

# Torture Awareness Month – June 2013 Toolkit

June is Torture Awareness Month – a time to recommit as people of faith to end torture in our backyards and around the world. This year, our theme is “Healing a Culture of Torture,” encompassing the need to reflect, pray, and act in light of the deep physical and spiritual harm caused by torture. The International Day in Support of Victims of Torture was named by the United Nations in June 26, 1997 to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the date that the Convention Against Torture came into force. Torture Awareness Month honors that day and extends the campaign throughout the month of June.

The National Religious Campaign Against Torture invites you and your congregation to commemorate Torture Awareness Month by displaying one of our posters, using a bulletin insert, a prayer, or in another way marking the month with a local event, such as a public event or an educational forum.

If you have questions or would like more information, please contact:

Paz Artaza-Regan, our Director of Program & Outreach at [partaza-regan@nrcat.org](mailto:partaza-regan@nrcat.org), or  
Laura Markle Downton, our Director of U.S. Prisons Policy & Program at [ldownton@nrcat.org](mailto:ldownton@nrcat.org)

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**Posters** are available in two sizes:

- 8.5” by 11”: See page 6 below or download at [www.nrcat.org/tam2013-poster](http://www.nrcat.org/tam2013-poster)
- Legal sized paper (8.5” by 14”): Download at [www.nrcat.org/tam2013-poster-legal-sized](http://www.nrcat.org/tam2013-poster-legal-sized)

Two **bulletin inserts** are available:

- One on the report from the Task Force on Detainee Treatment and calling for public release of the Senate Intelligence Committee report on CIA torture:  
See page 2 or download at [www.nrcat.org/tam2013-bulletin-report](http://www.nrcat.org/tam2013-bulletin-report)
- One on solitary confinement in U.S. prisons, jails and detention centers:  
See page 4 or download at [www.nrcat.org/tam2013-bulletin-solitary](http://www.nrcat.org/tam2013-bulletin-solitary)

You are welcome to customize the bulletin inserts.

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For more ideas to engage your congregation, your campus, or your community, go to:  
[www.nrcat.org/June2013](http://www.nrcat.org/June2013)

There you can find links to our “End Prolonged Solitary Confinement Now” and “A Call for the Facts” petitions and education and advocacy resources on U.S.-sponsored torture.

Also, we will have suggested tweets and Facebook posts for use during June at  
[www.nrcat.org/tam2013-socialmedia](http://www.nrcat.org/tam2013-socialmedia)



### A PRAYER FOR TORTURE AWARENESS MONTH

God whom we call by many names and know in many ways,  
we confess that too often your children violate one another,  
inflicting hurt and harm on each other.

We pray for our brothers and sisters who endure torture.  
May they experience your healing presence and care,  
binding the wounds they endure.

We pray for our brothers and sisters who inflict torture.  
May they experience your healing presence and care,  
binding the wounds they receive as they wound others.

We pray for our brothers and sisters who authorize torture.  
May they experience your healing presence and care,  
breaking the hold of fear and anger upon them.

We pray for ourselves acknowledging our responsibility for acts  
of torture.

May we experience your healing presence and care:  
leading us to learn the realities of torture,  
leading us to pray and study,  
leading us to come together for dialogue,  
leading us to speak for the end of torture in our country and  
around your world.

Amen.

*Our thanks to Mark Koenig, Director, Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations, for this prayer.*

The National Religious Campaign Against Torture mobilizes people of faith to end torture in U.S. policy, practice and culture. We are a coalition of over 300 diverse religious organizations from national entities to local congregations across the country.



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## GETTING IT RIGHT

On April 16th the bipartisan Task Force on Detainee Treatment of The Constitution Project released its report on the detention and treatment of detainees following 9/11.

The Task Force, in a thorough and detailed examination of U.S.-sponsored torture, unanimously found that the U.S. engaged in torture and in so doing violated our Constitution, own laws and treaties. They called the torture program “unprecedented” and said it requires a national response to acknowledge, condemn, repair, and prevent the future use of torture.

The Task Force found that keeping our torture practices secret conceals the evidence of our nation’s wrongdoing and makes its repetition more likely. The panel called on President Obama to declassify information on torture and on the Senate Intelligence Committee to make public its 6,000 page bipartisan report, adopted in December after a three-year investigation. “The high level of secrecy [about torture],” the Task Force said, “cannot continue to be justified on the basis of national security.”

