



## 26 JUNE INTERNATIONAL DAY IN SUPPORT OF VICTIMS OF TORTURE



UNITED NATIONS FUND FOR  
VICTIMS OF TORTURE



UNITED NATIONS  
HUMAN RIGHTS  
OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER

# Torture still endemic

Despite the absolute prohibition of torture under international law, torture persists in all regions of the world. A shocking number of people even favour its use. Concerns about protecting national security and borders are increasingly used to allow torture and other forms of cruel, degrading and inhuman treatment. The United Nations has condemned torture from the outset as one of the vilest acts perpetrated by human beings on their fellow human beings.

Torture victims come from all walks of life: men, women, and heartbreakingly, a growing number of children. They are indigenous people and minorities; human rights defenders, political opponents and journalists; migrants; people with disabilities; people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans or intersex; or simply inhabitants of certain neighbourhoods. They are selected for torture at random, or targeted and hunted down.

Torture seeks to annihilate the victim's personality and denies the inherent dignity of the human being. Its pervasive consequences often go beyond the isolated act on an individual; and can be transmitted through generations and lead to cycles of violence.

The UN Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture is a unique victim-focused mechanism that channels funding for the assistance to victims of torture and their families.



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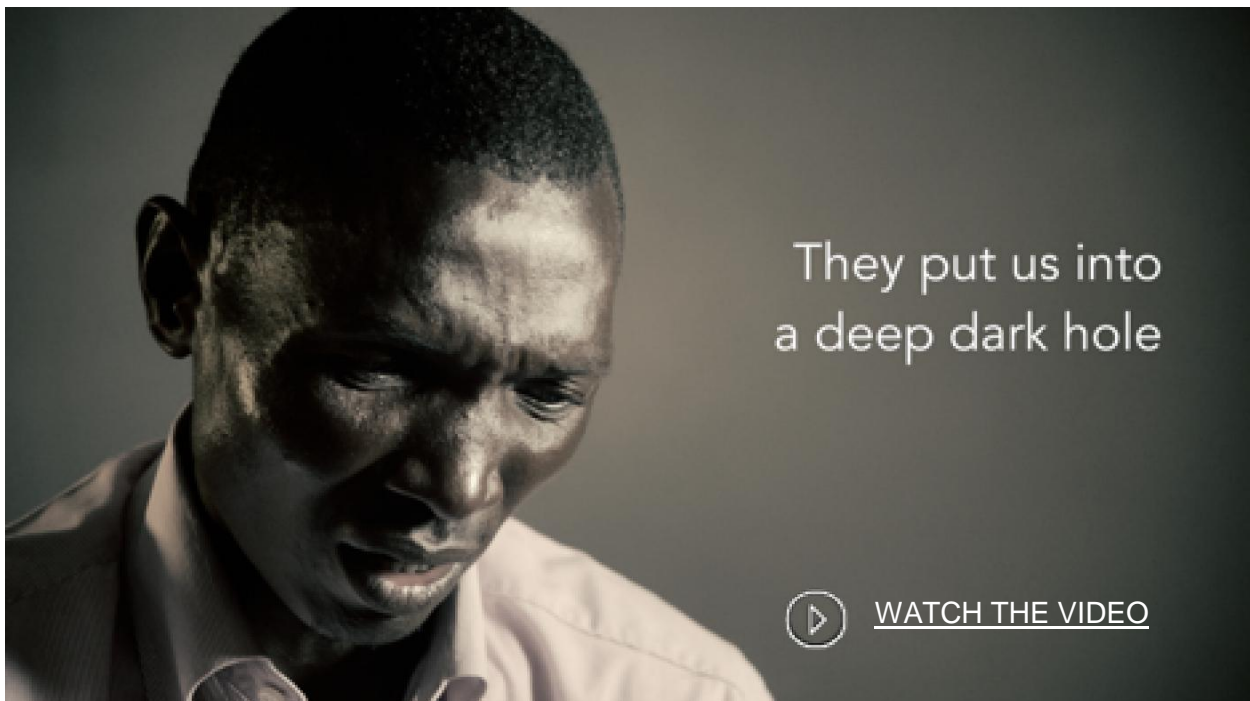


# Why we mark June 26?

The UN International Day in Support of Victims of Torture on 26 June marks the moment in 1987 when the UN Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, one of the key instruments in fighting torture, came into effect. Today, the Convention has been ratified by 162 countries.

