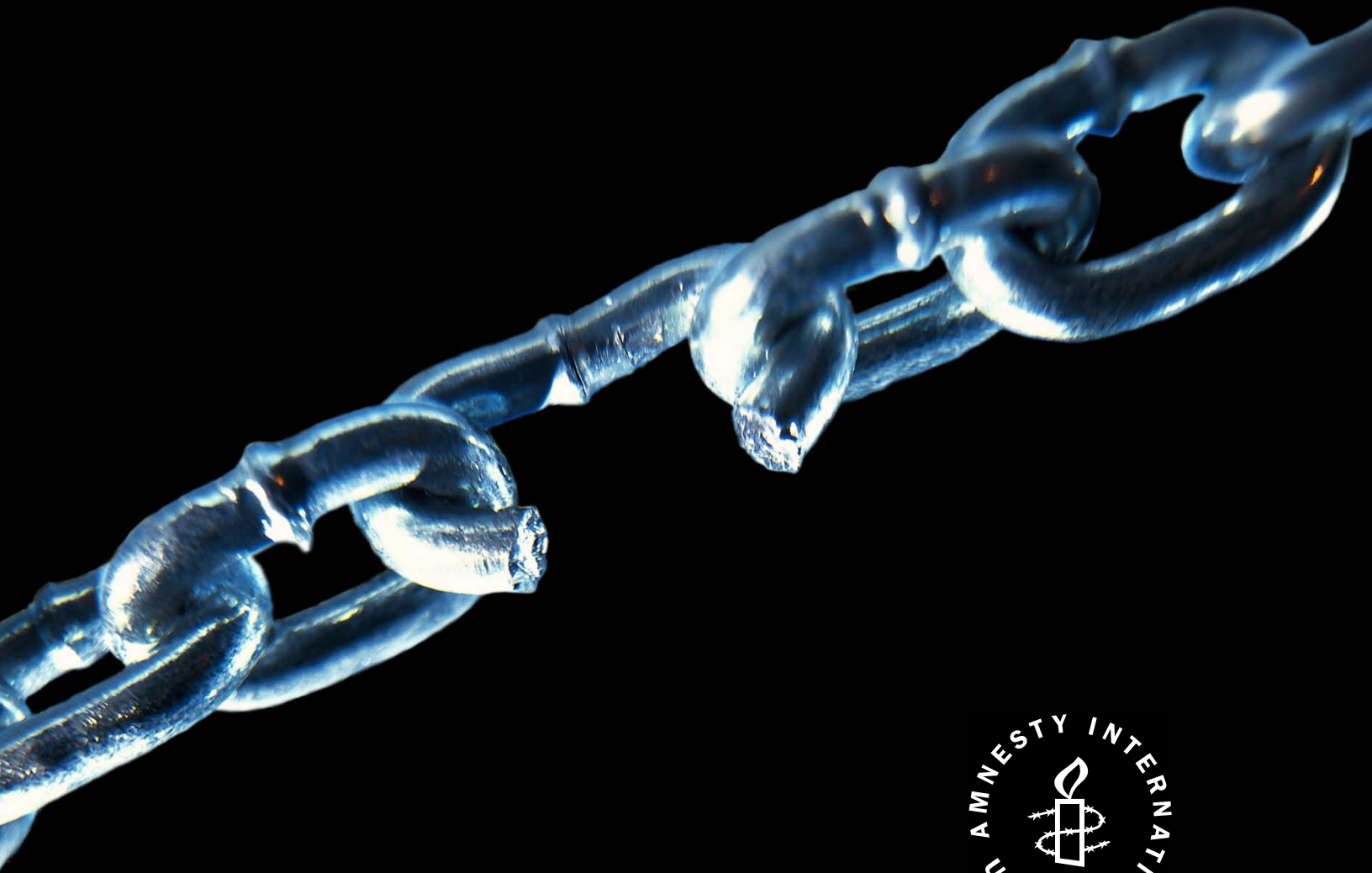


DENOUNCE TORTURE



Action Guide



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Introduction

In July 2003, Amnesty International sent the U.S. Government a memorandum on concerns relating to law and order in Iraq. The memorandum included allegations of torture and ill-treatment of Iraqi detainees by U.S. and Coalition forces. Amnesty International never received a response. Nearly a year later, in April 2004, the gruesome pictures emerged from Abu Ghraib depicting the torture of detainees, confirming Amnesty International's concerns. Since that time, the U.S. Government has conducted at least eight investigations of detainee abuse, none of which have been fully independent, and only the lowest ranking soldiers have been held accountable for the crimes committed at Abu Ghraib.

The International Committee for the Red Cross, Amnesty International, and other human rights organizations have continued to receive reports of torture and ill-treatment of detainees being held in U.S. detention centers around the world. From Iraq to Afghanistan, to Guantanamo Bay Cuba and beyond, a pattern of allegations of abuse has emerged. In response to the U.S. Government's unwillingness to take meaningful action to stop the abuses and hold everyone involved accountable, Amnesty International USA has launched a special initiative, **Denounce Torture: Stop It Now!** The aim of this special yearlong initiative is to build a diverse array of Americans who rigorously oppose the use of torture and ill-treatment in the context of the U.S. led "war on terror", to hold every person accountable who has been involved in these acts or fostered the environment under which they occurred, and to stop the practice of extraordinary rendition, also called "outsourcing of torture."

Our Advocacy Goals are two fold:

1. To ensure that Congress establishes an independent commission to conduct public investigations into the reports of abuses by agents of the U.S. government around the world; to establish whether such acts violate relevant federal statutes and international law to ensure that full responsibility for these crimes is assessed through the military and civilian chain of command; and to recommend safeguards to prevent further torture and ill-treatment.
2. To pass legislation introduced by Congressman Edward Markey of Massachusetts and Senator Patrick Leahy of Vermont that would end the practice of extraordinary rendition by the U.S.

Our advocacy goals will not be achieved without a strong push from grassroots activists making clear to Congress that torture and other forms of cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment are unlawful, unconstitutional, and un-American.

The success of this initiative hinges on activists around the country educating people in their community and galvanizing them to act. What follows is a comprehensive overview of the Denounce Torture initiative and the vital roles you can play to help stop the use of torture and ill-treatment in the context of the U.S. led "war on terror" once and for all. The time has never been more urgent. Together we will make a difference!



Frequently Asked Questions ***on Torture and Ill-treatment***

What is torture? What is ill-treatment? What's the difference?

Torture is defined in the UN Convention Against Torture as the intentional infliction of severe physical or mental pain or suffering for purposes such as obtaining information or a confession, or punishing, intimidating or coercing someone. The term is applied to those forms of ill-treatment that are particularly severe and are deliberate.

It is not possible to make a sharp distinction between those forms of treatment which amount to torture and those that amount to other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment (ill-treatment). But from a practical standpoint, any such distinction is not significant because all forms of torture and ill-treatment are absolutely prohibited under international law – and it is not simply a matter of law. The universal legal prohibition is based on a universal philosophical consensus that torture and ill-treatment are repugnant, abhorrent, and immoral.

