

# REDRESS

Seeking Reparation for Torture Survivors



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*"One thing that really hurt was being blindfolded and just catching sight of 'Made in England' on the handcuffs. Boy did that hurt."*

*(Les Walker)*

**Torture (Damages) Bill**  
Justice for torture survivors in the UK



**Les Walker  
(British, tortured in Saudi Arabia)**

*"I do not want anybody to have to undergo the treatment we were made to endure by our torturers for any reason whatsoever, including so called homeland protection."*

*"It really upset me when the British Government even used their own office of Constitutional Affairs to fight against us in the House of Lords."*

**Les' Story**

"I had lived in Saudi Arabia for 25 years before I was taken on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2001. I was systematically tortured over ten weeks.

**When I was in solitary confinement and being interrogated intensely I would imagine going on long walks with my dog.**

It would upset the interrogators because I would be mentally somewhere else. They thought I was totally crazy, which I was, through being locked up for a long time on my own with no mental stimulus.

**One thing that really hurt was being blindfolded and just catching sight of 'Made in England' on the handcuffs. Boy did that hurt.**

I want to try and get that time out of my mind but I can't. I struggle through flash backs. Nights can be terrible and sometimes I wake up screaming."



**Torture Survivor**

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## **Torture Survivors in the UK Currently Have No Access to Justice**

*A public acknowledgement of the wrong committed. Compensation for the physical and psychological consequences of torture.* These are not only the rights of survivors, but an essential part of their healing process.

Yet, survivors in the UK such as Les, have been denied the opportunity to seek redress against the regimes responsible for their torture.

Under the State Immunity Act 1978, as a general rule, foreign States are immune from the jurisdiction of the UK courts. This means that torture survivors in the UK are unable to seek justice in UK courts for the torture they endured overseas.

## **Opportunity for Justice: Torture (Damages) Bill**

The Torture (Damages) Bill, a Private Members' Bill, proposes an exception to the State Immunity Act. It will allow torture survivors to seek justice through the courts in England and Wales, where they have been denied this right in the State in which they were tortured.

The State Immunity Act already has exceptions. For example, it allows foreign States to be sued for breach of business contracts. **Yet, there is no exception to allow survivors to seek justice for torture; a fundamental human right. REDRESS believes this inconsistency is wrong.**

After continual campaigning by REDRESS and its supporters, the Torture (Damages) Bill was given its first reading in the House of Lords on 5<sup>th</sup> February 2008 and is soon to have its second reading.

***This is a unique and timely opportunity to bring the importance of enforcing the absolute prohibition of torture to the attention of the UK Government. Survivors must obtain justice and perpetrators must be brought to account, wherever in the world torture takes place.***

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## **TAKE ACTION**

### **Support the Torture (Damages) Bill**

Join REDRESS in campaigning for the Bill to be enacted.  
Your support can make the difference.

- Write to your MP asking them to support the Bill.  
Go to [www.redress.org/torture\\_bill.html](http://www.redress.org/torture_bill.html) to join our e-campaign
- Support REDRESS with a donation
- For further information on the Bill and ways you can help:

Visit REDRESS' website

**[www.redress.org/torture\\_bill.html](http://www.redress.org/torture_bill.html)**

email **[campaigns@redress.org](mailto:campaigns@redress.org)** or call **020 7793 1777**

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