The Hague and Toronto of the film “The Secret Life of Words”, whose main character is a Bosnian torture survivor. Both events attracted considerable attention to the cause as did a radio interview with IRCT Secretary-General Brita Sydhoff, which was broadcasted in twelve languages. Finally, the TV spot “You Can Do Something to Stop Torture” was aired by 22 TV stations worldwide. The present report provides a wealth of examples about the content and extent of the overall campaign.

Thank you for your contributions!

Brita Sydhoff  
Secretary-General

## Argentina

In cooperation with a number of other organisations the *Equipo Argentino de Trabajo e Investigación* (EATIP) organised a number of activities during the week leading up to 26 June. On the Pueyrredon Bridge in the Buenos Aires Province 3000 informative flyers were distributed at a peaceful rally. In the Córdoba Province seventy professionals participated in a debate on psychosocial treatment of torture survivors. The event was covered by a provincial newspaper. Furthermore, the EATIP organised two lectures at national universities. One lecture with the title "30 years after the coup d'état. No to Torture. The Role of the Psychologist" had 120 participants, both students and professors. The other lecture, which focused on the background and significance of 26 June, was attended by ten medical professionals, two psychologists and 53 students. Four members of the EATIP's Executive Committee participated in the fourth International Congress on Traumatic Stress where they put the commemoration on 26 June on the agenda in various discussions. Dr. Darío Lagos gave detailed information at two symposia at the National Congress. The Congress had

approximately 1500 participants. In cooperation with the *Human Rights Secretariat*, EATIP wrote an article on the current situation of torture in Argentinean prisons. The article was published in the newspaper "La Nación". Together with other human rights organisations in the Latin-American and Caribbean Network of Health Institutions against Torture, Impunity and other Violations, EATIP co-wrote a declaration on the Guantánamo Prison, which was distributed to more than 30 human rights organisations in Argentina.

## Australia

In Hobart, Tasmania the *Phoenix Centre for Survivors of Torture and Trauma* organised a gathering of survivors and supporters with live music and personal storytelling. The theme was acknowledging the past, celebrating healing in the present and moving on into the future. Very moving stories of survival were interspersed by beautiful, expressive duets on Djembe and double bass. The programme finished with a song that described life in cold but friendly Tasmania that was written during music therapy group sessions.



AUSTRALIA: Live music and personal storytelling were part of the gathering organised by the Phoenix Centre.



BANGLADESH: A human chain organised by BRCT.

The NSW Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors (STARTTS) was responsible for an event at the Powerhouse Museum in Sydney. The 120 participants from the refugee and multicultural affairs sector, students, education workers, police, academia and STARTTS staff and volunteers listened to and participated in a discussion with invited speakers. The Southern Sudanese entertainer Mary Mamour provided very moving entertainment in the event singing songs from her homeland with the accompaniment of drums. A number of newspapers and the Radio Station ABC Radio



AUSTRALIA: STTARS campaigning in the heart of Adelaide's commercial district.

National covered torture and trauma issues of clients and staff of the STARTTS.

This year in South Australia the *Survivors of Torture and Trauma Assistance and Rehabilitation Service* (STTARS) decided to take the campaign right into the heart of Adelaide's commercial district in an attempt to reach people who would not normally become involved in torture related issues. After some difficulties in getting permission from the City Council to hold the event it turned out to be one of the most successful events the STTARS has ever held. Approximately 500 passersby

were approached and many of them stopped to talk and give donations.

## Bangladesh

A "Human Chain" and a peaceful rally were organised by the *Bangladesh Rehabilitation Centre for Trauma Victims* (BRCT) in cooperation with *Bangladesh Institute of Human Rights* (BIHR). They involved 123 organisations and approximately 35,000 human rights activists in the country, and brought torture to the attention of politicians and the public.

A report on the situation of torture in Bangladesh was published and presented at a press conference. On the day after the commemoration, all leading national and local newspapers published reports highlighting 26 June activities throughout the country.

As a follow up to the 26 June TV Spot, which was broadcasted in Bangladesh, the BRCT made a survey report on the effect of the broadcasting. The report concluded that it is very efficient to use mass media when disseminating information on

torture as it is a very visible and easily communicable issue.

*The Centre for Rehabilitation of Torture Survivors* (CRTS) organised a colourful rally that marched through the main streets of Dhaka. After the rally a discussion meeting was organised with the participation of teachers, journalists, lawyers and physicians. Several newspapers covered the CRTS activities in the days after 26 June.

## Bolivia

In Bolivia the *Instituto de Terapia e Investigación sobre las Secuelas de la Tortura y la Violencia Estatal* (ITEI) carried out similar activities in both the capital of La Paz and in Cochabamba. On a public square, ITEI and other organisations displayed an exhibition with informational panels on torture. This year special emphasis was placed on Bolivia's recent ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and the process of implementing the protocol in the country. Other panels contained information on the Istanbul Protocol, prison visits and other issues related to human rights violations and torture. In

addition to the panels, videos dealing with torture in Bolivia were shown intermittently throughout the day. The response of the media was extensive – in La Paz seven radio stations and six TV stations covered the activities and in Cochabamba seven radio stations and eight TV stations covered the activities.

## Bulgaria

The *Assistance Center for Torture Survivors* (ACET) in Sofia commemorated the UN International Day in Support of Victims of Torture in cooperation with the *Association Eurointegration* by organising a round table discussion. The event was honoured by the former Prime Minister of the Republic of Bulgaria, Mr. Philip Dimitrov and former Vice-President, Mr. Todor Kavaldjiev. Guests of the discussion were representatives of the National Assembly, the Association of Judges, the Unions of the Repressed People from the Communist Regime, the Vice-President of the Commission on Human Rights and journalists. As a conclusion of the discussion, it was unanimously agreed upon to draw up a declaration to the Bulgarian state institu-

tions to call on contributions to the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture (UNVFVT). The declaration was disseminated to government officials.

## Cameroon

The *Centre for the Rehabilitation and Abolition of Torture* (CRAT) alongside the *Trauma Centre Yaoundé* and *Tort for Torture Victims Cameroon* (TTVC) organised a forum in Yaoundé to commemorate the day. Activities at the forum included the reading of the commemoration speech of the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture, Manfred Nowak, presentations on the Istanbul Protocol, the psychological impact of torture and legal aspects in the investigation of torture to fight impunity. Approximately 50 people participated in the forum, among them representatives from the public administration, the Ministry of Justice, NGOs and lawyers. By the end of the commemoration many participants committed themselves to join the fight against torture. In the week leading up to 26 June, an extensive media campaign was launched and several national newspapers covered the commemoration day.

Furthermore, the *Tort for Torture Victims Centre's* (TT-VC) head office in Bamenda co-organised three days of activities with nine other organisations. The theme of the events was the need for government commitment to support the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture (UNVFVT). The commemoration started on 24 June with panel discussions on both national and private radio and television stations. On the same day representatives from the organisations visited prisons and detention centres to provide medical and social help to torture victims.

On 25 June there was a marathon and football match to attract the attention of the public, as well as the Rwanda Refugee dance on the beach which entertained over 800 people. The day concluded with a conference.

Finally on 26 June close to 1,000 people joined a peaceful rally which also included theatre, drama and music performances. After the rally a press conference was held with the participation of three international representatives from Nigeria, Ethiopia and the Philippines.



CANADA: The Canadian actor Sarah Polley and Dr. Abdel Hamid Afana, President of the IRCT attended the CCTV screening of *The Secret Life of Words*.

## Canada

The *Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture* (CCVT) marked the 26 June with two events. During the day clients, teachers and staff gathered together at the Centre for a party which included food and a talent show starring clients and staff members. In the evening the CCVT was

honoured to be part of the North American premiere of the film *The Secret Life of Words* by Isabel Coixet. The Canadian actor Sarah Polley attended the screening and answered questions at the end of the movie. Also in attendance was Dr. Abdel Hamid Afana, President of the IRCT. He, along with Mulugeta Abai, Executive Direc-



CANADA: OCISO, in partnership with NCASWTT, hosted an exhibition of various local artists whose work reflects their personal experience with torture.

tor of the CCVT, Sarah Polley and actress Arsinee Khanjian, took part in a panel discussion after the film.