What is the purpose of torture?

“Torture is the systematic destruction of person, family, neighborhood, school, work, formal and informal organizations, and nation, with the purpose of controlling a population the state perceives to be dangerous...Torture is the worst experience a human being can endure and survive.”¹ Torture’s purpose is to change the behavior, the thinking patterns, and the personalities of the victims –many do not survive it. By taking advantage of the person’s values and fears, torturers cut the sources of personal strength needed to resist and recover.²

What are methods of torture and their effects?

Torture can be physical and include various techniques including: beating, whipping, burning, rape, suspension upside down, submersion into water almost to the point of suffocation, and electric torture with shocks of high voltage on various parts of the body, very often on the genitals.

And it can be psychological, including threats, deceit, humiliation, insults, sleep deprivation, blindfolding, isolation, mock executions, witnessing torture of others (including one’s own family), being forced to torture or kill others, and the withholding of medication or personal items.

Physical and neurological complications include soreness of wounds, painful scars, stiffness of limbs and muscles, atrophy and paralysis of muscles, hearing and vision loss, and persistent headaches. Torture survivors suffer psychological symptoms such as feelings of anxiety, guilt and shame, powerlessness in relation to the problems of everyday life, problems with concentration, poor sleep with frequent nightmares, and impotence.

¹ Martinez, A. (1992). *The ecology of human development*. In S. Turitz, P. Davis, & J. Heisel (Eds.), *Confronting the Heart of Darkness: An International Symposium on Torture in Guatemala* Report of the Conference held by the Guatemala Human Rights Commission/USA, Washington, DC, November 13-15, 1992) (pp. 22-25). Washington, DC: Guatemala Human Rights Commission/USA.

² Johnson, Douglas, (1991). Forward. In G. R. Randall & E. L. Lutz (Authors), *Serving Survivors of Torture* (pp. vii-xi). Washington DC: The American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS).



Frequently Asked Questions on Torture and Ill-treatment

Specialized rehabilitation centers have been set up around the world to provide treatment to survivors. After receiving appropriate medical and psychological help, torture survivors can often resume leading healthy, involved lives.

Who uses torture?

Amnesty International regularly tracks instances of torture and ill-treatment around the world. Information on torture is usually concealed, and reports of torture are often hard to document, so the figures almost certainly underestimate its extent. The statistics are shocking. From 1997 to mid-2000, Amnesty International documented reports of torture or ill-treatment by state officials in more than 150 countries. In more than 70, they were widespread or persistent. In more than 80 countries, people reportedly died as a result.

Who is tortured?

- a) Anyone can be tortured.
- b) People may be tortured because they are activists for human rights, labor rights, or any other cause, because they are family members of these activists, or because of their identity (ethnicity, gender, sexual identity, etc).
- c) Quite often they are criminal suspects or prisoners.
- d) People may also be tortured at random if the state or an opposition group is trying to create a climate of terror in a population – even if the torturers do not consider this person “guilty” for any reason.

What are the U.S. and international standards against torture?

- a) United States Bill of Rights (1789), Amendment 8: “...nor (shall) cruel or unusual punishment be inflicted.”
- b) Federal Anti-Torture Statue (1994): This statute ensures that any American, whether in the U.S. or abroad, will be prosecuted if s/he commits or attempts to commit torture. A person found guilty under the act can be incarcerated for up to 20 years or receive the death penalty if the torture results in the victim’s death.
- c) War Crime Act of 1996: The War Crime Act of 1996 makes it a criminal offense for U.S. military personnel or U.S. nationals to commit war crimes regardless of the circumstances. War crimes include, but are not limited to:
 - Mutilation
 - Treatment
 - Torture



Frequently Asked Questions on Torture and Ill-treatment

- Attacks on personal dignity
 - Humiliating and degrading treatment
- d) Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), Article 5: “no moral or physical coercion may be exerted on a prisoner of war in order to admit himself guilty of the act of which he is accused.”
- e) The UN Convention Against Torture (1984): “No State may permit or tolerate torture... Exceptional circumstances such as a state of war... or any other public emergency may not be invoked as a justification of torture or other cruel inhumane or degrading treatment or punishment.”
- f) Geneva Conventions (1949) Article 99, Third Convention: “no moral or physical coercion may be exerted on a prisoner of war in order to admit himself guilty of the act of which he is accused.”
- g) UN Minimum Standards for the Treatment of Prisoners (1957), Rule 31 “Corporal punishment, punishment by placing in a dark cell, and all cruel, inhumane or degrading punishments shall be completely prohibited...”
- h) International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination “...to guarantee the right of everyone, without distinction to race, color or national or ethnic origin, to equality before the law, notably in the enjoyment of the following rights:
- “(b) The right to security of person and protection by the State against violence or bodily harm, whether inflicted by government officials or by any individual group or institution...”
- i) America Convention on Human Rights (1969) “...All persons deprived of their liberty shall be treated with respect for the inherent dignity of the human person.”
- j) UN Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials (1979), Article 5
“No law enforcement official may inflict, instigate or tolerate any act of torture... nor may any law enforcement official invoke superior order or exceptional circumstances... as a justification of torture... In this code of conduct, the term law enforcement officials is said to include all officer of the law who exercise police powers, especially the powers of arrest or detention.”

Are there exceptions to the prohibition against torture?

- a) No. The Convention Against Torture clearly states, “No exceptional circumstances whatsoever, whether a state of war or a threat of war, internal political instability or any other public emergency, may be invoked as a justification of torture.”
- b) The prohibition of torture has a special status in international law. It is part of customary



Frequently Asked Questions on Torture and Ill-treatment

international law, which means it is binding on all states, whether or not they have ratified any of the international human rights treaties.

- c) The prohibition on torture is also a “peremptory norm,” which means that it cannot be overruled by any other law or by local custom.

Why does Amnesty International stand unequivocally against torture?

- a) **Immoral:** Torture is immoral
The use of torture is an affront to human dignity that can never be justified and must be opposed in every country of the world. Those who try to justify torture contribute to undermining the rule of law.
- b) **Illegal:** Torture is illegal – under U.S. and international law
U.S. and international law prohibit torture under all circumstances. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that “no one shall be subjected to torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.”
- c) **Ineffective:** Torture is unreliable and counterproductive
Torture as a means of interrogation may result in false statements, for a person under torture is liable to say anything to diminish the pain. Thus, information extracted under torture is inadmissible as evidence in legal proceedings.

The use of torture can be counterproductive. The U.S., by abandoning the prohibition of a universally recognized human right -- the right not to be tortured -- would alienate a range of international allies.

The official use of torture in the U.S. would nullify U.S. efforts against torture abroad and undermine U.S. human rights policy. It also would signal to other governments that when faced with a special situation, any behavior is acceptable.

Amnesty International’s forty years of experience fighting torture shows that once torture has been legitimized, even on a small scale, the use of torture, cruel, inhuman and degrading practices inevitably expands to include countless other victims, and ultimately erodes the moral and legal principles on which society is based.