26 June is an opportunity to call on all stakeholders including UN Member States, civil society and individuals everywhere to unite in support of the hundreds of thousands of people around the world who have been victims of torture and those who are still tortured today.

The UN Fund stands by the victims around the world. On June 26 we honour them, and the many dedicated professionals that put their expertise at the service of those who have endured torture.



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# UN anti-torture laws and mechanisms

According to all relevant instruments, torture is absolutely prohibited and cannot be justified under any circumstances - whether a state of war, a threat of war, internal political instability, or any other public emergency or national security situation. This prohibition forms part of customary international law, which means that it is binding on every member of the international community, regardless of whether a State has ratified international treaties in which torture is expressly prohibited. The systematic or widespread practice of torture constitutes a crime against humanity.

States must take effective legislative, administrative, judicial or other measures to prevent acts of torture in any territory under their jurisdiction. Article 14 of the Convention Against Torture stipulates the obligation of States to ensure that a victim of torture under their jurisdiction obtains redress, including the means for as full rehabilitation as possible.

Anti-torture instruments:

- [Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment](#)
- [International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights \(Article 7\)](#)
- [First Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights](#)
- [International Criminal Court](#)
- [Universal Declaration of Human Rights \(Article 5\)](#)
- [Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners](#)
- [Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from Being Subjected to Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment](#)
- [Principles of Medical Ethics relevant to the Role of Health Personnel, particularly Physicians, in the Protection of Prisoners and Detainees against Torture and Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment](#)
- [International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance](#)

UN mechanisms:

- [Committee against Torture \(CAT\)](#)
- [Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture \(SPT\)](#)
- [Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment](#)
- [United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture](#)



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# Effects of torture

Torture's pervasive effect on societies lies in spreading fear and intimidation; its consequences often go beyond the isolated act on an individual. The trauma of torture can be transmitted through generations and lead to cycles of violence and revenge.

Recovering from torture is possible. It requires prompt and specialized programmes. The victim's path from horror to healing relies on the expertise and dedication of doctors, lawyers, therapists and social workers. Their daily work with victims of torture, including children and adolescents, is often made possible with the support of the [UN Fund for Victims of Torture](#).

“Take one member of society, torture him, send him back to the society, it is as if you have tortured the entire society.”

Medical Service Provider, Iraq



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# The work supported by the UN Fund for Victims of Torture

The [UN Fund for Victims of Torture](#), administered by the UN Human Rights Office in Geneva, serves as a unique bridge among victims, practitioners and UN Member States in the field of redress and rehabilitation of victims of torture.

Since 1981, the UN Fund has directed over USD 168 million to more than 620 organisations globally. As the oldest and largest humanitarian fund, it provides essential services to over 50,000 victims of torture and their family members each year.

“There is a need for urgent, material, meaning concrete assistance, and that is where the trust fund for survivors of torture has such an important part to play; it can directly position immediate relief to survivors of torture of a kind that absolutely can be life-saving, this is an action-oriented fund.”

Kate Gilmore  
UN Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights



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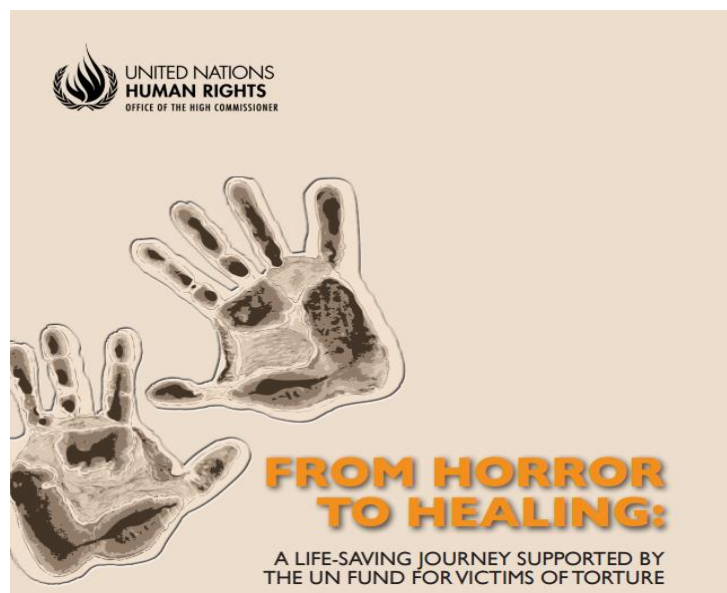
# Victims' voices

