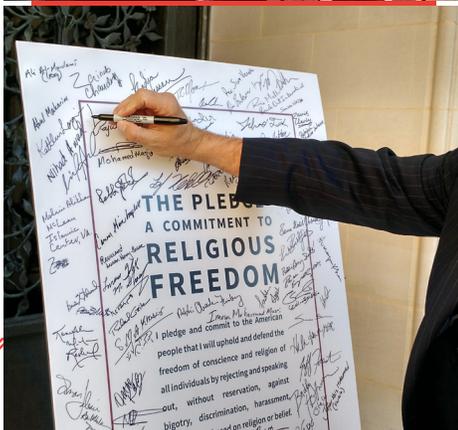


NRCAT *at* 10 YEARS

GROWING *the* MOVEMENT TO END TORTURE

2015 Annual Report



Dear Friends,

In 2015, the National Religious Campaign Against Torture saw significant gains in our shared work to end torture. Advances included the U.S. Senate's historic bi-partisan 78-21 vote in favor of legislation that puts a permanent end to CIA torture. This legislation later passed the House and was signed into law by President Obama as part of the National Defense Authorization Act. Advances also included landmark legislative and legal gains on the road to ending prolonged solitary confinement. The voices of faith advocacy made a difference. I'm extremely proud of NRCAT's network of interfaith leaders and partner organizations for these tangible policy wins and for increased media attention.

NRCAT continues to be one of the most respected national faith-based organizations working to end torture.

We know our work is not done. Guantanamo Bay remains open and continues to hold detainees without due process. On any given day, an estimated 100,000 people, disproportionately adults and youth of color, continue to endure the inhumane torture of solitary confinement cells. Anti-Muslim sentiment continues to foment individual and collective acts of hate, campaign rhetoric, and public policy proposals dangerous to our democracy.

Join us in 2016 as we mark the 10th Anniversary of NRCAT by Growing the Movement to End Torture!

With gratitude,

Rev. Ron Stief
Executive Director
National Religious Campaign Against Torture



Ending U.S.-Sponsored Torture

In 2015, NRCAT took an enormous step toward fulfilling its founding mission to end the torture of detainees when a Republican-led Congress passed, and President Obama signed, legislation that makes permanent the executive order banning torture.

The legislation, which was modeled after legislation NRCAT has advocated for since 2007, requires the CIA to follow the guidelines in the Army Field Manual (AFM) when conducting interrogations and mandates that the AFM be regularly updated to include only legal, effective techniques that do not involve the use or threat of force. It also allows the International Committee of the Red Cross access to all detainees.

Despite this victory, though, much remains to do. While President Obama has consistently opposed torture, his Department of Justice is fighting to prevent the full Torture Report from being made public and many executive branch agencies have not even opened their copies of the full Report. Also, the prison at Guantanamo remains open. Many of those held in Guantanamo were tortured by our government and most are held without charge or trial, often more than a decade after they were captured.

Changing Policy to Eliminate the Use of Solitary Confinement

From state to state nationwide, the moral call for human rights and an end to the torture of solitary confinement grew tremendously in 2015. In New York, the participation of the faith community in the statewide Campaign for Alternatives to Isolated Confinement (CAIC) continued to strengthen, adding new co-sponsors to the *Humane Alternatives to Long-term Solitary Confinement (HALT) Act*, model legislation to end prolonged isolation and promote therapeutic alternatives.

In California, a historic legal settlement in the *Ashker vs. Governor of California* case brought an end to indefinite solitary confinement and California's gang validation process, following a series of courageous hunger strikes led by incarcerated persons, and organizing led by families of the incarcerated. As legislation to confront solitary for youth and adults advanced in a number of states and public pressure mounted for national leadership on solitary, President Obama made history during a speech before the NAACP National Convention, fundamentally questioning the use of solitary and directing the Department of Justice to conduct a nationwide review of the practice.

2014-2015

Highlights

Pushed for public release of the Senate Torture Report and advocated for the McCain-Feinstein amendment banning torture, which was signed into law as part of the FY 2016 National Defense Authorization Act; significantly expanded grassroots support and partnerships for alternatives to solitary confinement through release of documentary film and cell replica tour.

2012-2013

Multi-year campaign, including op-eds in 50 states, calling for adoption and release of the Senate Intelligence Committee report on CIA interrogations and torture; organized nationwide fast and press conference prior to first Congressional hearing on solitary confinement.