To raise awareness about the commemoration day members of the Multicultural Wellness Program at the *Mount Carmel Clinic* wore the “Together against Torture”

t-shirts and distributed the “T-badges” on the 26 June.

At the University of Ottawa, the *Ottawa Community Immigrant Services Organization* (OCISO) in partnership with the *Network Committee to Assist Survivors of War Trauma and Torture* (NCASWTT) hosted an interactive and culturally stimulating presentation in commemoration of 26 June. The event featured the artwork of various local artists whose work reflects their personal experience with torture. Further, there was a twenty minute theatrical presentation with subsequent time for personal reflection and feedback from the audience. The day concluded with a discussion on contemporary torture issues affecting Canada. Approximately 70 participants joined the commemoration at the University.

The *Vancouver Association for Survivors of Torture* (VAST) held a meeting and celebration on the 24 June to commemorate the UN Day. VAST staff, organising team members, volunteers, program participants and friends met at a local park and enjoyed a beautiful sunny day, good food and great company. On 26 June VAST co-

organised an event entitled: “Encounter, Reflections and Testimonies: The Cost of a World without Peace”. Following a lively discussion, members of the audience created art pieces which express messages against war and torture, to be delivered to the United Nations.

## Chad

The *Association jeunesse pour la Paix et la Non Violence* (AJPNV/CRVT) organised an all day event on 26 June. Among the invited were lawyers, policemen, students, professors, teachers and presidents of the different associations of civil society.

The day began with a presentation by the President of AJPNV/CRVT, talking on the annual commemoration of the 26 June. Following this presentation, the Secretary General of AJPNV/CRVT appealed to the government to establish a policy on the rehabilitation of torture victims.

Lastly, the names of the winners of a writing competition on the notion of torture were announced. Among the forty participants, four were rewarded. The four students received t-shirts, badges and school furniture.



*CHILE: Staff from CINTRAS talked to several hundred people about the prevention of torture and the need for adequate reparation for torture survivors on a public square in the capital.*

## Chile

Together with several other organisations, the *Centro de Salud Mental y Derechos Humanos* (CINTRAS) participated in many activities during the days around 26 June. On 23 June 80 participants watched the film "La Colonia" based on true incidents

during the dictatorship of Pinochet. The film was followed by a forum discussion with a lawyer, priest, journalist and a representative from CINTRAS on the panel. On 24 and 25 June the Organisation of Former Minors who have been Victims of Prison and Torture during the Dictatorship of Pinochet organised their first national meeting. In the following days, the group organised a public event in the city of Valparaíso focusing on torture of children.

On the commemoration day 26 June, several hundred people were approached on the square of Plaza de Armas in the capital Santiago. The message was the prevention of torture and the need for adequate reparation for torture survivors. On the following day a cultural-artistic ceremony was held at the Faculty of Law at the University of Chile where approximately 100 participants paid tribute to social activists who were tortured to death during the dictatorship.

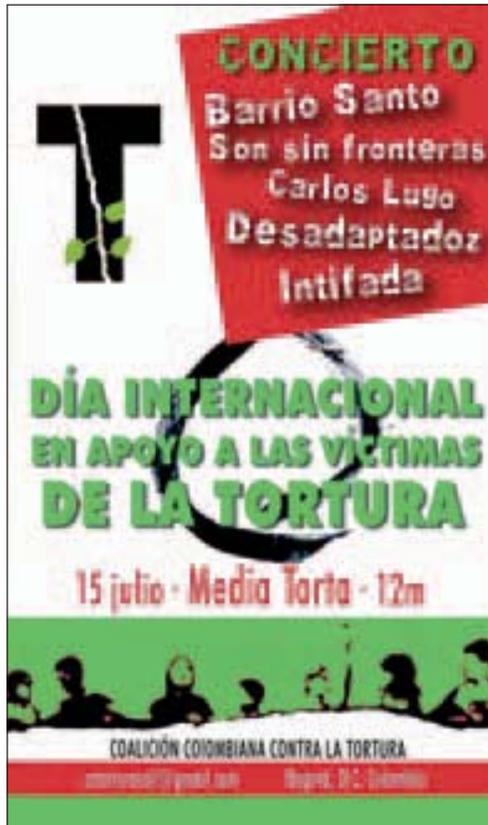
All these activities culminated on 28 June with a round table discussion and an event in memory of torture victims.



*COLOMBIA: A concert in Bogotá in support of victims of torture.*

## Colombia

On 15 July, the *Coalición Colombiana contra la Tortura* organised a rock concert in Bogotá in support of victims of torture. Three rock groups, one cultural group and one soloist singer participated with entertainment containing social and torture



COLOMBIA: The Coalición Contra la Tortura produced posters to raise awareness on their 26 June activities.

related issues. Approximately 800 persons listened to the messages of the performers.

## Congo, Democratic Republic of the

During the week beginning 26 June Arche d'Alliance, *Organisation de Promotion et de Defense des Droits de la Personne Humaine* organised a number of activities in the territories of Uvira and Fizi. Over five days national radio and television stations broadcasted information on the role of the community in the prevention of torture. Issues related to this topic were also debated at a conference held on 27 June. Arche d'Alliance also organised a childrens drawing and writing competition on torture.

On 29 June the representative of the military garrison of Uvira attended the prisons in the area of Ruzuzi, located in the territory of Uvira, with the aim of verifying if torture had been committed. This visit was followed by the Public Prosecutor attending all the prisons in Uvira and Fizi: 18 prisoners were found to be in irregular situations and were liberated. Among them seven had been tortured by military officers and security agents.

Arche d'Alliance also visited inmates of the Central Prison of Uvira. Provisions were supplied with mosquito nets to reduce the cases of paludism, a frequent disease in Congo prisons.

*L'Association pour les Victimes de la Répression en Afrique (AVRA)* arranged a variety of events for 26 June. The day began with a "Support the Victims" march in the city of Kindu. This was followed by a debate with schoolchildren. The children were taught about the fight against torture, as well as the importance of tolerance in today's society. A cultural evening was held afterwards, with the presentation of a play entitled "The Nightmare of an Oppressor" dealing with the consequences of torture. The event ended with a reception and a concert with an invitation to the youth to be involved in the fight against torture.

On 23 June, *Comité des Observateurs des Droits de l'Homme (CODHO)* held a press conference in the area of Kinshasa. Among the invited guests were journalists from daily newspapers and national radio and television. It was hosted by the president



CONGO: A special ceremony was held at the Victory Church in Tshikapa.

and vice-president of CODHO and focused on the definition and nature of torture in the Convention against Torture, in the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and in the Congolese legislation. Several cases of torture that had occurred during the past month (June 2006) were presented.

The *SAVE Congo DR, Rehabilitation Centre for Victims of Torture* in collaboration

with the *Christian Church in Congo* held a special ceremony at Victory Church in Tshikapa to commemorate 26 June. The event began with a speech by the Executive Director of SAVE Congo, Mr. Guy Kitwe Mulunda. He highlighted the significance of the UN International Day in Support of Victims of Torture. Additionally he explained how the Centre offers physical and mental assistance to victims of torture and how to eradicate torture and end impunity. Congo DR has ratified the UN Convention against Torture but the Government does not support the UN Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture (UNVFVT). Bishop Abraham Mazemba called upon the Congolese government to fully comply with its responsibilities under the Convention and to join the main donors of the UNVFVT. This was followed by songs and prayers by the approximately 800 participants.

## Croatia

Listeners of the Croatian Radio were informed about the commemoration day on 1 June when Zdenka Pantic, the Director of the *International Rehabilitation Centre for Torture Victims Zagreb* (IRCT

Zagreb) was invited to talk about torture in the world today, the work of the IRCT Zagreb and the UN International Day in Support of Victims of Torture. A few days later on 6 June, the Centre hosted a seminar for 25 students of psychology with information on medical, psychological, social and legal aspects of torture and encouraged them to join commemoration activities as volunteers during the month of June. A second seminar was hosted by the Centre 24 – 25 June with the participation of a wide range of professionals working with torture survivors.

