

“Torture works” — in all the wrong ways

As the world marks the UN Day in Support of Torture Victims, a leading advocate for victims' rights calls for global public condemnation of the practice

COPENHAGEN, ONTARIO, DENMARK, June 26, 2017 /EINPresswire.com/ -- As the world marks the UN Day in Support of Torture Victims, Victor Madrigal-Borloz, Secretary-General of the [International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims](#), Copenhagen, representing 153 centres in 76 countries, and a Hilton Humanitarian Prize Laureate, issued the following statement:

“

What does torture not achieve? Torture does not work to produce reliable intelligence, to solve crime, or to prevent terrorism.”

*Victor Madrigal-Borloz,
Secretary-General, IRCT*

“Torture works” might rank among the most sweeping generalisations ever uttered, one brutal in its disregard of the pain and suffering created by this abhorrent practice.

Indeed, torture works, but to all the wrong ends.

Torture is effective at creating enormous pain, severe trauma, and lasting damage. Victims suffer psychological symptoms such as anxiety, depression, withdrawal and self-isolation, confusion, flashbacks, memory lapses and other cognitive symptoms; as well as fatigue, insomnia and recurrent nightmares. This can naturally lead to permanent physical impairment and is psychologically scarring, leaving victims with long-lasting illnesses such as post-traumatic stress disorder and deep depression.

In rehabilitation centers worldwide, victims of torture report suicidal feelings and of being easily frightened and suspicious, making it extremely difficult to maintain social relationships, or to work and function in society. They often describe being disconnected from the world and from the feeling of being less than human.

In addition to psychiatric disorder, it is strongly believed that PTSD results in later serious medical problems such as cardiovascular disease, hypertension, diabetes, and possibly dementia.

So, if the intent is to inflict severe pain and lasting suffering, torture is the tool.

Torture is also an effective mechanism to corrode the social fabric. The necessary conditions for torture include alienation — the mechanism through which the perpetrator ceases to regard his or her victim as human. What this does to a society is difficult to describe in the abstract, but easy to perceive in any conversation with a Chilean, a Cambodian, a Croatian or a Congolese survivor of torture. All will describe how it has taken decades, and will take many more, to restore the trust among neighbors, and sometimes even family.

So, if the goal is to divide communities, torture will do.

Torture, not surprisingly, also ensures long lasting damage to democratic structures. In states in which torture is systematic or widespread, human rights defenders are invariably under threat.

Justice is carried out at the peril of the prosecutor. The independence of judges is curtailed. How can you expect people to speak freely, to claim their rights or to organize politically if the response from the state is torture?

So, as a way to weaken democracy, torture does the trick.

What does torture not achieve?

Torture does not work to produce reliable intelligence, to solve crime or to prevent terrorism. In her foreword to the US Senate's Intelligence Committee on the CIA Detention and Interrogation Program, Senator Diane Feinstein registered this conclusion pristinely: "Prior to the attacks of September 2001, the CIA itself determined from its own experience with coercive interrogations that such techniques 'do not produce intelligence,' 'will probably result in false answers,' and had historically proven to be ineffective."

Yet the global consensus on an absolute prohibition of torture is vociferously questioned. Despite the vacuum of evidence of benefits, politicians across the political spectrum jump to vouch for the necessity of torture. This shift in public discourse away from a universal and total prohibition of torture is now leading to other challenges. Traditional national donors are shrinking from their commitments and responsibilities by decreasing or stopping funding. This at a time of unprecedented demand for the crucial services performed by human rights organisations.

Despite these challenges, dedicated staff at rehabilitation centres continue, often at great personal sacrifice and sometimes at great risk, to provide outstanding physical and psychological treatment while assisting their clients to re-integrate into societies.

There is a lot of pending work in relation to torture victims. The member centres of the International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims treat some 100,000 victims around the world every year, but we know that this is a minuscule proportion of all affected children, women and men.

Our movement is resilient. Today, we speak with one voice to let demagogues and extremists know that, more than ever, we stand resolutely for what is right, and we are ready to work with anyone wishing to improve the lives of torture victims. We invite the support of those members of the public who share our aspiration to safer societies and understand that torture is not the answer, and who recognize that all victims of this despicable crime have the right to full rehabilitation to rebuild their lives.

Today, as the world marks the [United Nations International Day in Support of Torture Victims](#), please join your voice to ours at <http://irct.org>

Terry Collins
International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims
+1-416-878-8712
email us here

This press release can be viewed online at: <http://www.einpresswire.com>

Disclaimer: If you have any questions regarding information in this press release please contact the company listed in the press release. Please do not contact EIN Presswire. We will be unable to assist you with your inquiry. EIN Presswire disclaims any content contained in these releases.

© 1995-2017 IPD Group, Inc. All Right Reserved.