

Beat: News

## International Day in Support of Victims of Torture

### US State Department Press Release

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**USPA NEWS** - Today, we solemnly observe the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, and in so doing, the United States reaffirms our condemnation of torture no matter where or by whom it is perpetrated. Torture is not only an unacceptable violation of human rights; it is a crime under international and U.S. law. As we condemn this horrific crime, we also affirm the humanity of torture survivors around the world and note our respect for their dignity.

The United States is one of 173 states that are parties to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, which entered into force in 1987. Yet despite this near universal condemnation, torture and other violations of human rights are still perpetrated around the world, often against political opponents, members of marginalized populations, prisoners of war and other detainees, human rights defenders, and those who voice opinions that certain governments do not like. So long as any person anywhere suffers from torture, our pursuit of accountability will continue, as will our support for torture survivors.

As outlined in our most recent periodic report to the United Nations' Committee Against Torture last September, the United States remains committed to the Convention against Torture. We acknowledge that we must confront our own shortcomings and mistakes and uphold U.S. values. We take seriously our obligations as a State Party, including to prevent and punish torture, and not to expel, return, or extradite anyone to a country where they would be tortured. We welcomed the election last October of Todd Buchwald as an independent expert on the Committee and support the Committee's work to promote compliance of treaty obligations by parties to the Convention.

U.S. law prohibits the provision of our assistance to any foreign government security force units credibly implicated in torture. In addition, as the largest contributor to the UN Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture, we continue to support rehabilitation and justice programs to help victims around the world transition from horror to healing. We also directly support the needs of survivors and their calls for truth, through programs like the Survivors of Torture Initiative.

The United States will continue to strive to advance the Convention against Torture's goal of a world free from torture. Perpetrators of torture should know that we will vigilantly pursue accountability for torture, other human rights violations and abuses, and violations of international humanitarian law. As long as torture occurs, the United States will not waver in its commitment to eliminate this human rights violation.

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Wendy writes for the United States Press Agency and is a former columnist with the Fulton County Expositor, Wauseon, Ohio.

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