On 26 June professionals and NGO representatives working with refugees, prisoners and torture victims were invited to join a round table discussion at the Centre. Finally, the commemoration activities culminated on 27 June with 250 people participating in the screening of the documentary "Haidari Crises" which describes an asylum seekers life in a refugee camp, isolated and without proper care, waiting three years to join his family.



DENMARK: RCT hosted a conference at the Danish Parliament.

## Denmark

In cooperation with several other Danish organisations The *Rehabilitation and Research Centre for Torture Victims* (RCT) hosted a conference at the Danish Parliament on 26 June. In the morning the speakers focused on themes relating to asylum and legal rights and in the afternoon discussion topics dealt with trauma and integration. The conference concluded with a panel of parliamentarians. More than 200 attended the conference.

At the *Rehabilitation and Integration Centre Horsens*, 50 visitors saw the facilities and talked with staff at the open house day on 26 June. The staff informed visitors about the possible treatment methods they can offer torture survivors and answered questions. The event was covered by the local newspaper. The centre also disseminated information materials to passersby on the pedestrian street.



EGYPT: Banners and posters were used in a silent demonstration.

## Egypt

Approximately 50 lawyers and human rights activists staged a silent demonstration in front of Cairo's Al-Sayyeda Zeinab Police Station in commemoration of the UN International Day in Support of Victims of Torture. One of the participating organisations was the *El-Nadim Centre for Psychological Management and Rehabilitation of Victims of Violence*. Some of the activists held up banners and posters reading "Tor-

ture is a crime against which we will not keep silent". Others showed drawings and photographs of torture techniques commonly used in Egyptian prisons and police stations. Doctors from the Centre and Sudanese torture survivors drew attention to the commemoration day through interviews with the following media: Aljazera TV-Station, German Channel 1 TV-Station and the UN Press Agency. Finally, El-Nadim Centre hosted a conference at the press syndicate about the role of the perpetrator in the legal process of torture survivors' redress.



ETHIOPIA: RCVTE presented a cultural event to create awareness of the degrading and dehumanising effects of torture.

## Ethiopia

To create awareness of the degrading and dehumanising effects of torture, poems were read, presentations given, music played and a photo exhibition presented by the *Rehabilitation Center for Victims of Torture in Ethiopia* (RCVTE) at a public event on 26 June. Among the 81 participants, the European Commission Delegation to Ethiopia honoured the RCVTE by being present at the commemoration. In the days following, three newspapers covered the activities.

## France

*Association pour les Victimes de la Répression en Exil* (AVRE) created a special campaign for the 26 June which was posted in the streets of Paris. The campaign encouraged people to get involved in the fight against torture. In particular, the campaign highlighted the fact that torture is still prevalent today.



FRANCE: Posted in the streets of Paris, AVRE organised a campaign encouraging people to get involved in the fight against torture.

## Georgia

The *Georgian Centre for Physical and Medical Rehabilitation of Torture Victims* (GCRT) together with the *Georgian Human Rights Information and Documentation Center* (HRIDC) began their commemoration on 25 June, when representatives of the NGOs appeared on Shardeni Street, outside the restaurant from which murdered banker, Sandro Girgvliani, was abducted by employees of the Ministry of the Interior. The activists lit candles in his memory and wrote the letter "T" for torture with the candle lights. On 26 June the rally continued in Vera Park in support of victims of torture, where posters against torture and instruments of torture were displayed. A theatrical performance representing scenes of torture was also performed in the park. All main TV and radio stations covered the demonstration and broadcasted live from the activities in the park.

At the III Conference "Together against Torture", the *Rehabilitation Centre for Victims of Torture Empathy* (RCT/Empathy) in cooperation with other organisations discussed the implementation of interna-

tional standards on prevention of torture in Georgia. One hundred people representing more than 40 organisations and ministries participated in the conference. A special declaration with recommendations for torture prevention in Georgia was elaborated and approved during the Conference. The Declaration focuses on the implementation of the principles of the Istanbul Protocol, the international medical ethics and health care standards in the legal system in Georgia as well as the implementation of the Articles of the Convention against Torture (CAT) and the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture (OPCAT). The Declaration was sent to the President, the Parliament and to the Prime Minister of Georgia.

On 26 June the President of the RCT/Empathy had a live interview on the international radio station "Liberty" talking about the commemoration day and the situation of torture in Georgia.



GEORGIA: Children in Georgia displaying posters against torture.

## Germany

The *Center for the Treatment of Torture Victims Berlin* (BZFO) devoted the 2006 UN International Day in Support of Victims of Torture to the situation of traumatised refugee children. The event was planned in cooperation with UNICEF Germany. In a joint press release the BZFO and UNICEF urged the German government to give high priority to the well being of children in the asylum procedure and to speed up the decision-making process regarding asylum for refugee children and unaccompanied youth.



*GERMANY: To honour the commemoration day, the German Federal President, Horst Köhler, and his wife, Eva Luise Köhler, visited the BZFO.*

To honour the commemoration day, the German Federal President, Horst Köhler, and his wife, Eva Luise Köhler, visited the BZFO. In his statement to the press the president underlined the importance of the work of the BZFO. He also stated that refugee children and unaccompanied youth must be secured access to rehabilitation and education.

The BZFO Director, Dr. Franz Janssen, also gave an introduction of the organisation's

work at an Amnesty International conference. This was followed by a dialogue with the audience on the conditions of the BZFO clients. Seventy people participated in the discussion. Several media, both electronic and printed, covered the events.

## Ghana

The *Action by Christians against Torture* (ACAT) observed the day through activities organised by various ACAT groups, especially in Accra and Ho. Further, the organisation organised a petition addressed to the President in which they request the Republic of Ghana to ratify and implement the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture. Several church prayer sessions were also arranged in commemoration of the day.

To create awareness on 26 June the *Coalition of African NGOs against Torture* (CANAT) issued press releases to all media houses. Two radio stations granted an interview with the Secretary General of the Coalition, Mr. Nurundeen Mohammed Ibrahim. The themes of the radio interviews



*GHANA: ACAT wrote a petition addressed to the President in which they request the Republic of Ghana to ratify and implement the OPCAT.*

were the commemoration day 26 June, the UN Convention against Torture and the Optional Protocol. More than five million people listened to the twenty minute interviews. Furthermore, the executive members of the CANAT, in collaboration with the *United Nations Information Center*, planned a visit to Kumasi Central Prison on 30 June. However at the last moment, the prison authorities did not grant permission for the executive members to visit the prison.

## Greece

An art exhibition titled "60 Visual Artists from Epiros against Torture" was held 26 June – 9 July by the *Medical Rehabilitation Center for Torture Victims* (MRCT) in collaboration with the *Municipality of Athens*. Sixty volunteer artists from the area Epiros donated their work to the MRCT. The main speaker at the ceremony was the former President of the Greek Parliament Mr. Apostolos Kaklamanis. Messages from the President of the Republic, the Prime Minister and the President of the Greek Parliament were read. Approximately 300 people participated in the event which was extensively covered in newspapers, radio and TV stations.

## Honduras

On 26 June, in the capital of Honduras, the *Centro para la Prevención, Tratamiento y Rehabilitación de las Víctimas de la Tortura y sus Familiares* (CPTRT) in cooperation with the *Centro de Investigación y Promoción de Derechos Humanos* (CIPRODEH) organised a discussion forum entitled "Integrated Rehabilitation – A Challenge for the Legal System in Honduras". The

*HUNGARY: An exhibition of art and craftworks in the heart of Budapest.*



President of the Supreme Court and a human rights lawyer from the Ministry of Public Work were among those who participated in the programme. After the speakers' presentations and comments, the audience asked questions on the topic. In the following days the forum was covered in two national newspapers.