What is Extraordinary Rendition?

Extraordinary rendition, also called “outsourcing torture,” is the practice of transferring detainees into the custody of countries with a known record of torture in violation of U.S. obligations under federal law and the Convention Against Torture. The United States has rendered detainees to countries such as Egypt and Syria, each of which are known to regularly engage in acts of torture and ill-treatment.



Frequently Asked Questions on Torture and Ill-treatment

The Convention Against Torture specifies that “No State Party shall expel, return, or extradite a person to another State where there are substantial grounds for believing that he would be in danger of being subjected to torture.” However, the U.S. is able to use the unclear “substantial grounds” language as a loophole to use extraordinary rendition.

Why is Amnesty International calling for an independent commission?

Amnesty International is increasingly concerned about the ever-growing body of evidence detailing torture and other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment of detainees in U.S. custody. The sheer number of allegations and investigations and the striking similarity of the charges that have followed the U.S. Government from Afghanistan to Guantanamo to Iraq and beyond strongly suggest a pattern and practice of abuse by agents of the U.S. Government and the outsourcing of torture to third party governments. Although the U.S. Government has conducted numerous internal investigations, none have been given a mandate that would allow them to look at all levels of civilian and military leadership and determine who is responsible and should be held accountable for policies that set the stage for such abuse.

Amnesty International is calling for an independent commission of inquiry to conduct a thorough and impartial investigation into torture and other abuses in Iraq, Afghanistan, Guantanamo, and elsewhere, and for assurances that those who perpetrated crimes and those who contributed to a command climate that facilitated crimes are brought to justice. The commission should be composed of credible experts independent of government, must have broad-ranging powers to examine the administration's detention policies and practices and ensure accountability at the highest level, and hearings and findings should be made public.

Specifically, Amnesty International is concerned about:

Extraordinary Renditions – Growing evidence of a U.S. practice of transferring detainees into the custody of countries with a known record of torture in violation of U.S. obligations under federal law and the Convention Against Torture.

Indefinite and Arbitrary Detention – Hundreds of people from several nations are being held without charge or trial in Guantanamo Bay, with thousands more being detained in Afghanistan, Iraq and elsewhere.

Disappearances – The U.S. Government has admitted to keeping “ghost detainees” in custody without registering them and without allowing access to the International Committee of the Red Cross. Allegations of torture and deaths in custody have been reported.

Use of Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment – Government documents have revealed the use of interrogation techniques that amount to torture or cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment with some of those tactics being approved by high ranking administration officials.



Action Opportunities

Below are a number of action opportunities you can take in conjunction with the Denounce Torture Initiative. Do not feel bound by what you see below – feel free to get creative and shape your own original events and actions! If you ever have questions about whether something you are planning falls outside Amnesty International policy, be sure to check with your Regional Office staff at toll free 866.A.REGION or the Denounce Torture Initiative at dtorture@aiusa.org or 202.544.0200 ext. 243. You can find general information on organizing events in the Amnesty International USA Activist Tool Kit, which can be found at:

http://www.amnestyusa.org/activist_toolkit/planevents/

Host a Teach-in

A key step in stopping torture and ill-treatment in the context of the U.S. led “war on terror” is to educate the public about these issues. The Denounce Torture Initiative has developed a special teach-in guide that will provide you with the tools to host a successful teach-in on torture and ill-treatment. Remember, you do not need to be an expert on torture to host a teach in – the teach-in guide makes it easy! To download the teach-in guide, visit:

http://www.amnestyusa.org/stoptorture/pdf/teach_in_guide.pdf

Additionally, you are encouraged to review the extensive list of anti-torture speakers in the Appendix of this Guide and consider hosting a speaker. Remember, if you decide to host a teach-in or speaker, it is a perfect time to get other organizations in your community involved, so be sure to review the section in this Guide titled “Making Your Outreach Effective.”

Lobby Your Members of Congress

Lobbying your members of Congress can be a rewarding and extremely effective form of advocacy on human rights issues. You are encouraged to lobby your members of Congress as part of the Denounce Torture Initiative. Be sure to coordinate *any* lobby visit with your Amnesty International USA Regional Office. Regional office staff can be contacted at toll free 866.A.REGION. You can get the most updated talking points and other pieces of pertinent information for a lobby visit from the Denounce Torture Initiative by emailing dtorture@aiusa.org. To find out who your Senators or Representative are, visit:

<http://takeaction.amnestyusa.org/legdirectory/>

Write Letters To The Editor and Opinion Pieces

Writing letters to the editor and opinion piece in newspapers and other print publications is an important way to spread Amnesty International’s message and cultivate dialog about our efforts to stop torture and ill-treatment in the context of the U.S. led “war on terror.” A special internal guide for writing letters to the editor and opinion piece is available on the members’ section of the Amnesty International USA website at:

<http://www.amnestyusa.org/members/>



Raise Awareness Through Tabling

If you know of an event, festival, fair, etc in your area where you could table on behalf of the Denounce Torture Initiative, Amnesty International will send you special postcards, stickers, and other supplies to complement the materials off the web and out of the Action Kit. Contact your Regional Office for materials at 866.A.REGION or contact the Denounce Torture initiative at dtorture@aiusa.org or 202.544.0200 ext. 243.

Gather Signatures on the Statement Against Torture Petition

Amnesty International is working to get 250,000 people living in the United States to sign our petition by the end of the year, and need your help to meet this goal! The petition (which is included in the appendix) calls for the immediate end of the use of torture by governments worldwide. Amnesty International USA will use the petition to prove to members of Congress and the White House that people living in America stand firmly against the use of torture and ill-treatment. If you host any Amnesty events, have your attendees sign the petition. An online version of the petition is available at:

<http://takeaction.amnestyusa.org/petition/index.asp?id=30>

Take Action Online

Amnesty International has ongoing online actions to stop torture, ill-treatment, and extraordinary renditions. Be sure to sign each petition and encourage your friends and family to do the same. To learn more, visit:

<http://www.amnestyusa.org/stoptorture/actions.do>

Participate in the Guantanamo Reading Project

With public readings of the play *Guantanamo: 'Honor Bound to Defend Freedom'* the Guantanamo Reading Project focuses attention on the shameful and unlawful detentions at the U.S. naval base in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. The project's goal is to encourage local debate and action to support the remaining detainees' habeas rights to challenge their detentions in federal court, as upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court in 2004. The Center for Constitutional Rights and the Bill of Rights Defense Committee, the project's sponsors, invite people and groups across the U.S. and abroad to put on readings in their communities, using the list of steps and the resources on the following web site:

<http://www.ccr-ny.org/v2/gac/grp/>

Be sure to check the Denounce Torture Initiative's website periodically for special actions that will occur throughout the year! Go to:

<http://www.amnestyusa.org/stoptorture/campaign.html>



Making Your Outreach Effective

Note: For the purposes of this section, when we refer to “organization(s)” we are using it loosely as a catch all word, so it can include civic and social justice organizations or groups, as well as faith communities, and various military organizations.