Join the National Religious Campaign Against Torture (NRCAT) in urging the Senate Intelligence Committee to release all the information on the U.S. torture program. Our job as a nation is to account for the acts of torture, make amends for those acts, and put in place safeguards that will ensure that torture will never happen again. Full disclosure is needed to get this right and to heal the spiritual wound created by our nation’s use of torture.

**To learn more and call for public release of information on the U.S. torture program, go to:**  
[www.nrcat.org/ReleaseTheReport](http://www.nrcat.org/ReleaseTheReport)

“WE AS A NATION HAVE TO GET THIS RIGHT”  
- Former Rep. Asa Hutchinson, Co-Chair of the  
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## A PRAYER FOR TORTURE AWARENESS MONTH

Giver of community, who weaves together our human family,  
Intending us for fellowship with one another,  
We pray for our sisters and brothers imprisoned in isolation for  
months and years,  
Denied all opportunity for connection and reconciliation.  
In place of vengeance, we pray for the courage to create  
opportunities for healing.

Giver of life, who charges us with the care of the children in our  
midst,  
Intending for them a future of possibility and potential,  
We pray for the young people in our community who are locked  
away,  
Denied access to nurturance, education and guidance.  
In place of neglect, we pray for the wisdom to create opportunities for  
growth.

Giver of day and night, of daily cycles of wake and rest,  
Intending for us balance and fulfillment,  
We pray for all held in windowless cells, with lights left on night and  
day.  
In place of fear, we pray for the strength to create opportunities for  
restoration.

Giver of dignity and sacred worth in each life,  
Intending for us experiences marked by respect and safety,  
We pray for all who endure violation in mind, body and spirit,  
In place of violation, we pray for the boldness to create communities  
of wholeness.

*By Laura Markle Downton, NRCAT*

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National Religious Campaign  
Against Torture

[www.nrcat.org](http://www.nrcat.org)

## HEALING A CULTURE OF TORTURE

With just five percent of the world's population, the U.S. accounts for 25 percent of the world's incarcerated and the vast majority of all prisoners held in long-term solitary confinement. According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, over 80,000 people in the U.S. criminal justice system are held in some form of isolation. The severe psychological effects of solitary confinement include hallucinations, paranoia, and increased rates of self-mutilation and suicide.

Solitary confinement involves isolating a prisoner in a small cell, usually 6'x 9', for 22-24 hours per day for months, years and even decades. Individuals held in solitary confinement in U.S. prisons include young people under the age of 18, individuals with mental illness, and migrants held in immigration detention. People of color are disproportionately impacted by solitary confinement. State data reveals that African Americans in New York account for roughly 14% of the state population yet make up 59% of the population in solitary confinement units and nearly 50% of the overall prison population in the state.

Prolonged solitary confinement is a form of torture taking place every day in U.S. prisons, jails and detention centers. People of faith have a critical role to play in healing a culture of torture. Act now by calling for an end to torture in U.S. prisons.

Go to [www.nrcat.org/stopsolitary](http://www.nrcat.org/stopsolitary) to sign NRCAT's statement against solitary confinement. When we reach 500 signatures from your state, we will send the statement to your governor and top corrections official, along with every member of your state's legislature.

**To learn more and sign NRCAT's statement against solitary confinement, go to:**

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# Healing a Culture of

ATTACK DOGS  
SUPERMAX PRISONS  
**RENDITION**  
STRESS POSITIONS  
RAPE  
INDUCED HYPOTHERMIA  
ABU GHRAIB  
**THE BOX**

**WATERBOARDING**

SHU  
EXCESSIVE NOISE  
SHACKLING  
ISOLATION  
DEPRIVATION  
SLEEP DEPRIVATION  
BEATINGS  
ASSAULTING  
**SOLITARY CONFINEMENT**  
PANIC  
MOCK EXECUTIONS  
SENSORY DEPRIVATION  
SLAMMING  
BRUTALITY

**TORTURE**

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**JUNE IS TORTURE AWARENESS MONTH**

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National Religious Campaign  
Against Torture

**LEARN. PRAY. ACT.**

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