## Hungary

In a joint event commemorating the International Refugee Day and the UN International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, the *Cordelia Foundation for the Rehabilita-*

*tion of Torture Victims* in cooperation with the *UNHCR* and *Menedék Asylum Association*, organised an exhibition of art and craftworks in the heart of Budapest on 17 June. The exhibited articles were made by traumatised unaccompanied minors and were the result of combined therapeutic sessions including non-verbal, verbal and art therapies. 250-300 participants attended the event. Furthermore, the Medical Director of the Cordelia Foundation, Dr. Lilla Hárđi, was interviewed on one of Hungary's most popular radio stations on the nature and frequency of torture in the world and rehabilitation methods.



*VENEZUELA: Fiorella Perrone, doctor at the Red de Apoyo, answering questions from the media.*



*LEBANON: Representatives from KRC at a press conference.*



*GEORGIA: Mariam Jishkariani, Director of RCT Empathy, talks to the media.*

## Raising Awareness on Torture

Needless to say, one out of 365 days is not enough to combat torture. It is an ongoing struggle to attract the attention of politicians, media, health professionals and lawyers – and the public at large – emphasising that torture is never allowed, under any circumstances. However, the decision to designate one single day in the year to the numerous torture victims serves the clear purpose to call on the international community on this specific day to stand together against torture, inhuman and degrading treatment.

Consequently, this day is a crucial moment for rehabilitation centres and programmes to focus on this man-made atrocity and to urge individuals and governments to join the fight against torture.

This report documents a substantial number of initiatives organised by centres and programmes worldwide. A selection of these activities cannot in any way pay tribute to the great amount of effort by staff and volunteers on this day. But it illustrates

why torture is worth fighting against on June 26. And the rest of the year.

### **TV spot aired in 22 countries**

With the great effort of many centres and programmes, the IRCT network was honoured to receive pro bono support from TV stations from most parts of the world. TV channels in 22 countries broadcasted the TV spot made especially for 26 June by award winning Spanish director, Isabel Coixet, known for the international movies “My Life Without Me” and “The Secret Life of Words”, the latter was launched in spring 2006 and portrays the life of a torture survivor.

Radio stations in four countries also aired the spot.

This remarkable support is extremely important for the dissemination of the message on 26 June: That torture is a crime against humanity and that every human being can act to prevent torture: “You can do something to stop torture,” is the message. This year the IRCT as the global coordinator of June 26 activities had campaign materi-

als produced in five main languages including statements, press releases, campaign kits and translations of the 26 June TV spot. With this in their hands, human rights defenders worldwide have spoken up and said a clear NO to torture and thus endorsed the thematic approach of this year's campaign: The need for further financial commitment to the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture. This had repercussions in a number of countries, among others Bulgaria where a declaration was aimed at the Bulgarian state institutions to call on contributions to the UN Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture. In India one of the main topics of a round table discussion in Calcutta was the need of the government's support to the UN Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture.

An interview with Brita Sydhoff, IRCT General-Secretary, on the importance of June 26 and the need for support to torture survivors was aired in 12 different languages, namely English, Pashu, Dari, Turkish, Macedonian, Bosnian, Urdu, Bengali, Portuguese, Kiswahili, Amharic and Hausa. At national and local level media attention was impressive at several events.

Many politicians used the occasion of June 26 to render their support to the fight against torture. The BZFO centre in Berlin had the honour of a visit by the German Federal President, Horst Köhler, and his wife. In a statement to the press, the President underlined the importance of the work of the BZFO and his support to their work.

**Below is the list of TV and Radio stations that the IRCT pays tribute to for airing the TV spot on 26 June:**

**Austria:** ORF

**Bangladesh:** Channel I, Ntv, ATN Bangla

**Bolivia:** Canal 39 PAT, Canal 4, RTP Canal 5 Bolivisión, Canal Televisión Nacional, Canal 11 Red Uno, Canal 13

**Cameroon:** Canal 2, Abakwa FM, STV

**Canada:** CBC

**Croatia:** RTL

**Denmark:** DR 1

**Finland:** YLE

**France:** TV5MONDE

**Georgia:** TV Channel 202, Public Broadcasting Georgia

**Germany:** Deutsche Welle

**Greece:** Greek Parliament TV, Mega, Antenna TV, EPT-EPA1, Star Channel, ET1, NET, Alpha TV, Alter

**Guatemala:** Radio Universidad

**Honduras:** STC, Canal 66, Canal 45, HRN, Radio Globo

**India:** Bangla Ekhon

**Kenya:** Citizen TV

**Kosovo:** RTK

**Qatar:** Aljazeera

**Serbia & Montenegro:** B92, Pink

**South Africa:** TCFN Radio, Bush Radio

**Spain:** Canal +

**Switzerland:** SF DRS

**Turkey:** Gün Radio and TV

**Venezuela:** Telesur tv, Vive TV

**The TV-Spot can be downloaded from [www.irct.org](http://www.irct.org)**



*"You can't do anything to stop a hurricane"*

*"You can't do anything to stop an earthquake"*

*"... but you can do something to stop torture"*



*The Secret Life of Words* directed by Isabel Coixet.

## The Secret Life of Words on 26 June

Since the first premiere of the international film "The Secret Life of Words" by Spanish director Isabel Coixet, the film, portraying the life of a torture survivor, has rendered much attention to the work of the IRCT and the global struggle against torture. Isabel Coixet was inspired to the film after she had visited IRCT in Copenhagen and the Centre for Torture Victims (CTV) in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and several references are made to the IRCT and its founder, Dr. Inge Genefke, in the film.

The film has already been screened in a number of European countries like Germany, France, Spain, Italy, Switzerland and Belgium and given considerable public attention.

On 26 June 2006, the film was screened at two exclusive events for a selected audience, in Toronto, Canada and The Hague, The Netherlands.

### Film screening in Toronto

The Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture (CCVT) was honoured to organize the first North American premiere of "The Secret Life of Words" on 26 June at the National Film Board in Toronto. It was actually Canadian actor Sarah Polley, who portrays Hanna in the film, suggesting that a premiere of the movie could be used as a fundraising tool for the CCVT.

CCVT says that the event was a powerful success. Sarah Polley attended the screening and answered questions at the end of the movie together with the president of the IRCT, Dr. Abdel Hamid Afana.

Together with executive director of the CCVT, Mulugeta Abai and actress Arsinee Khanjian, they also took part in a panel discussion after the film. The discussion centred on the public opinion in the current political climate. Abdel Hamid Afana and Mulugeta Abai emphasised the importance of public accountability meaning that each one of us has a responsibility to raise our voices against torture. It was also said that it is necessary to challenge social elements that breed complacency to torture.

The film screening was also attended by representatives of the Danish and Spanish governments, namely Mrs. Anje Jeffrey, Deputy Chief of Mission, Royal Danish Mission and Ignacio Sanchez de Lerin, Consul General of Spain both of whom made introductory remarks to the film.

Says Mulugeta Abai: "The event was highly profiled and well attended. Participants emphasised the importance of such events in the fight against torture. Most participants want more events of such profile and thanked all involved for an event well organized."

Following the screening, former donors doubled their contributions to the CCVT and new donors committed themselves to the rehabilitation work.

#### And in The Hague

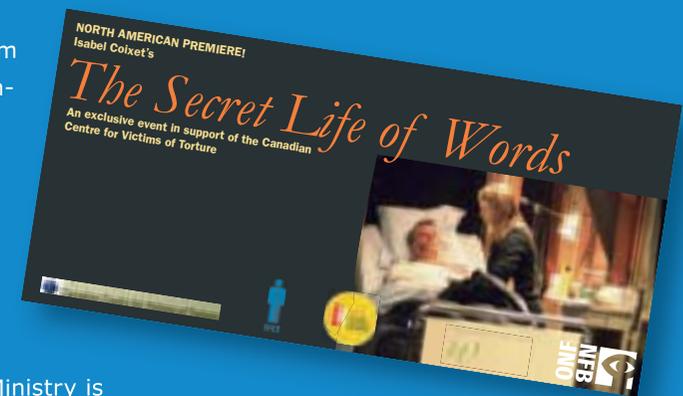
To commemorate 26 June a screening of the film "The Secret Life of Words" was organised at Het Filmhuis in The Hague. The Screening was a co-event between the IRCT, The War Trauma Foundation and the four

Dutch rehabilitation centres Expertisecentrum Phoenix, Pharos – Kenniscentrum, Vluchtelingen en Gezondheid, Psychotrauma Centrum Zuid Nederland and Stichting Centrum '45.

