

Torture can happen to anyone

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“When you’ve been tortured you feel very isolated because some people will think, well, for that to have happened you must have done something very wrong.”

Keith Carmichael is REDRESS’ founder, tortured in Saudi Arabia



Kuljinder Kaur, tortured in Pakistan

20
YEARS

REDRESS
Ending Torture, Seeking Justice for Survivors

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Victims of torture & ill-treatment

REDRESS' clients who have suffered torture and ill-treatment include:

- Political activists, for example, from Bahrain, Chile, Cameroon
- Civilians targeted in armed conflict, including women or child soldiers
- Human rights defenders, for example, from Uzbekistan, Zimbabwe, Libya
- Persons persecuted for their sexual orientation, for example, in Greece, Uganda, Iran
- UK nationals abroad, mistreated in or out of detention
- Family members of political activists or human rights defenders
- Suspects or those accused of crimes tortured to 'confess' to help 'solve' crimes
- Socially excluded individuals including minority groups, sex workers or migrants.

Challenging impunity

REDRESS challenges key obstacles that perpetuate impunity. These include: state officials' immunity, the lack of independence of prosecutors or judges, corruption, inaccessible justice, unacceptable delays, inadequate laws and procedures, as well as discriminatory practices.

Justice

There is an absolute prohibition on torture and other ill-treatment. States have an obligation to prevent and refrain from committing, being complicit in or condoning torture and cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment or punishment. However, in many States, public officials commonly abuse their positions and commit serious crimes, such as torture. This can be an immensely traumatising and disorientating experience. Being able to lodge a complaint, seek assistance, or seek and obtain justice and reparation can be empowering for survivors. All victims of torture should have an opportunity to register a complaint and have that complaint investigated promptly, impartially and effectively. Survivors of torture must also have access to reparation and the perpetrators must be brought to justice and held accountable.

Reparation

Reparation can include a range of measures to repair injustice or its consequences :

- Physical rehabilitation, including medical or dental treatment;
- Psychological rehabilitation: most survivors struggle to rebuild their personal relationships and lives following the dehumanising brutality of torture;
- Procedural justice: opening investigations, restoring legal rights (employment, nationality), adopting new laws or procedures;
- Recognition by a court of law, the general public or those responsible;
- Public apologies, memorials, re-burials or other measures.



Les Walker *British, tortured in Saudi Arabia*

“I do not want anybody to have to undergo what we were made to endure by our torturers for any reason whatsoever, including so called ‘homeland protection’. I had lived in Saudi Arabia for 25 years before I was taken on 24th February 2001. I was systematically tortured over ten weeks. During the initial period 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. 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.”

Kawther Hamed *Sudanese Lawyer*

“I used to work as a lawyer in my country and I practiced for nine years. I have a young daughter. I have had a very bad experience both because I am politically active and because I am a woman. I was arrested several times and my house was often searched. This affected my daughter’s mental health and mine too. The security men would turn up at 2am and my daughter would not see me again for a day, at a time that I was still breastfeeding. I was tortured. [Amongst others] I was slapped and insulted and given 40 lashes in public. I still get very depressed and have lower back pain.

My husband is still there, he is an activist and has been tortured. I want to fight for my country—its my home, my family, my work, my everything. But I came alone [to the UK] because of my daughter.”



Necati Zontul *Turkish, tortured in Greece*

Necati was raped with a truncheon by a Greek coastguard official in a homophobic attack in May 2001. In April 2008, REDRESS brought Necati’s case to the European Court of Human Rights. On 17 January 2012, the Court found that Greek coastguard officials tortured Necati and ordered Greece to pay €50,000 in compensation. Necati told us that he felt terrible after the events of 2001 but he began to feel stronger as his case progressed and after the hearing because his true story was finally being told.

Mutabar Tadjibayeva *Uzbek Human Rights Defender*

In 2005, Mutabar, a nobel prize nominee, was arrested by masked and armed security forces in her home. She was charged with 18 counts of criminal activity and sentenced to eight years in prison following a flawed trial. She spent two years and eight months in prison, where she suffered severe torture and ill-treatment, including being beaten and hung from a hook. She was also forced to undergo an operation to remove her uterus. Up to this day, she has not been able to see her full medical records or know the reason for her operation. She was freed in June 2008, after intensive efforts by diplomats and human rights organisations. On 12 December 2012, REDRESS and FIDH and filed a complaint against Uzbekistan before the UN Human Rights Committee . The Committee’s views are pending.



Torture aims to dehumanise

REDRESS works to combat torture by seeking justice and reparation for torture survivors from all over the world. This is a survivor's right and a vital step in their recovery process. We also work to ensure that torturers are punished and that governments uphold the absolute prohibition on torture.

REDRESS is a human rights organisation based in London with partners around the world. We have been working to tackle torture for more than 20 years. Our caseload currently covers torture and related crimes in more than 40 states around the world, with over 120 active cases relating to more than 800 survivors before national and international courts.

REDRESS provides:

- **ADVICE:** to survivors of all nationalities, from all states, about the options they may have for seeking justice. Practical advice is also provided on referrals to other service providers (doctors, psychologists, lawyers) who may be able to help on a range of other issues such as employment, housing or social security.
- **LITIGATION:** taking survivors' cases to national and international courts, promoting criminal prosecutions of perpetrators and pursuing other remedies aimed at acknowledging that what was done is wrong and should never happen again.
- **ADVOCACY:** with governments, parliaments, regional and international organisations on the need to respect the absolute prohibition of torture.
- **TRAINING:** of lawyers, human rights and survivors groups, communities and those working with vulnerable people.

Who do we help?

If you or someone you know (perhaps a client or a family member) have been tortured, and you/they need help with issues relating to the torture, we may be able to help. You/they might be a British national, a UK resident, or an asylum seeker. We also help survivors living abroad. REDRESS' services are free of charge. We cannot take up every case, but we will try to offer advice if we can.



REDRESS is grateful to the UN Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture, the Trust for London, Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, and the European Union for supporting its casework.