“When they came to get me, I was shaking terribly and my heart kept beating so fast. That was the first day of three years I was kept in abduction. During that time, I had to see so many terrible things, people being tortured and killed.”

“I was forced to witness the killings of people with a panga (machete) when they had tried to escape, when they were just too weak or for no obvious reason at all. One time I had to watch many people being burnt alive in a hut.”

“I also experienced torture myself. Once when I was walking too slowly, I was called aside with another girl, then two rebels were called to come and beat us. At that point I thought they would even kill us. They beat us until my friend was not able to say a word anymore. The whole of my body was swollen. They left us to lie there in pain.”

From Horror to Healing: A life-saving journey supported by the UN Fund for Victims of Torture.



# The healing community

“It is a blessing to be a part of someone’s healing, in particular that of a child who is recuperating and regaining their life after experiencing torture; including by helping them to diminish their symptoms and enabling them to tell their story.”



[WATCH THE VIDEO](#)

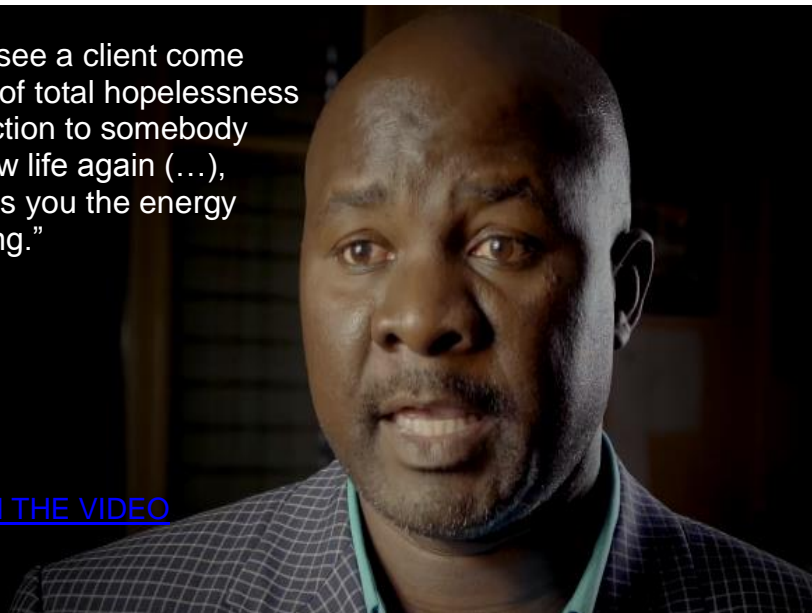


**Ms. Anette Carnemalm**, Head of Treatment Center for Persons Affected by War and Torture in Malmö, Swedish Red Cross

“When you see a client come from a kind of total hopelessness and dysfunction to somebody who has new life again (...), it really gives you the energy to keep going.”



[WATCH THE VIDEO](#)



**Mr. Paul Orieny**, Clinical Advisor for Mental Health, The Center for Victims of Torture, United States of America

[Click here to see other related videos](#)



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# Expert workshops convened by the UN Fund

Torture Victims in the Context of Migration: Identification, Redress and Rehabilitation.  
2017 expert workshop



[WATCH THE VIDEO](#)

How Can Children Survive Torture?  
2016 expert workshop



[WATCH THE VIDEO](#)



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# Act Now!

Support the UN Fund for Victims of Torture to make a concrete difference in the lives of victims of torture.

**DONATE NOW**

click the button to donate or go to:  
<http://donatenow.ohchr.org/torture.aspx>

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