The organisers were very fortunate that Mr. Piet de Klerk, Dutch Human Rights Ambassador, agreed to be the main speaker, introducing the film. In his speech he emphasised that The Netherlands Foreign Ministry is pleased to support the work of the IRCT directly for a period until 2008 and added that the Dutch Government also contributes to the work to rehabilitate victims of torture through the UN Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture. He also underscored the need for all countries to ratify the UN Convention against Torture.

After the film, IRCT founder and Ambassador Inge Genefke presented the history and work of the IRCT, followed by a panel discussion. Representatives from all co-hosting organisations participated in the panel. Many interesting issues were brought up and the panel managed to emphasise the complexity of consequences of torture.

The film screening reached a wide audience: Representatives from the International Court in The Hague, Human Rights NGOs, the Netherlands Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Health, and people invited by the co-hosting organisations.



CANADA: CCVT marked the 26 June with a screening of *The Secret Life of Words* in Toronto.



THE NETHERLANDS: Mr. Piet de Klerk, Dutch Human Rights Ambassador, and Inge Genefke, IRCT founder, at the screening of "The Secret Life of Words" in The Hague.





INDIA: On 26 June, the CCTV lit candles and lamps after sunset on the doorstep of the office to commemorate torture victims.



INDIA: RUC, together with a number of local organisations, held two conferences on 21 and 26 June, marking the UN International Day in Support of Victims of Torture.

## India

The *Centre for Care of Torture Victims* (CCTV) arranged a round table discussion on 24 June at the Academy of Fine Arts in Calcutta with 40 participants. The focus of the discussions was the need of the government's support to the UN Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture (UNVFVT), the role of the media in the rehabilitation of torture victims and the ratification of the UN Convention against Torture. Legal and health professionals as well as representatives from the media and NGOs partici-

pated as speakers. In addition, on 26 June the CCTV lit candles and lamps after sunset on the doorstep of the office to commemorate torture victims.

This year the *Rural Uplift Centre* (RUC) together with a number of local organisations held two conferences on 21 and 26 June, marking the UN International Day in Support of Victims of Torture. Both conferences focused on the ratification of different conventions, including the UN Convention against Torture (UNCAT) and the

Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture (OPCAT). During the conferences the 300 and 400 participants respectively, discussed the topics with various experts in the field and enjoyed cultural entertainment. Further, RUC produced a leaflet with information on the commemoration day and a number of demands urging the Indian government to ratify the UNCAT and the OPCAT. The leaflet was sent to the Indian Prime Minister, the President, the Minister of Interior, the Chairperson of the National Human Rights Commission,

the Chairperson of the National Women's Commission and the Government of Tamil Nadu. The events were covered in both English and Tamil newspapers and on state and local television stations.

## Indonesia

The International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC) supported a coalition of 27 Indonesian NGOs to commemorate the day. The activities consisted of a rally that marched from the center of the city to the parliament. Further, a radio program focused on the existing laws on torture and the need for a separate law that support the Convention against Torture. The speakers were lawyers, a Member of Parliament, torture victims and Human Rights activists. The radio station estimates at least a million listeners. Finally, a community discussion was held on the theme: "Forcefully Evicted People".

## Ireland

Launching from Dublin Port on 10 June, the tall ship "Faramir" sailed the high seas as part of the "Tall Ship Challenge against



*INDONESIA: Activists offering flowers and information on the Convention against Torture to the police.*

Torture" organised by the *Spiritans Asylum Seeker Initiative* (SPIRASI). The ship sailed into 10 ports around Ireland with a crew consisting of refugees, torture survivors and school children from three Dublin schools. The aim of the campaign was to raise awareness about torture throughout the world. As the boat stopped at each port along the way, there were concerts, performances and other awareness raising events which were organised in cooperation with local community groups. The musical performances culminated in a concert at Liberty hall, Dublin on 26 June. During the day on 26 June an intercultural



*IRELAND: SPIRASI organised concerts, performances and other awareness raising events in cooperation with local community groups.*

event was hosted for the SPIRASI clients to celebrate their courage and to recognise the incidence of torture worldwide. The celebration included Brazilian, African and Irish music and was addressed by Morris Manning, President of the Irish Human Rights Commission.

## Italy

Two hundred participants commemorated the UN day in Milan in an event organised by the *NAGA-HAR Centro per Richiedenti Asilo, Rifugiati e Vittime di Tortura*. The evening on 25 June began with a dinner



KENYA: To create awareness on torture, IMLU held a boat race with 700 participants.

with different ethnic dishes prepared by clients of the centre of NAGA-HAR. After dinner the winning team of the soccer tour "Against Racism", made up of refugee and immigrant soccer teams, was presented with the cup. Later in the evening professional actors and clients of NAGA-HAR performed together in a theatre performance. The evening finished with musical entertainment.

## Kenya

The *Independent Medico Legal Unit* (IMLU) held a series of activities to commemorate 26 June and create awareness on torture in Kenya. On 17 June a boat race took place. 700 people participated in the event and listened to human rights messages while watching the race. During the event basic human rights information including torture and how to report incidents of torture was distributed. Traditional songs

blended with human rights messages were also heard.

At a prison visit in the Tewa GK prison in Mombasa, IMLU donated blankets, medicine and a TV to the inmates. The visit also included a volleyball match and a speech by the regional prison commandant.

Further, a number of workshops were held for journalists. The purpose of the training was to strengthen the journalists'



ITALY: NAGA-HAR advertising their cultural 26 June event.

knowledge and understanding of relevant aspects of national mechanisms for protecting human rights with a special focus on torture issues.

The earlier events culminated in a public symposium on 26 June. A number of prominent people were invited including senior government officials, human rights organisations, members of parliament, torture survivors and their families. A petition was delivered to the Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs on the need of the government to pass the necessary laws to eradicate torture. Both television and radio stations as well as newspapers covered the event.

## Lebanon

The activities on the UN International Day in Support of Victims of Torture this year in Lebanon started on 9 June when the *Khiam Rehabilitation Center for Victims of Torture* (KRC), in cooperation with other Lebanese civil society organisations, launched "The Festival of Justice" in the Lebanese Press Syndicate. The festival included a number of activities in Beirut and Southern Lebanon including the "Open-For-Free Medical Day" for relatives

of detainees and missing persons on 23 and 24 June. On the following day the KRC continued celebrating the festival displaying posters, drawings and photos etc. on torture related issues. The festival also included a special exhibition called "Their Belongings Talk". Handcrafts by female detainees and drawings by children had a special place in the exhibition. On 26 June a celebration was held with the kind presence of former Prime Minister Dr. Salim El-Hoss. A number of statements were read including one from the UN Secretary General, Mr. Kofi Annan, and the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms. Louise Arbour. In the evening a photo exhibition with the title "Silent Eyes" was opened by the Minister of Culture, Dr. Tarek Mitri. All the activities were followed by urging the Lebanese government to ratify the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention against Torture as well as to join the Rome system of the International Criminal Court. A special activity this year was a loud SCREAM demanding the release of detainees and revealing the fate of those who have disappeared, as well as granting the needed medical, psychological and social assistance to the victims of torture. It is

estimated that the Festival of Justice had 7.000 visitors. Six local TV Stations, three radio stations and 11 newspapers covered the activities.

## Liberia

A parade and an indoor programme were the activities organised by the *Action by Christians for the Abolition of Torture in Liberia* (ACAT-Liberia), the *Prisoners Assistance Programs* (PAP) and the *Center for Victims of Torture* (CVT -Liberia). The parade began at the Monrovia City Hall where hundreds of human rights activists and civil society organisations gathered with posters and banners of slogans against torture. Later in the day an indoor programme was attended by representatives from the Government of Liberia, the United Nations Mission in Liberia, members of the press and civil society organisations. A statement from the UN Secretary General Kofi Annan was read and speeches by representatives from the Liberian government and the collaborating organisations were delivered. The ceremony ended with an anti-torture song ringing through the air.