Polls and focus groups conducted over the past few years have made a compelling case that the majority of people living in America oppose the use of torture. Torture and ill-treatment are issues that deeply resonate with many people living in the United States for a variety of reasons ranging from moral opposition to great concern over the U.S. Government violating both federal and international law. This gives activists involved with the Denounce Torture initiative an opportunity to outreach to a diverse array of organizations in your community.

Our common vision of stopping torture and ill-treatment in the context of the United States led “war on terror” and holding those accountable who are involved will not be achieved without a diverse spectrum of voices advocating in support of these goals. Thus, it is important when planning events that Denounce Torture activists reach out to organizations throughout their community and ask for their involvement. Below are some helpful guidelines for forging relationships with organizations and diverse communities. Remember, these are guidelines, there is no perfect formula, so be sure to take into account the climate and culture around you when developing an outreach plan.

Guidelines for Outreach

Do your homework on the organization.

Check to see if the organization has made public statements against torture and ill-treatment in the context of the U.S. led “war on terror.” It is not necessarily a problem if they have not, but you should be ready to recognize their contribution to our collective efforts if they have. Remember, it is worth giving any organization a call if you feel like they might potentially be helpful in planning, supporting, or recruiting attendees to your event.

Be flexible.

When approaching an organization, it is important to invite their input in your event planning and be willing to use that information to help shape the event. To whatever extent possible, include the organization throughout the *entire* planning process. While flexibility is important, always be sure to keep within the bounds of Amnesty International policy when holding events. If you ever have questions related to policy, you can contact your regional office toll free at 866.A.REGION or the Denounce Torture initiative at dtorture@aiusa.org or 202.544.0200.

Ask well in advance.

Always be sure to ask organizations well in advance if you want them to co-sponsor your event. Two to three months advance notice is ideal. Most organizations need months of advance notice in



Making Your Outreach Effective

order to gain approval before they can sign onto or participate in an event. Giving plenty of advance notice also allows the organization time to advertise the event to their constituents, and allows you more time to develop a strong working relationship with the organization.

Mold your pitch to match your audience.

In this context, a “pitch” is the approach you use to gain the involvement of a given organization or community in the event you are planning. It is important to craft your pitch in a way that will resonate with the organization to whom you are reaching out. Think about what issues are of concern to the given organization and how they connect to the Denounce Torture initiative. With this campaign, there is a particular interest to involve faith communities, military families, and traditional civil rights organizations. Below is information that you might find helpful in making your pitch for each:

- **Faith Communities:** Focus on the moral issues surrounding torture and ill-treatment. Also, emphasize justice, a notion that is strong among faith communities. There is a need to bring justice to the torture scandal by holding every person accountable up and down the military and civilian chain of command.
- **Military Families:** Be sure to *not* criticize soldiers and the military. Many members of the military and their families are strongly opposed to torture and ill-treatment. Focus on the need to hold the “U.S. Government” accountable for committing or authorizing abuses. Make appeals to the need to respect the rule of law, the constitution and upholding *our* view of America. Mention that your concern for human rights extends to the well-being of U.S. soldiers and members of the military who are serving in U.S. detention centers and in the field, as well as upon their return home.
- **Civil Rights Organizations:** Connect the local to the global. Many civil rights organizations have a long rich history working to end torture and ill-treatment of minorities in the United States – there is much we can learn from them. Clear parallels can be drawn between abuses occurring in the context of the U.S. led “war on terror” and abuses that have occurred here in the United States. As with faith communities, emphasizing the need to bring about justice will be useful.

Do realize that the above ideas are only suggestions. It is impossible to create a perfect formula for outreach to various communities, so be sure to keep in mind local cultural issues when considering how you want to pitch involvement to a given organization. If you have a friend or acquaintance connected to one of the above constituencies, ask their opinion on how best to pitch their involvement in the event you are organizing.

Know what you are asking for and give options.

When calling an organization, be sure that you know what you want them to do. Having several



Making Your Outreach Effective

levels of involvement on which the organization can participate is always helpful. For instance, if you are hosting a teach-in on torture and ill-treatment in the context of the U.S. led “war on terror” and you would like the local NAACP chapter (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, a civil rights organization) to take part, you could give them the following options:

- Co-sponsor the teach-in and have an NAACP presenter talk about their organization’s concerns with torture and ill-treatment in the context of the U.S. led “war on terror”.
- Co-sponsor and advertise the teach-in to their grassroots members but not provide a speaker.
- Post information about the teach-in on their website.

To reiterate the first point, it is always important to hear what ideas the given organization might have for their participation in the event you are planning, so be sure to ask for their input as well.

If they need time to make a decision, offer to send or drop off a packet of information on Amnesty International USA’s Denounce Torture Initiative so they may so they may discuss their involvement with other staff and/or volunteer constituency.

Schedule a time to follow up.

Before you hang up the phone, end an email, or conclude your face-to-face meeting, be sure to schedule a time to follow up with the organization. This shows your commitment to their involvement and also makes your request time-bound.

Send a note of thanks.

We are all busy people with many demands on our time, so sending a note of thanks is a way to recognize the contribution the organization or individual representing the organization is making. Notes of thanks are always good practice, so be sure to acknowledge their contribution to your event within a week after your event!

Special Suggestions For Outreach to Faith Communities

Be aware of religious holidays.

If you want involvement from faith communities, be sure not to plan an event on one of their holidays. Examples include but are not limited to:

- Muslim Faith: Ramadan which begins October 5 and continues through November 3.
- Jewish Faith: Sabbath begins at sundown on Friday and runs through Sunday evening at sundown, Passover, Rosh Hashanah, and Yom Kippur.
- Christian Faith: Christmas, Ash Wednesday, Palm Sunday, Good Friday and Easter.



Making Your Outreach Effective

Check websites of faith communities for exact dates and a more comprehensive list of religious holidays.

Avoid non-germane issues.

Be sure to avoid issues that are controversial within a given community. Torture and ill-treatment are issues that all faiths teach against, so this is an opportunity to unite, not divide.

Don't try to be an expert if you are not one.

Do not quote scripture or talk about a given faith with authority if you have no affiliation with the faith. Contact the faith community with respect and interest to learn from them, and be excited to gain their involvement at whatever level they are comfortable.



Appendix: Documentary Suggestions

One way to educate people about torture and ill-treatment is to show a video and have a discussion after. Below are some potential documentaries you can show to educate and spark dialog about torture and ill-treatment. Note that Amnesty International does not have these videos to loan out.

From Terror to Healing

Part 1: Overview of Political Torture Today (31 minutes)

This 2001 Telly award-winning video overview includes the legal definition of torture, how torture is practiced and why, the highest risk population, aftereffects, assessment and treatment options, and the history of the torture rehabilitation movement. The presenters are three clinicians who have worked extensively with torture survivors: a psychiatrist, a physician, and a psychologist.

Part 2: The Torture Survivor's Perspective (28 minutes)

Two torture survivors and a Bosnian medical interpreter describe their experiences with torture, the aftereffects, and their first experiences with the U.S. Healthcare system. Included are suggestions to healthcare providers for effective engagement.

