



**International  
Rehabilitation  
Council for  
Torture Victims**

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**IRCT statement for a global reading on the occasion of the  
International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, 26 June 2010**

Ladies and gentlemen,

Today marks the UN International Day in Support of the Victims of Torture. It provides us with a time to reflect on the past, to honour the victims and survivors of torture and to look to a better future: to a World Without Torture.

The horrific practice of torture continues to afflict people across the globe. But a world without torture is possible. That is something we must always hold on to. We owe it to the victims and survivors of this heinous crime around the world.

A world without torture will not become a reality until we have brought healing to those who have been subjected to this appalling practice. Without healing, the effects of torture are all too likely to continue within the survivors.

Each year over 100,000 survivors of torture receive treatment from IRCT member centres. But there are many more. Together, we must work to increase our reach in order to bring healing to the greater numbers who suffer.

In bringing about a world without torture we must work to ensure that the mechanisms are in place to prevent it from happening in future. We will take a meaningful step towards this when governments, the health and legal professions and other relevant actors are committed to ensuring that all torture survivors have access to justice.

This must include children, torture's oft-forgotten victims. While anyone can become a victim of torture, children are especially vulnerable, in particular those countless girls and boys born into poverty and conflict.

In the context of war and police brutality children much too often find themselves violated at the cruel hands of a torturer. Today we stress that every state has an additional duty to ensure that there is someone to speak up on their behalf and to protect them from this horrendous crime.

Ladies and gentlemen,

In the past year we've seen positive steps being taken on the long road towards a world without torture. These steps must be celebrated. A few examples:

In Asia, only this month Pakistan ratified the United Nations Convention Against Torture. And we've seen India, the world's second most populous country and its largest democracy, take steps to ratify the Convention.

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and participatory  
status with the Council  
of Europe.*



In Europe, we've seen the British government call for an inquiry into complicity in torture in the so-called "War on Terror".

In Africa, following the horrific post-election violence in Kenya, the International Criminal Court has announced that it will initiate an investigation and to protect witnesses.

In the Americas we've seen Argentina successfully bring to justice the perpetrators of torture from the despotic regimes of the 1970s, sending out a strong message that there is nowhere for the perpetrators to hide.

And last but not least, at the local level the member centres of the IRCT continue tirelessly working to help torture survivors rebuild their lives, as well as to raise awareness and seek justice.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The greatest threat to the fight against torture remains apathy: that we silently accept that torture exists. Today, as we honour the victims and survivors of torture all over the world, let us promise that we will not silently accept that the crime of torture continues. Let us pledge to do all we can to prevent greater numbers joining their ranks.

Right now, we – the rehabilitation centres and programmes that are members of the IRCT – are jointly raising our voices across the world, reading out this statement on this special day. Together, we are saying that we will not remain silent, and that we will continue working together to bring about a World Without Torture.

Mohamud Sheikh Nurein Said  
President

Brita Sydhoff  
Secretary-General

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