2010-2011

NRCAT work expanded to include ending the practice of solitary confinement in U.S. prisons; launched Shoulder-to-Shoulder and held a press conference at the National Press Club in response to threats to burn the Koran and a wave of mosque burnings.



Addressing Anti-Muslim Bigotry

With partner Shoulder to Shoulder, NRCAT facilitated the *Beyond Tolerance: A Call to Religious Freedom and Hopeful Action* service. Worshipping side-by-side in the pews of the Washington National Cathedral, interfaith leaders bore a powerful public witness against anti-Muslim sentiment. Immediately following the service on the steps of the Cathedral, interfaith leaders demonstrated their commitment to religious freedom and solidarity by signing *The Pledge: A Commitment to Religious Freedom*.

NRCAT provided resources for faith communities to respond to hate-fueled anti-Muslim bigotry, such as the murder of three Muslim students in Chapel Hill, NC. In late 2015, some in Congress took advantage of fears of terrorism to target refugees from Iraq and Syria. Bigotry against Muslims led these Members of Congress to attempt to pass legislation that would have effectively prevented these victims of ISIS and Assad from coming to our country, even though refugees already undergo a more than yearlong screening process. NRCAT successfully opposed this attempt to demonize refugees, and, while legislation did pass the House, it did not become law.

2008-2009

Campaign to Ban Torture, including Banners Across America! Project; the President signed an executive order halting the use of torture.

2006-2007

In response to the release of photos from Abu Ghraib, NRCAT launched at January conference organized by Dr. George Hunsinger of Princeton Seminary and proclaims, "Torture is a moral issue."

Education and Outreach

In 2015, NRCAT released three highly impactful education and outreach tools – two documentary films and a life-sized solitary confinement replica cell.

- ***Breaking Down the Box*** is a 40-minute documentary film examining the mental health, racial justice and human rights implications of the systemic use of solitary confinement in U.S. prisons. With more than 1,000 requests for the film from communities of faith fulfilled by NRCAT in 2015, screenings in houses of worship from coast to coast served as a moral call to action for restorative alternatives to isolated confinement that prioritize rehabilitation, therapeutic interventions, and recovery. The film is available at: www.nrcat.org/breakingdownthebox
- ***Out of the Shadows: Casting Light on CIA Torture***, a nine minute film, documents the story of how people of faith from across the country mobilized to convince political leaders – both Republican and Democrat – to pass legislation ensuring that the CIA never uses torture again. *Out of the Shadows* not only portrays a vivid and disturbing picture of CIA torture, but also presents a compelling story about the pathway out of this horrific chapter in U.S. history and a clarion call to close the Guantanamo Bay detention center. The film is available at: www.nrcat.org/shadows
- ***Life-sized solitary confinement replica***. NRCAT built and installed the replica at major religious conferences and college campuses nationwide. Installations included Ecumenical Advocacy Days, the national convention of the Islamic Circle of North America for 10,000 Muslim participants, and the National Catholic Youth Conference in Indianapolis for more than 20,000 Catholic youth. To book this powerful experiential educational tool, contact sgale@nrcat.org.

Gratitude

NRCAT wishes to thank all those in our network whose tireless advocacy and financial gifts throughout the year make our work possible. In particular, NRCAT wishes to recognize the following for extraordinary giving in 2015:

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An Anonymous Foundation
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The Herb Block Foundation
Jacob & Valeria Langeloth Foundation
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Religious Organizations

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Clerics of St. Viator
East Liberty Presbyterian Church, Pittsburgh, PA
First Congregational United Church of Christ, Madison, WI
Foundry United Methodist Church, Washington, DC
Friends Committee on National Legislation
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
General Board of Church and Society, The United Methodist Church
General Board of Global Ministries, The United Methodist Church
Islamic Circle of North America
River Road Unitarian Church, Bethesda, MD
Shalom United Church of Christ, New Haven, CT
Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations
United Church of Christ
United Methodist Women

Individuals and Companies

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William N. Butler
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Dr. and Mrs. Inayat Malik
Rev. Allie Perry
Rev. Wilma Reichard and Gordon Howie
Ford Rowan
Sterling Charitable Gift Fund Trust (M. Yaqub Mirza)

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