

Statement on International Day in Support of Victims of Torture
June 26, 2023

Torture is prohibited everywhere and at all times. It is illegal, immoral, and a stain on our collective conscience. Today, on the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, I reaffirm the United States opposition to all forms of inhumane treatment and our commitment to eliminating torture and assisting torture survivors as they heal and in their quests for justice.

Torture destroys lives, families, and communities. Yet, every day, people around the world are subjected to this horrific violation of their human rights and human dignity. In Ukraine, we have seen evidence of appalling brutality by members of Russia's forces. Patterns of abuse included torture to compel cooperation with occupation authorities and during interrogations, such as through beatings, electrical shock, mock executions, and use of sexual violence. Inside Russia itself, reports of torture in places of detention are commonplace, including against activists and critics of government policies. In Syria, tens of thousands of Syrians remain forcibly disappeared and subject to torture, with families often never knowing the fate and whereabouts of their loved ones. In North Korea, there are widespread credible reports of torture and other forms of cruel, inhumane, and degrading punishment by the government, including in political prison camps, and against women specifically, such as sexual violence, forced abortion, and forced sterilization. We see reports of torture from every region of the world: No country is immune.

It is our firm belief as a nation that we must hold ourselves to the same standards to which we hold others. This is why we continue to ensure that torture remains prohibited in all of its forms, without exception. This is also why the United States will continue to be the world's largest contributor to the U.N. Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture, which has provided desperately needed assistance to survivors of torture and their families from around the world as they undertake the long process of physical, psychological, economic, and social recovery. It is why we are providing the largest ever funding amount for the U.S. Survivors of Torture Program in the Office of Refugee Resettlement at HHS, and have requested even more funding in coming years, to help survivors and their families build new lives in the United States. It is why we work to promote justice for victims and survivors around the world. And it is why we must take this opportunity to reaffirm our commitment as a nation to ending the practice of torture once and for all.

I call on all nations around the world to join me in supporting rehabilitation and justice for torture survivors and in taking action to eliminate torture and inhumane treatment for good.

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

Subjects: Civil and human rights, U.S. promotion efforts; Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Refugee Resettlement; International Day in Support of Victims of Torture; North Korea, human rights issues; Russia, conflict in Ukraine; Russia, human rights issues; Syria, human rights issues; U.N. Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture; Ukraine, Russian invasion and airstrikes.

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