MEXICO: A bicycle race took over the streets of Mexico City to demonstrate against torture.

The *Prisoners Assistance Program* (PAP) launched a one-month anti-torture programme starting on 1 June. The opening ceremony was attended by over 75 persons from a number of civil society organisations. One of the activities during the month was radio discussions on three different radio stations focusing on the impact of torture, rehabilitation of victims and the need for Liberia to fully implement the UN Convention against Torture and the Optional Protocol.

On 5-7 June, one-day workshops were held in three communities with a total of 150 participants. The workshops highlighted facts on torture and the role of the communities to contribute to the prevention of torture.

Another key activity during the month was the distribution of street posters with anti-torture messages. Finally, on the 26 June PAP co-organised the street parade in cooperation with ACAT-Liberia and CVT-Liberia (see above).

## Mexico

A bicycle race took over the streets of Mexico City on 25 June to demonstrate against torture. The *Colectivo contra la Tortura y la Impunidad* (CCTI) organised the race in which 60 participants raised their voices against torture, demanding the release of the women and men who were imprisoned and tortured on 3 and 4 May 2006 in San Salvador Atenco, Mexico. As a symbolic act, white balloons with the "T"-logo were attached to the bicycles. When the bicycles stopped at a public square, one of the torture survivors gave his evidence to the public and a representative from CCTI gave a speech on behalf of one of the tortured women. The day finished with Mexican music and a theatrical performance.

## Namibia

The *Peoples Education Assistance & Counselling for Empowerment Centre* (PEACE Centre) commemorated 26 June by disseminating information materials at a busy local shopping complex in Katutura. The day's activities started in the morning handing out pamphlets and booklets con-



*NIGERIA: Secondary school students participated in a national school art project on torture organised by PRAWA.*

taining information on torture and on the UN International Day in Support of Victims of Torture. The materials were in local languages and handed out to approximately 200 persons. The PEACE staff also answered a wide range of questions from the public.

## Nigeria

The Executive Director of the *Consulting Centre for Constitutional Rights and Jus-*



*NIGERIA: PRAWA organised activities to create awareness on the need for the Nigerian government to ratify the OPCAT.*

*tice* (C3RJ), Barrister Churchill, was guest on African Independent Television to talk about the victims of torture and human rights abuses. The radio section also featured the Executive Director in a programme where victims of torture and other listeners could call and ask questions on legal matters and medical treatment. The programmes enlightened the public on the devastating effects of torture. The occasion was also used to emphasise the need to use forensic science in both interrogation

and proof of torture. The numerous callers indicated an extensive interest in the topics and that these kinds of programmes are very much needed.

The *Prisoners Rehabilitation and Welfare Action* (PRAWA) organised activities to create awareness on the need for the Nigerian government to ratify the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention against Torture (OPCAT) and to support the United Nation Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture (UNVFVT). The activities started on 20 June with a press conference where representatives from PRAWA briefed the press on why the Nigerian government needs to ratify OPCAT and support UNVFVT.

Secondary schools from the six geopolitical zones in Nigeria participated in a national school art project on torture. The grand finale of the event was held at PRAWA and featured an art exhibition by the students. An open air testimony by torture survivors from different zones in Nigeria was held on 26 June. Case stories and photos were used as documentation for feature articles in the media.



PALESTINE TERRITORY (OCCUPIED): TRC workshop in Ramallah

## Palestine Territory (Occupied)

The Gaza Community Mental Health Programme (GCMHP) in coordination with Prisoners Association "HOSSAM" and the High Commissioner Office for Human Rights organised various activities to celebrate the UN International Day in Support of Victims of Torture. The GCMHP partici-

pated in the "solidarity sit-in" with prisoners' families at the International Committee of the Red Cross office in Gaza City. The "sit-in" was organised to support the prisoners' issues and demand the return of their financial allowances which has not been paid for the last four months. In addition, the GCMHP and HOSSAM issued and distributed a press release calling upon the international community

to support Palestinian prisoners who are living under extreme conditions in Israeli prisons.

Representatives from the three participating organisations participated in a live TV interview on the Palestinian Satellite Channel on prisoners' issues and torture. In another activity GCMHP participated in a workshop organised by the Torture Rehabilitation Centre in the West Bank via a video conference. The workshop was entitled "The Psychological Impact of Torture".

One minute silence started a workshop in Ramallah on 26 June organised by the Treatment and Rehabilitation Center for Victims of Torture (TRC). The workshop was attended by legal specialists, human rights activists, health workers, the Minister of Ex-Detainees, representatives of human rights organisations, victims of torture and their families and the public. Many participants spoke about issues surrounding conditions in the Israeli prisons. As a result of the workshop a number of recommendations were made: upgrade and expand services provided to torture survivors, reinforce procedures for admin-



PHILIPPINES: Advertising 26 June activities by Balay Rehabilitation Centre.

istrative and legal investigations, document case studies of victims, initiate a project to prevent torture to be put forward for approval by the legislative council, hold an international conference in Palestine to discuss the plight of Palestinian prisoners, establish a local committee to combat and prevent torture, create a new position to enable an elected individual to investigate the conditions of prisons to prevent human rights abuses, provide psychological care to the victims of torture, especially children, work to raise public awareness and create a culture that rejects and combats torture.

The conference was covered by local, regional and international media channels.

## The Philippines

On 26 June the *Balay Rehabilitation Center* gathered fifteen torture survivors and their relatives to share their ordeal in prison and their difficulties in adjusting to normal life when they were released. Balay social workers and psychologists facilitated a subsequent discussion on healing and how torture survivors and their relatives can enhance their coping resources. A group of young artists known as the "Association of Children of the Disappeared" performed a dance depicting the struggle of victims of human rights violations to reclaim their dignity.

On 27 June the *United against Torture Coalition (UATC)*, which is a network of 22 organisations that lobby for passing the anti-torture law and the ratification of the OPCAT in the Philippines, held a public forum entitled "Beware, you may be the next victim of torture". Resource persons from the Congress, the Philippine Human Rights Commission, UATC, torture survivors and Amnesty International Philippines participated in the forum. Approximately 50 persons from 18 organisations includ-

ing media groups discussed the following issues: the continuous use of torture in the Philippines, the psycho-social impact of torture and the challenge of rehabilitation, the campaign for passing the anti-torture law, the campaign for the ratification of the OPCAT and the promotion of a documentation system based on the Istanbul Protocol. A dramatisation of torture was staged by members of Balay Rehabilitation Center and UATC. Three national TV stations and 12 newspapers covered the activities.

## Romania

At the *ICAR Foundation* in Bucharest the UN International Day in Support of Victims of Torture was commemorated with an event especially dedicated to clients among former political prisoners. Fifty participants received information on ICAR's activities and were debriefed on the Court for the Trial of Communism. ICAR also presented the initiative to create a virtual library collecting experiences from victims of torture in Romania. The aim of the library is to make torture related informa-

tion available, especially for the younger generations with no experience of repression under the communist regime.

In addition, the ICAR addressed an open letter to the Romanian Minister of External Affairs explaining the need for international funding for rehabilitation services for torture survivors and requesting the Romanian government to contribute to the United Nation Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture (UNVFVT) and to support the activities of the three Romanian centres.

On 26 June at the headquarters of the *Medical Rehabilitation Centre for Torture Victims* (MRCT) in Iasi the novel "A Small Episode of a Big Tragedy" by Mr. Nicolae Butureanu was released. Professor Mihai Dorin who wrote the preface of the novel made a speech about the importance of the commemoration day and the importance of written testimonies that future history will be based on. The MRCT also distributed information materials on the commemoration day as well as presentations of the Centre and rehabilitation activ-

ities for torture victims. A local newspaper covered the event at the Centre.

## Senegal

*Victimes de Violence Réhabilitées* (VIVRE) organised an all-day event to enlighten the public about torture. Seventy-five torture victims and their children were invited to join the conference. In addition to testi-

monies from torture survivors, the day included presentations from professionals; doctors, psychiatrists and magistrates, focusing on the clinical consequences of torture including the psychological, social and medical aspects of torture. A debate and question session followed the presentations with the possibility to address questions to the victims.