And After the Torture (1994, 40 minutes, available in English, Spanish and Dutch, directed by Lars Feldballe Peterson) is a film about the consequences of repression. It takes place in Chile in 1993, four years after the fall of the Pinochet dictatorship. The time of the dictatorship was a period of violence, torture and disappearances. The torture rehabilitation center CINTRAS estimates that 1/5 of the Chilean Population was affected by the violence. The present government tells the people to forgive and forget. However, this is very difficult when the torturers were never identified, found guilty or punished. After Pinochet's fall, the torturers very often maintained their powerful positions. The torture victims say they could forgive their torturers if the men would admit their guilt and apologize. Instead they have had to live side by side with their former torturers, and this prevents rehabilitation. The knowledge that Pinochet was still head of the army creates uncertainty, and therefore the silence about what happened continues. The film very clearly shows the negative effects of impunity.

Returning to Life – About the Fight Against Torture (1997, 19 minutes, available in English and Danish, directed by Lars Feldballe Peterson) shows the gravity of the problem of torture and how rehabilitation can help victims re-establish a normal life. The film features Shamal, a torture victim from the Middle East, who was severely tortured during his two years in prison. Shamal talks openly about his horrible experiences, the difficulties in resuming a normal life, and how his treatment is progressing at the Danish Rehabilitation and Research Center for Torture Victims, (RCT). Directors and health professionals from RCT are interviewed on general aspects of treatment, and the Secretary-General of the International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims, IRCT, adds her comments on the global perspectives of torture and its ramifications.



Appendix: Background Documents and Helpful Links

The following links will provide you with additional detailed information about torture and ill-treatment in the context of the U.S. led “war on terror.”

Amnesty International Report 2005: Amnesty International’s 2005 report covers worldwide human rights issues from January to December 2004. This link will bring you to a specific section of the Report that discusses organizations human rights concerns at Guantanamo Bay as well as U.S. detention facilities in Afghanistan, Iraq, and other undisclosed locations.

<http://www.amnestyusa.org/annualreport>

Guantanamo and Beyond: The continuing pursuit of unchecked executive power: This report explores in-depth the myriad of human rights abuses that Amnesty International has documented at the United States prison at Guantanamo Bay and in other detention centers around the world.

<http://www.amnestyusa.org/countries/usa/document.do?id=4494BC984C8C552280256FE3004228E2>

Amnesty International USA Issue Briefs

Independent Commission: Learn more about why Amnesty International is urging Congress to establish an independent commission to conduct a public investigation of all allegations of torture and ill-treatment by agents of the U.S. government around the world.

<http://www.amnestyusa.org/uspolicy/document.do?id=d4ac6167c1d6a5328525703f006c4738>

Extraordinary Renditions: Learn more about Amnesty International’s concerns surrounding the use of extraordinary renditions, also known as outsourcing of torture.

<http://www.amnestyusa.org/uspolicy/document.do?id=e6a40455594af12685256fc5007801c5>

Helpful Links

Denounce Torture Initiative website

www.amnestyusa.org/stoptorture/campaign.html

Torture Abolition and Survivors Support Coalition

www.tassc.org

Center for Victims of Torture

www.cvt.org/main.php

American Civil Liberties Union

www.aclu.org

United Nations

www.un.org/english/

Human Rights First

www.humanrightsfirst.org

Human Rights Watch

www.hrw.org/



Appendix: Speakers List

Below is a list of speakers the Denounce Torture Initiative has compiled who can speak on a range of issues related to torture and ill-treatment. If you want to invite a speaker listed below, email or phone Eric Sears, Project Manager for the Denounce Torture Initiative (esears@aiusa.org or 202.544.0200 ext. 243), and he will send you the speaker's contact information.

Speakers on Torture and Ill-Treatment in the Context of the War on Terror

Jumana Musa

Areas of Focus: U.S. policies relating to the status and treatment of detainees, torture allegations and investigations. U.S. and international law relating to torture and ill-treatment in the context of the war on terror.

Personal Profile/Short Bio: Jumana Musa is a human rights attorney and activist. She is currently the Advocacy Director for Domestic Human Rights and International Justice at Amnesty International, where she addresses the domestic and international impact of the Bush administration's "war on terror" on human rights. She has also served as Amnesty International's legal observer at military commission proceedings at the U.S. naval base in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. Formerly, she worked as a policy attorney for the National Network to End Domestic Violence and handled international relations and immigration issues as a fellow in the office of Congressman Jesse L. Jackson, Jr. Ms. Musa holds a BA in International Relations from Brown University and a JD from Georgetown University Law Center.

Honorarium: Welcome but not required

Travel costs: Must be paid in full

Travel limitation: None

Advance notice: One month is preferred, but not required

Margaret (Meg) Satterthwaite

Areas of Focus: Human Rights in the "War on Terror;" special expertise on "extraordinary renditions," disappearances, and the use of proxy prisons.

Personal Profile: Margaret Satterthwaite is a professor and Research Director for the Center for Human Rights and Global Justice (CHRGJ) at NYU School of Law. Her research and advocacy currently focuses on human rights abuses in the "war on terror." Under her direction, the CHRGJ published (with the ABCNY) the first comprehensive report on the issue of "extraordinary renditions," entitled *Torture by Proxy*. She has co-authored a follow-up report, *Beyond Guantánamo: Transfers to Torture One Year After Rasul v. Bush*, and is conducting research into "disappearances" and the use of proxy prisons by the United States. Prof. Satterthwaite is an expert in human rights law, and also serves on the Board of Directors of AIUSA. For more information, see www.chrgj.org.



Honorarium: Negotiable.

Travel costs: Must be covered by inviting group/organization.

Travel limitation: None.

Advance notice: Prefer at least 30 days.

Rick Halperin

Areas of Focus: The history of torture, spurring people to understand this as a human rights education issue and getting them active with torture centers in their locales.

Personal Profile: Rick Halperin teaches a Human Rights course at Southern Methodist University and has worked extensively with the Center for Survivors of Torture in Dallas, and with other similar entities. He currently serves as the chair of the Amnesty International USA Board of Directors.

Honorarium: No

Travel costs: Yes

Travel limitation: No limitations

Advance notice: 10 days, could go immediately if not in conflict with commitments.

Professor William J. Aceves

Areas of Focus: International Law; Human Rights; impunity issues.

Personal Profile: William Aceves is a Professor of Law and Director of the International Legal Studies Program at California Western School of Law. He studies human rights and international law and writes extensively in these fields. He frequently works with Amnesty International, the Center for Justice & Accountability, the Center for Constitutional Rights, and the American Civil Liberties Union on projects involving the domestic application of international law. He has represented several human rights and civil liberties organizations as amicus curiae counsel in cases before the federal courts. Many of these cases involved serious violations of international law, including torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. He is the principal author of the 2002 Amnesty International USA report on torture and impunity in the United States. He has served on the Board of Directors of Amnesty International USA and is presently the Ombudsperson for AIUSA. He is also a member of the National Board of Directors of the American Civil Liberties Union and serves on the Board of the Center for Justice & Accountability.

