

Statement on the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture
June 26, 2015

Today we mark the anniversary of the United Nations Convention Against Torture, a document that affirms the inherent dignity of all members of the human family. The United States helped draft the Convention, and we have long sought to eradicate torture and all forms of cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment around the world.

Generations of Americans have understood that we must always act with conscience, even in the chaos of war and even when our adversaries may not. Torture is not only inconsistent with our Nation's most deeply held values, but also undermines our national security: by emboldening repressive regimes, by serving as a pretext for terrorist recruitment and violent extremism, and by damaging our reputation as a force for good in the world.

As President, I have made clear that the United States legally prohibits torture without exception and that all U.S. personnel are prohibited from engaging in torture at all times and in all places. I have also reaffirmed our commitment to the Convention Against Torture. No nation is perfect, and the United States must openly confront our past, including our mistakes, if we are to live up to our ideals. That is why I ended the CIA's detention and interrogation program as one of my first acts in office and supported the declassification of key details of that program as documented by the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence. I also strongly support Congress' efforts to codify key elements of the Executive order I issued in 2009 on Ensuring Lawful Interrogations.

Torture is unfortunately still too prevalent in the world today, which is why the United States must continue to play a leading role to eradicate it and address the needs of its victims. The United States is the largest supporter of the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture and supports a broad range of programs that seek to rehabilitate and reintegrate torture victims. We also back efforts to eradicate torture through human rights training for security forces, capacity building, and improving prison and detention conditions around the world.

Today I salute all the men and women striving to end the scourge of torture. I thank them for reminding governments around the world that upholding the fundamental commitment to human dignity not only makes us who we are, but also makes us stronger and more secure.

Categories: Statements by the President : Torture, International Day in Support of Victims of

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