SOUTH AFRICA: At the open day at the Trauma Centre children performed dancing.

Lastly gift bags containing toys and school material were distributed to 50 children of torture survivors of 14 different nationalities. This act had a strong effect on the parents as most of them had not been able to give their children gifts since becoming refugees.

## Serbia

The *International Aid Network Ian* organised a press conference on 26 June at the cinema of Mali Odeon in Belgrade, attracting 30 journalists and NGO representatives. The attendees received information on the work of the centre and an overview of the psychological consequences of torture. The coordinator of Ian Legal Service talked about the Centre's activities in regard to legal advice and legal representation for torture victims. One of the main topics of the day was the presentation of the publication "Redress in Action – Forcibly Mobilised Refugees in Serbia". The day ended with the screening of a documentary on forcibly mobilised refugees produced by the Ian Centre. Several newspapers wrote about the press conference over the following days.



SWEDEN: At a town square in Skövde, the Swedish Red Cross Center for Victims of Torture and War in Skövde distributed flyers.

## South Africa

The *Trauma Centre for Survivors of Violence and Torture* held an Open Day at the Centre in an attempt to get people to reconnect and recommit to the vision and mission of the organisation. The primary theme was the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and the Centre's advocacy strategy on the issue. After a number of speakers, the floor was open

for discussion. The day concluded with the planting of a tree dedicated to the fallen heroes and heroines of South Africa in their struggle against oppression. 140 participants joined the day.

## Sweden

At a town square in Skövde, the *Swedish Red Cross Center for Victims of Torture*

and War in Skövde distributed flyers with information on anti-torture legislation, reports from Amnesty International about the prevalence of torture in the world and information on IRCT and Red Cross action against torture. To show the passersby the magnitude of the sequela of torture, outlines of torture cases that the Centre had treated were represented by hand-written yellow cards that were pinned on large outlined "T"s. Two local newspapers wrote articles on the event the following day. One of the newspapers wrote a follow-up article on the following Monday on the sequela of torture and the rehabilitation treatment the Centre offers.

## Turkey

The *Human Rights Foundation of Turkey* (HRFT) in cooperation with other NGOs organised various activities on 25 and 26 June. In Istanbul fishing boats on the Bosphorus Strait were covered with messages against torture and a press statement was read about torture in Turkey and in the world. In Izmir the HRFT set up an information stand on the busiest pedestrian street. Materials were distributed and the



TURKEY: In Istanbul fishing boats on the Bosphorus Strait were covered with messages against torture.

TV Spot by Isabel Coixet was screened for 6 hours. Passersby were asked to sign a petition with the heading "I demand a world and Turkey without torture". Several hundred people received information and talked with the HRFT staff at the stand. In Adana and Diyarbakir press statements were made in collaboration with other organisations. Several local and national TV stations and newspapers covered the activities in Turkey.

A number of public seminars, organised by the *Centre d'Action Sociale, Réhabilitation et Adaption* (SOHRAM-CASR A) took place from 25 to 26 June. They mainly dealt with issues concerning the use of psychotherapy in the rehabilitation of torture victims.

According to the traditional practice each year, children released balloons on the morning of 25 June in front of Fort Diyar-

barkir in an effort to protest against torture. Afterwards they visited local NGOs to hand out brochures and invite them to an informational meeting at the centre.

On 26 June a briefing was organised at the centre with the participation of the public, clients of the centre and staff. The topics were many: the legal rights of torture victims, how to protect yourself against torture, the situation of human rights in Turkey and worldwide, and the responsibility of the government in the rehabilitation of torture victims.

The commemoration ended with a reception held for the victims of torture and their families.

## Uganda

Activists, torture survivors, the media, key government stakeholders, development partners and members of the public all took part in a street march that the *African Centre for Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture Victims* (ACTV) organised on 26 June. The European Union representative in Uganda led the march from St. Peter

and Paul Primary School to Boma Grounds. At Boma Grounds the acting Chairperson of Uganda Human Rights Commission gave a speech commemorating the day and torture survivors gave testimonies on their experiences.

## United Kingdom

The *Refugee Therapy Centre* (RTC) held its annual Open Day on 24 June combining recognition of the UN Day in Support of Victims of Torture on 26 June and celebration of the World Refugee Day on 20 June. The day began with an emotional welcome with special mention to those who were not present, those who lost their lives to persecution and torture. This was followed by a minute of silence. The day continued with a presentation on legal issues affecting asylum seekers in the UK and the opportunity for friends and colleagues to get to know the Centre and learn about psychotherapy, counselling and support to refugees and asylum seekers. After an emotional morning, the mood changed to something more uplifting and a delicious multicultural lunch was served and music played from around the world. Approxi-

mately 100 people participated in the event.

## Uruguay

A number of NGOs, including the *Servicio de Rehabilitación Social* (SERSOC), organised four activities with focus on the support of Victims of Torture. The first activity on 19 June in the City of Paysandú was the launch of a campaign to revoke the impunity law. The event was attended by 700 persons and focused on the fight against torture and impunity. On 24 June SERSOC participated in a round table discussion on human rights and education with focus on the commemoration of 26 June. The activities continued on 27 June – the anniversary day of Uruguay of the coup d'état – with workshops, information materials displayed and a photo exhibition on a central square in Montevideo. Finally on 30 June SERSOC participated in an event against torture organised by Amnesty International Uruguay.



USA: A free, public program organised by PTV included cultural dance performances and had an audience of 200 persons.

## United States of America

Large banners reading "Together against Torture" and a petition form to be signed met passersby on 24 June in Dearborn. The event was organised by the *ACCESS Psychosocial Rehabilitation Center* in cooperation with the *Freedom House*. More than 100 persons listened to live testimonials by clients from Iraq and Africa and hats and t-shirts with the "T" logo were distributed.

As part of the commemoration of the UN International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, a former client of the *For Immigrants & Refugees Surviving Torture Project Inc.* (FIRST Project Inc.) gave interviews to a number of electronic and printed media throughout the month of June. Two clients participated in torture awareness activities in Washington D.C. with *Torture Abolition & Survivors Support Coalition International*. On 29 June the FIRST Project organised a client picnic in Lincoln, Nebraska with approximately 150 survivors of torture, FIRST project staff, board members, volunteers and their families. Furthermore, the State of Nebraska issued proclamations declaring the State as a Torture-Free Zone.

This year the theme of the *Program for Torture Victims'* (PTV) event on 26 June was "Do No Harm" and emphasised medical complicity and the use of torture in the "War on Terror". The free, public program included keynote speakers, survival testimony and cultural dance performances and had an audience of 200 persons. PTV was also presented with a proclamation from the city of Los Angeles on this occasion,

which recognised their work, the torture treatment movement and the clients. Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger presented the California Consortiums, courtesy of PTV, with a similar proclamation.

The *Survivors of Torture, International* (SURVIVORS) organised a series of activities in relation to the UN day. In the first week of June, the ship "the Esmeralda" visited San Diego from Chile. After the 1973 coup d'état in Chile, the Esmeralda was used as a floating prison and torture site. To educate the public about the Esmeralda's past, SURVIVORS partnered with Amnesty International and the International Museum of Human Rights – San Diego to screen the documentary "The Dark Side of the White Lady". The film was followed by a discussion with Chileans who were detained and imprisoned in 1973. 25-30 students, human rights activists and community members participated in the event. The day after the screening, SURVIVORS and the partner organisations encouraged people to protest against the ship where it was docked in San Diego. Pamphlets were distributed and large banners were exhibited.



USA: The ship "the Esmeralda", which visited San Diego, was used as a floating prison and torture site after the coup d'état in Chile in 1973.



VENEZUELA: Press conference organised by the Red de Apoyo.

On 26 June SURVIVORS joined with Amnesty International to present a free screening of the film "Down came a Blackbird". Approximately 35 people saw the movie about a journalist struggling to regain control of her life a year after she was abducted and tortured in Central America. Following the movie, SURVIVORS' Executive Director and Clinical Director answered questions from the audience about the movie and how it relates to the actual experiences of torture survivors.