Honorarium: Not required

Travel costs: Must be reimbursed

Travel limitations: Anywhere, U.S. and abroad

Advance notice: Depending on location, a few days to a few weeks



Douglas Johnson

Areas of Focus: Turkey, non-violent resistance and change, public policy, rehabilitation

Personal Profile: Douglas Johnson is the executive director of the Center for Victims of Torture in Minneapolis, MN. As CVT's executive director since 1988, He has led the organization through an important period of growth, as offices and treatment centers opened in St. Paul, Washington, D.C., Guinea and Sierra Leone. He has also pioneered the New Tactics in Human Rights project and the Tactical Mapping methodology.

Honorarium: Donation to CVT of \$500

Travel costs: Must be reimbursed

Travel limitations: Wherever needed

Advance notice: Four weeks' notice (call to check)

Professor Rick Wilson

Areas of Focus: U.S. legal obligations under the Torture Convention in the immigration field, and use of the Torture Convention as a way to strengthen domestic law.

Personal Profile: Mr. Wilson a professor here at the law school, where he directs the clinical programs and the International Human Rights Law Clinic, which he founded in 1990. Last year the Clinic had 32 students and 4 faculty members working on asylum and human rights cases. Many of the clinic's clients have suffered torture, and present symptoms of post-traumatic stress. The clinic has also filed complaints on behalf of our clients with the UN Committee Against Torture. The clinic also helped the Spanish lawyers with the complaints that led to the arrest of General Pinochet in London and with other aspects of claims against the military leadership of Chile and Argentina during the Dirty Wars years. Since July of 2004, Mr. Wilson has represented Omar Khadr, a Canadian citizen detained at Guantanamo Bay, who was captured in Afghanistan at age 15. The clinic has challenged his torture and other mistreatment in federal court in Washington DC. Mr. Wilson speaks fluent Spanish.

Honorarium: Welcome, but not necessary

Travel costs: Must be reimbursed

Joe Margulies

Areas of Focus: Post-9/11 detention policies

Personal Profile/Short Bio: Lead counsel, *Rasul v. Bush*. Actively involved in all aspects of the litigation and lobbying challenging the administration's post-9/11 detention policies. Professor of law at the University of Chicago

Honorarium: Not required



Travel costs: Need full reimbursement

Travel limitation: Prefer to be in the Chicago area.

Advance notice: As much as possible

Eric Sears

Areas of Focus: The use of torture and ill-treatment in the context of the U.S. led “war on terror” and how it violates to U.S. and international law. How to educate around these issues in your community and galvanize individuals to take action to help stop torture and ill-treatment.

Personal Profile: Eric Sears is the Project Manger for Amnesty International USA’s Denounce Torture Initiative, overseeing the day-to-day operation of the campaign. He has been on staff at Amnesty International USA for the past three years in a variety of capacities including serving on the organization’s Iraq Crisis Response Team and working as a Field Organizer. Eric holds degrees in peace and conflict studies and political science from Saint Louis University.

Honorarium: Not required, but a donation to Amnesty International is welcome.

Travel costs: Must be covered

Travel limitation: No limitations

Advance notice: Two weeks notice is appreciated, but not required.

Speakers on the Effects of Torture and Ill-Treatment in General

Orlando Tizon

Areas of Focus: What torture does to individuals and communities, and what we can do to stop it worldwide. Also willing to speak about the human rights situation in the Philippines.

Personal Profile: I was arrested on Sep 21, 1982 In Davao City, during the regime of President Marcos of the Philippines and imprisoned until April 1986. In the first three weeks of my imprisonment I was kept blindfolded and incommunicado in a military camp. I suffered beatings, mock execution, and solitary confinement. I am a sociologist involved in immigrant issues and a member of the Torture Abolition and Survivors Support Coalition (TASSC). I speak English and Filipino fluently, and can speak Spanish with moderate fluency.

Honorarium: An honorarium is appreciated

Travel costs: Must be reimbursed

Travel limitations: Flexible

Advance Notice: At least two weeks



John Conroy

Areas of Focus: 1) Torturers: the transformation of an ordinary person into a torturer, profiles of individual torturers he has interviewed; 2) Bystanders: how societies justify and rationalize torture; 3) Impunity: why torturers are so rarely punished; 4) Torture by Chicago Police detectives from the Area 2 Violent Crimes unit, and the vast indifference to the plight of those men in Chicago; 5) Three case studies of torture (Chicago, Israel, Northern Ireland) and what they tell us about perpetrators, obedience to authority, societal justification, and impunity.

Personal Profile: John Conroy is the author of *Unspeakable Acts, Ordinary People: The Dynamics of Torture*, published by Knopf in March 2000. During the course of researching that book he interviewed former torturers from 5 nations, a dozen men in total, as well as torture survivors from those and other nations. He is a staff writer for the *Chicago Reader* and has written about police torture suspects in Chicago since 1990 (these articles can be found on the net at <http://www.chicagoreader.com/torture/index.html>).

Honorarium: Depends on situation, time commitment and host group

Travel costs: Must be covered

Travel limitations: Anywhere, as schedule permits

Advance notice: Flexible, but prefers a month

Kathi Anderson

Areas of Focus: What is torture, where is it practiced, etc. Care for survivors of torture – physical and psychological sequelae as well as treatment models.

Personal Profile: Ms. Anderson holds an M.A. in Counseling and a B.A. in International Relations. She is a former RMC/AC, Trainer and Board of Directors member with Amnesty International, and is currently the Executive Director and Co-Founder of Survivors of Torture International.

Honorarium: Depends on frequency and duration, \$25/hour is suggested

Travel costs: Must be reimbursed

Travel limitations: Anywhere, with enough warning

Advance notice: Flexible

Dr. Mario Venegas

Areas of Focus: Chile, Pinochet, healing process, mutual support groups

Personal Profile: Dr. Venegas is the coordinator for the Permanent Committee for Chile at Amnesty International. He also serves as the Director for the Foundation for Human Rights in Guatemala. He currently works for the Abbott Pharmaceutical Company. Dr. Venegas earned his Ph.D. from the University of London in Chemistry. Dr. Venegas was a refugee in London before coming to the



Appendix: Speakers List

United States. He can speak about his experience in Chile as well as the political situation in that country.

Honorarium: Welcome, in the form of a donation to the Foundation for Human Rights in Guatemala

Travel costs: Must be reimbursed

Travel limitations: Travel within Chicago during the week, longer trips on weekends.

Advance notice: At least one month outside of Chicago; within the city, a week

Ana Deutsch

Areas of Focus: Psychological consequences of torture, psychotherapy, Integral Services for Survivors.

Personal Profile: Ms. Deutsch has a degree in Clinical Psychology from the Catholic University of Cordoba, Argentina (1964). She came to the U.S. in 1977 as a political exile. She founded the Program for Torture Victims, with Dr. Jose Quiroga, in 1980, and has worked with victims since then. She has lectured on the topic in the U.S. and abroad and has been called as an expert witness in landmark federal court cases involving victims of torture. Ms. Deutsch has been appointed as an expert witness by the Inter-American Human Rights Court (based in Costa Rica) in cases involving torture victims and victims of massacres in a few Latin American countries.

