

NATIONAL RELIGIOUS CAMPAIGN AGAINST TORTURE

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UN Report Details Torture in Afghanistan

Coalition of people of faith say U.S. must act effectively to end Afghan torture

WASHINGTON, D.C. – According to a United Nations report released Monday, many detainees who were captured by NATO forces and transferred to Afghan custody have been subjected to torture by Afghan interrogators. In response, NATO has halted transfers of detainees to certain Afghan detention facilities and begun work on a plan to reform the Afghan detention system. Rev. Richard Killmer, Executive Director of the National Religious Campaign Against Torture, released the following statement today in response to these steps:

“As people of faith, we are deeply saddened to hear of torture occurring anywhere. It is of particular concern to us, however, when the victims of torture were captured by our own government, turned over to a government supported by us and then tortured. Such a situation raises troubling specters of past policies.

We are grateful that NATO and the U.S. have halted transfers to certain detention facilities, and we are hopeful that the U.S. can assist the Afghan government in putting in place standards and safeguards to ensure that torture never again occurs in Afghan prisons. The U.S. should not transfer detainees to Afghan custody – or the custody of any government engaged in acts of torture – unless our government can ensure they will not be tortured. Further, the U.S. should ensure that American taxpayer dollars are not distributed to Afghan security forces that use torture.

As people of faith, we know that people err – sometimes grievously. Our government committed immoral and illegal acts when it used torture, and the Afghan government has done so now. The U.S. has the opportunity to help our Afghan ally begin on a better path, and we must seize this opportunity. Should the U.S. not act effectively to end torture in Afghanistan - that is, should it continue to transfer detainees to places where torture is used or to fund security forces that torture - then it will also bear culpability for Afghanistan’s immoral and illegal behavior.”

The National Religious Campaign Against Torture (NRCAT) is a growing membership organization committed to ending U.S.-sponsored torture, and cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment. Since its formation in January 2006, more than 300 religious organizations have joined NRCAT, including representatives from the Catholic, evangelical Christian, mainline Protestant, Unitarian Universalist, Quaker, Orthodox Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, Baha’i, Buddhist, and Sikh communities. Members include national denominations and faith groups, regional organizations and local congregations.