## Venezuela

For the commemoration of 26 June, the *Red de Apoyo por la Justicia y la Paz* organised a number of activities with two main objectives: to inform the general public about Venezuela's current situation in regard to torture related issues and to inform torture survivors about their rights and encourage them to report their cases.

The activities started with the distribution of posters and leaflets throughout the country with information for torture victims on their right to rehabilitation. This was followed by a radio programme on 13 June in which Red de Apoyo participated with information on the torture victims' rights and the services the Centre provides. On 22 June listeners could once again hear the voice of a representative from Red de Apoyo on the radio talking about the UN International Day in Support of Victims of Torture and inviting people to participate in the planned street rally the same day. The rally gathered torture survivors, their families and activists from Red de Apoyo.

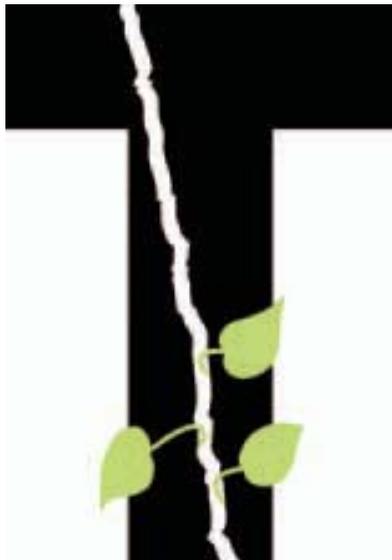
The objective to inform the general public about the torture situation in the country

was achieved as several media, electronic and printed, covered the event. The following day 23 June, Red de Apoyo held a well-attended press conference to present a report on their experience working with torture victims from 1995-2005. On 26 June the General Coordinator and the psychologist from Red de Apoyo participated in an hour long TV programme on torture related issues. On the same day Radio Caracas dedicated a programme to the torture situation in Venezuela and invited torture victims to talk about their experiences.

## Zimbabwe

On 26 June the *Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum* released an analysis of the legal cases that are connected to torture and organised violence for the period 1998-2006 simultaneously at the Monomotapa Crowne Plaza in Harare and the House of Lords in London. As part of the event a church service was held in London.

INDONESIA: Commemoration of 26 June in Jakarta. The banner says "Stop Torture"



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

141 States as of 29 September 2006

Afghanistan	Canada	France	Lebanon	New Zealand	South Africa
Albania	Cape Verde	Gabon	Lesotho	Nicaragua	Spain
Algeria	Chad	Georgia	Liberia	Niger	Sri Lanka
Antigua and Barbuda	Chile	Germany	Libyan Arab Jamahiriva	Nigeria	Swaziland
Argentina	China	Ghana	Liechtenstein	Norway	Sweden
Armenia	Colombia	Greece	Lithuania	Panama	Switzerland
Australia	Congo, Democratic Republic of the	Guatemala	Luxembourg	Paraguay	Syrian Arab Republic
Austria	Congo, Republic of (Brazzaville)	Guinea	Macedonia	Peru	Tajikistan
Azerbaijan	Costa Rica	Guyana	Madagascar	Philippines	Timor-Leste (East Timor)
Bahrain	Côte d'Ivoire	Holy See	Malawi	Poland	Togo
Bangladesh	Croatia	Honduras	Maldives	Portugal	Tunisia
Belarus	Cuba	Hungary	Mali	Qatar	Turkey
Belgium	Cyprus	Iceland	Malta	Romania	Turkmenistan
Belize	Czech Republic	Indonesia	Mauritania	Russian Federation	Uganda
Benin	Denmark	Ireland	Mauritius	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	Ukraine
Bolivia	Djibouti	Israel	Mexico	Saudi Arabia	United Kingdom
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Ecuador	Italy	Moldova, Republic of	Senegal	United States
Botswana	Egypt	Japan	Monaco	Serbia and Montenegro	Uruguay
Brazil	El Salvador	Jordan	Mongolia	Seychelles	Uzbekistan
Bulgaria	Equatorial Guinea	Kazakhstan	Morocco	Sierra Leone	Venezuela
Burkina Faso	Estonia	Kenya	Mozambique	Slovakia	Yemen
Burundi	Ethiopia	Korea, Republic of (South Korea)	Namibia	Slovenia	Zambia
Cambodia	Finland	Kuwait	Nepal	Somalia	
Cameroon		Kyrgyzstan	Netherlands		
		Latvia			

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

51 States as of 29 September 2006

Andorra	Eritrea	Korea, Democratic	Pakistan	Sudan
Angola	Fiji	People's Republic of	Palau	Suriname
Bahamas	Gambia	(North Korea)	Papua New Guinea	Tanzania, United
Barbados	Grenada	Laos	Rwanda	Republic of
Bhutan	Guinea-Bissau	Malaysia	Saint Kitts and Nevis	Thailand
Brunei Darussalam	Haiti	Marshall Islands	Saint Lucia	Tonga
Central African Republic	India	Micronesia, Federated States of	Samoa	Trinidad and Tobago
Comoros	Iran	Myanmar	San Marino	Tuvalu
Dominica	Iraq	Nauru	Sao Tome and Principe	United Arab Emirates
Dominican Republic	Jamaica	Oman	Singapore	Vanuatu
	Kiribati		Solomon Islands	Vietnam
				Zimbabwe

## We encourage you to commemorate 26 June 2007!

For the sixth consecutive year, the IRCT has published the Global Report on the UN International Day in Support of Victims of Torture. The report gives an overview of the many different types of events that were held on 26 June 2006, as part of the IRCT's "Together against Torture" campaign.

We encourage you to use this report as inspiration when considering what type of event to plan for 26 June 2007. We also encourage you to collaborate with other organisations in your country which have an interest in the fight against torture. You may find that you can learn from each other's experiences or that you can plan your 2007 event together.

In 2007, 20 years have passed since the Convention against Torture entered into force and 10 years since the General Assembly of the United Nations proclaimed

the 26 June the United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture. The IRCT is once again in 2007 supporting the global 26 June campaign and would like to collaborate with as many rehabilitation centres and anti-torture organisations as possible. The worldwide commemoration of 26 June will once more raise awareness of the problem of torture and the achievements of the global movement against torture. During the weeks prior to 26 June 2007, the IRCT website ([www.irct.org](http://www.irct.org)) will provide an overview of the activities commemorating this day in every region of the world.

Thanks to the generosity of our donors, and in particular the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, we have a small sum of money available for campaign and documentation materials in 2007. If you have innovative plans of how we can spread our message and reach even more people

during the 2007 campaign, please contact us and present your ideas and visions. We welcome all new initiatives.

For more information on how to join the 26 June 2007 campaign, please visit our website or contact:

### **International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims (IRCT)**

**Borgergade 13**

**P.O. Box 9049**

**1022 Copenhagen K**

**Denmark**

**Phone: +45 33 76 06 00**

**Fax: +45 33 76 05 00**

**E-mail: [irct@irct.org](mailto:irct@irct.org)**

**Website: [www.irct.org](http://www.irct.org)**

## How to support the IRCT

### By credit card

Please visit the IRCT website ([www.irct.org](http://www.irct.org)) to make a credit card donation.

### By cheque

Please send a cheque that is made payable to:

International Rehabilitation Council for  
Torture Victims (IRCT)  
Borgergade 13  
P.O. Box 9049  
DK-1022 Copenhagen K  
Denmark

### By bank transfer

Danske Bank  
Holmens Kanal Branch  
Holmens Kanal 2  
DK-1090 Copenhagen K  
Denmark  
S.W.I.F.T. DABADKKK

#### USD account:

Registration No: 3001  
Account No: 4310-005029  
IBAN: DK18 3000 4310 0050 29

#### DKK account:

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

#### EUR account:

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



International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims  
Borgergade 13  
P.O. Box 9049  
DK-1022 Copenhagen K  
Denmark

Phone: +45 33 76 06 00  
Fax: +45 33 76 05 00  
E-mail: [irct@irct.org](mailto:irct@irct.org)  
Website: [www.irct.org](http://www.irct.org)

ISBN: 87-88882-97-7  
ISSN: 1603-3272