Honorarium: Yes, compensation for missed work

Travel costs: Yes

Travel limitations: Anywhere

Advance notice: At least 3-4 weeks notice

Dr. Uwe Jacobs

Areas of Focus: Rehabilitation, forensic psychological documentation for asylum applications, & psychotherapy.

Personal Profile: Uwe Jacobs, Ph.D., has been working with Survivors International for the past 10 years and has provided services for well over 100 survivors of torture from many different countries and has developed and implemented a variety of programs for survivors. He is both a clinical neuropsychologist and a psychotherapist. He is an expert on the psychological and neuropsychological assessment of asylum seekers and has written and published guidelines on this topic (see SI publications). Dr. Jacobs drafted the chapters on the psychological and neuropsychological sequelae of torture for the currently existing international guidelines for the examination of torture published by the UN High Commissioner (Istanbul Protocol) and for the handbook on assessment of asylum seekers by Physicians for Human Rights. Prior to becoming Director of SI, Dr. Jacobs developed other programs for disadvantaged populations. He founded and directed the Homeless Assessment Program through the Wright Institute, Berkeley. He served



Appendix: Speakers List

as the psychological consultant in developing the Life After Exoneration Project (LAEP), a national program for wrongfully convicted ex-prisoners. He conducted workshops and needs assessments with exonerees in New York and Chicago. Dr. Jacobs has also published in the area of psychotherapy process research. Dr. Jacobs has served as an Adjunct Faculty at the Wright Institute, Berkeley since 1997 and maintains an independent practice in Berkeley

Honorarium: Depends on situation

Travel costs: Must be reimbursed

Travel limitations: Anywhere, as schedule permits

Advance notice: As much as possible

Survivors of Torture and/or Ill-Treatment from Around the World

Sowore Omoyele

Areas of Focus: Country conditions in Nigeria and personal experience as a survivor of torture.

Personal Profile: Mr. Sowore is a 34-year-old national of Nigeria. From 1989-1995 he was a well-known student leader and pro-democracy activist at the University of Lagos. Since 1989, he has endured multiple arrests, imprisonment, interrogations and torture for his outspoken and uncompromising stand against successive military regimes as well as his advocacy for minority rights in the Delta.

Mr. Sowore moved to New York in 1999 to seek treatment at the Bellevue-NYU Program for Torture Survivors, his costs covered in part by the World Organization Against Torture. He is fluent in both English and Yoruba.

Sowore was featured in AmnestyNow Magazine of fall 2000.

<http://www.ratical.org/corporations/Sowore.html>

Honorarium: At least \$250/day

Travel costs: Must be reimbursed

Travel limitations: Anywhere in the U.S.

Advance notice: At least 2 weeks

Doan Viet Hoat

Areas of Focus: Vietnam

Personal Profile: Doan Viet Hoat was adopted by Amnesty International as a “Prisoner of Conscience” after being arrested and imprisoned for 12 years without charges by the Vietnamese



Appendix: Speakers List

Government, from 1976-88. He was re-arrested and imprisoned again in 1990, and sentenced to 20 years' hard labor, for having published the "Freedom Forum", an underground magazine published in Vietnam to discuss and exchange different viewpoints on human rights and democracy issues. He was released and transported directly to the U.S. in 1998.

Doan Viet Hoat served as the editor and writer of *Freedom Forum* between 1988-90, and has also served as the Vice President of Administration at Van Hanh University in Saigon, a professor of English, Education and Social Studies, and the editor of *Tu Tuong* (Thought) magazine.

He has received numerous prestigious honors and awards from journalism and human rights organizations, and earned his Ph.D. at Florida State University. He is now Visiting Scholar at Columbus School of Law, Catholic University of America, Washington DC.

Honorarium: Preferable, as groups can afford

Travel costs: Must be reimbursed

Travel limitations: Anywhere, as schedule permits

Advance notice: 1 month

Munawar Laghari

Areas of Focus: Sindh (Occupied by Pakistan)

Personal Profile: Mr. Laghari is a survivor of torture from Pakistan. He is currently working at the World Sindhi Institute. He is comfortable speaking about both his personal experience as a survivor, as well as the political situation in his country.

Honorarium: Not necessary

Travel costs: Only if it is overseas

Travel limitations: Open to travel to any location other than Pakistan

Alex Taylor

Areas of Focus: Central America (esp. Guatemala) and Argentina; The effects of military and state repression on civil society, as caused by the methodology of state terror and torture.

Personal Profile: Alex Taylor is a Canadian citizen born in Guatemala. His interest on the relevant subject is related to his own personal background. His mother was disappeared by the military in Guatemala, and several of his friends and relatives have also experienced state repression in that country. As a result of that background, Mr. Taylor decided to pursue studies in contemporary Latin American history (focusing on the cases of Guatemala and Argentina), within the context of the historical roots and results of military rule, state terror and state-sponsored torture and terror in those societies. At different points in the past 15 years he has volunteered to work with human rights groups and refugee advocacy organizations in Canada. He is fluent in English and Spanish.



Honorarium: not necessary

Travel costs: reimbursements are welcome

Travel limitations: wherever needed

Advance notice: at least 2 weeks

Sister Diana Ortiz

Areas of Focus: surviving torture, preventing torture, torture rehabilitation, and a wide range of topics concerning torture.

Personal Profile: Sister Dianna Ortiz is a U.S. citizen who was held and tortured by Guatemalan security forces and an American working with them. Prior to her abduction in November 1989, she had been working as an Ursuline nun in Guatemala and teaching young children in a rural area of that country.

Sister Dianna is a staff member of the Guatemala Human Rights Commission/USA, a founder and former coordinator of the Torture Abolition and Survivor Support Committee, and a founder and former co-chair of Coalition Missing, an advocacy group of U.S. citizens who survived political violence in Guatemala. She has done significant advocacy around human rights and preventing torture and has worked with Amnesty International on several issues, including efforts to pass the Human Rights Information Act. She is an excellent public speaker and has spoken at events nationally and internationally.

Honorarium: Negotiable, all honorariums donated to the Torture Abolition Survivors Support Committee.

Travel costs: Yes

Travel limitations: no travel outside the U.S.

Advance notice: At least one month

Harry Wu

Areas of Focus: Torture in the Chinese prison system

Personal Profile: Harry Wu was first arrested as a young student at the Beijing Geology College for speaking out against the Soviet invasion of Hungary as well as his criticisms of the Chinese Communist Party. In 1960, he was sent to the Laogai – the Chinese Gulag – as a “counter-revolutionary rightist”. During the next 19 years, he was imprisoned in 12 different forced-labor camps around China, where he was forced to manufacture chemicals, mine coal, build roads, clear land, as well as plant and harvest crops. He survived beatings, torture, and starvation.

