

ILYM-PRC recommends to the Yearly Meeting, to Monthly Meetings, to Peace and Social Concerns Committees, and to individuals.

1. Study the information available about torture. An overview is provided below.
2. Promote understanding that helps to remove the causes of torture.
3. Participate in efforts to aid victims of torture. These may be nearer than you think.
4. Many Quaker Meetings have minuted endorsement of the Call for a Commission of Inquiry: http://www.nrcat.org/index.php?option=com_wrapper&Itemid=197. Please consider doing this. Text below

There is a well organized national interfaith movement aimed at reform, accountability, and the Golden Rule [We will not use any techniques which we would consider unlawful if applied to us.

- National Religious Campaign Against Torture <http://www.nrcat.org/>
- Teaching videos:

http://www.nrcat.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=246&Itemid=181

The first one listed is a 20-minute introduction aimed particularly at faith groups who have not yet taken up the cause. Please view it, then look for ways to make use of it to spread the word. (Note: online streaming was not successful, so I downloaded the file to my computer. That produced EXCELLENT viewing.)

Some of us participated in the two conferences of the Quaker Initiative to End Torture, QUIT, whose renewed vigor is shown in the email below. www.quit-torture-now.org

There are related groups working to counter the damaging effects of torture:

- Torture Abolition and Survivors Support Coalition International - <http://www.tassc.org/>
- The Center for Victims of Torture - <http://cvt.org/>

In practice, these groups are providing great support for domestic torture victims:

- Campaign to End the Death Penalty - <http://nodeathpenalty.org/content/index.php>
- Illinois Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty - <http://www.icadp.org/>
- Missourians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty - <http://www.madpmo.org/>
- Recall also the 2009 ILYM Minute in support of reform at Tamms supermax prison -

www.YearTen.org

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The Quaker Initiative to End Torture QUIT - December 2009

Dear Friends,

QUIT began when 6 Friends in May of 2005, after seeing the horrors of the Abu Ghraib torture photos, called for an end to American torture. With a minute from South Central Yearly Meeting and a gift from Friends World Committee for Consultation, we organized the first QUIT conference in June 2006. This led to our website www.quit-torture-now.org and listserv and

the collection of 31 minutes from yearly meetings across North America and the spectrum of Quakers. Two more conferences in the US and Canada followed in 2007.

QUIT has been very busy creating an organization and continuing to educate Friends. We've filed for 501 c3 status, revised and updated our website including a blog, and continued to teach QUIT Updates from coast to coast. A new study booklet is available – *Patience & Determination: Tools for Ending Torture & Seeking Accountability* is available <http://quakerhouse.org/patience-01.htm>. And we are currently planning our next conference for September 24-26, 2010 at Quaker Center in Ben Lomond, Ca.

Two aspects of the work in particular call for further education and action. There is a misunderstanding that American torture was a problem created and ending with the last administration. In truth, the United States has a 60 year modern history of torture in policy, practice, and experimentation. There is a further misunderstanding that the current administration has ended all American torture. Actually, beatings and forced feedings continue in Guantanamo against US and international law. The Red Cross has not been allowed into Baghram prison in Afghanistan, which is older and larger than Guantanamo. And the same Bush appointed lawyers, arguing against the release of information and fair process for prisoners in both prisons, are still in the “new” justice department making the same arguments in court today. The Obama executive order to end all policy and practice of torture has not made it into the dungeons or the courts.

QUIT needs your support to continue this important work. We are a young and spare organization with a leading to end the worst humans do to one another. This is excellent work for Friends as it needs much Light and is a long term work that will take more than one generation of Friends to accomplish. It is the Second Abolition and you can help from the beginning of a new historic Quaker work.

Please support our work generously with a tax-deductible gift for QUIT. Checks made out to The Washington Peace Center with *QUIT Treasurer* noted in the memo line and sent to Scilla Wahrhaftig, 7514 Kensington Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15221. Any questions can go to Scilla at (412) 371 3607 swahrhaftig@afsc.org . Thank you for your help.

In the Light,
John Calvi, Scilla Wahrhaftig, and Chuck Fager.
www.quit-torture-now.org

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TEXT OF THE CALL FOR A COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

The United States must never again engage in torture. Torture is immoral, illegal and counterproductive. It causes profound and lasting harm, especially to its victims but also to its perpetrators. It contradicts our nation’s deepest values and corrupts the moral fabric of our society.

We call for an impartial, nonpartisan, and independent Commission of Inquiry. Its purpose should be to gather all the facts and make recommendations. It should ascertain the extent to

which our interrogation practices have constituted torture and "cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment". Understanding the causes, nature and scope of U.S.-sponsored torture is essential for preventing it in the future and eliminating it from our system without loopholes. U.S. law will determine the extent of any criminal culpability.

As people of faith, we know that brokenness can be healed – both in individual lives and in the life of the nation. All religions believe that redemption is possible. Learning the truth can set us on a path toward national healing and renewal.

The United States must never again allow itself to be driven by blinding fears and bitter resentments in responding to national tragedy. The use of torture only serves to undermine our security in a dangerous world.

Nothing less than the soul of our nation is at stake in confronting U.S.-sponsored torture and completely renouncing its use. Let the U.S. reaffirm its values by establishing a Commission of Inquiry.