Finally released in 1979, Wu came to the United States in 1985 as visiting professor of geology at the University of California, Berkeley. Later, he began writing about his experiences, and became a human rights activist determined to expose the truth about the Laogai, which is the most extensive



forced labor and thought reform camp system in the world.

In the summer of 1995 the Chinese Government arrested him when he tried to legally enter the country. After 66 days of captivity, he was convicted in a four-hour show trial of “stealing state secrets”, sentenced to 15 years, and expelled as the result of an extensive international campaign launched on his behalf. Since his release, he has continued to travel the world to tell of the abuses the Chinese Government inflicts on its own people.

He is the Executive Director of the Laogai Research Foundation, a non-profit organization committed to documenting the Laogai system. He has received numerous awards for his activities, including the Hungarian Freedom Fighters Award in 1991, Martin Ennals Human Rights Award in 1994, Human Rights Advocate Award of Harvard Foundation of Harvard University and the 1996 Geuzen Medal of Honor from the Dutch Foundation for the Geuzen Resistance Movement, as well as other international honors.

Honorarium: No, but donations are welcome

Travel costs: Yes

Travel limitations: Wherever needed

Advance notice: One month

Adriana Portillo-Bartow

Areas of Focus: Guatemala

Personal Profile: I have been a human rights activist for over 22 years and I have lived in the United States for the last 16 of them. In 1981 the Guatemalan security forces killed one of my brothers and disappeared six members of my family, including my father, my 18 month old sister and my 10 and 9 year old daughters. I consider disappearances to be the perfection of torture. For the last year and a half I have worked as the coordinator of "Where are the Children" Project, an US/Guatemala organization working to find out the truth about the whereabouts of the thousands of children who disappeared in Guatemala during the war. In such a capacity I travel to Guatemala three to four times per year. I am fluent in English and Spanish.

Honorarium: Yes, a minimum donation of \$500 to the ‘Where are the Children’ Project

Travel cost: Yes, I need all my travel expenses covered.

Travel limitations: I am willing to travel at the local, regional and national level

Advance notice: A minimum of one month in advance

Nestor M. Fantini

Areas of Focus: Argentina’s Dirty War and Amnesty International’s work.

Personal Profile: Nestor Fantini is an Argentine educator and journalist who resides in California. In the 1970’s, Fantini was arrested, tortured and held by the military over the course of four years.



Appendix: Speakers List

Those were the days of the infamous Argentinian Dirty War when about 30,000 men, women and children “disappeared.” Adopted as a Prisoner of Conscience by AI, Fantini was finally released on July 14, 1979. A key factor in Fantini’s release was the hard work of the members of an AI group from Austin, TX – particularly the work of Mary Evelyn Porter, who was responsible for Fantini’s case. Ms. Porter became so involved in his case that she ended up traveling to Argentina when Fantini was released. They both decided to move to Canada where Fantini was offered asylum by the Canadian Government; in Canada, they got married and had a child.

Since then, Fantini has been actively promoting the goals of AI and insisting that the work of his organization does make a difference to people who, in various regions of the world, are still oppressed by totalitarian regimes. Mr. Fantini speaks English, Spanish and Portuguese.

Honorarium: No

Travel costs: Transportation & accommodation must be covered

Travel limitations: Anywhere

Advance notice: Minimum advance of 3 working days



Appendix: Regional Office Staff Contacts

The Denounce Torture Regional Office staff contacts can answer questions you have about the Initiative, give you additional ideas for actions, help you think through and organize actions, and answer policy questions you might have. They are a tremendous resource, so be sure to let them know when you organize any event related to the Denounce Torture Initiative!

Northeast Regional Office – Boston, MA

Contact: Josh Rubenstein, Regional Direct

Phone: 617.623.0202 or toll free from inside the region 866.A.REGION

Email: jrubenst@aiusa.org

Northeast state include: CT, ME, MA, NH, NJ, NY, VT, RI

Midwest Regional Office – Chicago, IL

Contact: Adriana Portillo-Bartow, Deputy Regional Director

Phone: 312.427.2060 or toll free from inside the region 866.A.REGION

Email: apbartow@aiusa.org

Midwest states include: IN, IL, IA, KS, KY, MI, MN, MO, NE, ND, OH, SD, WI

Western Regional Offices – San Francisco and Los Angeles, CA

Contact: Sandra Perez, Field Organizer based in San Francisco

Phone: 415.291.9233, or toll free from inside the region 866.A.REGION

Email: sperez@aiusa.org

Western states include: AK, AZ, CA, CO, HI, ID, MT, NV, NM, OR, UT, WA, WY

Southern Regional Office – Atlanta, GA

Contacts: Laura Moye, Deputy Regional Director, and Amanda Plumb, Field Organizer

Phone: 404.87.5661 or toll free from inside the region 866.A.REGION

Email: lmoye@aiusa.org and aplumb@aiusa.org

Southern states include: AL, AK, FL, GA, LA, MS, NC, OK, SC, TN, TX

Mid-Atlantic Regional Office – Washington, DC

Contact: Lia Lindsey, Field Organizer

Phone: 202.544.0200 or toll free from inside the region 866.A.REGION

Email: llindsey@aiusa.org

Mid-Atlantic states include: PA, VA, WV, DE, MD, and DC

For additional contact info such as addresses and fax numbers, see:

<http://amnestyusa.org/contact>

Representative
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515



Dear Representative

I am deeply concerned by the ongoing reports of torture and ill-treatment of detainees in U.S. custody in Iraq, Afghanistan, Guantanamo, and elsewhere. Amnesty International and others have interviewed former detainees who reported being subjected to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment during interrogation and detention. Extensive evidence suggests that these are not isolated incidents. It is time to establish an independent commission to investigate these allegations.

In June 2003, President Bush stated “torture anywhere is an affront to human dignity everywhere” and affirmed that “the United States is committed to the world-wide elimination of torture and [is] leading this fight by example.” Torture and ill-treatment of detainees at the hands of agents of the U.S. government runs contrary to American values and to U.S. and international law. Although the U.S. government has conducted a series of high profile investigations into the subject of detainee treatment, none of the investigations have been entirely independent and comprehensive. Investigations have been internal, largely classified, and lacked the mandate or ability to investigate the highest levels of civilian and military leadership and to assign responsibility or demand accountability.

I urge Congress to establish a fully independent commission to conduct public investigations into the reports of abuse by agents of the U.S. Government in Iraq, Afghanistan, Guantanamo and elsewhere; to establish whether such acts violate relevant federal statutes and international law; to ensure that responsibility and accountability for these crimes is assessed up the military and civilian chain of command; and to recommend safeguards to prevent further torture and ill-treatment. It is crucial that there be a truly thorough and impartial investigation. For that reason, I urge you to support H.R. 3003 or similar legislation creating an independent commission. Thank you for your attention to this matter and I look forward to your response.

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*Please send duplicate copies of signed petitions to:
Denounce Torture Initiative, 600 Pennsylvania Ave. SE 5th Fl, Washington DC, 20003*

Senator
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510



Dear Senator

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