

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

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**MESSAGE ON THE INTERNATIONAL DAY
IN SUPPORT OF VICTIMS OF TORTURE
26 June 2009**

Despite an impressive legal and institutional framework to prevent it, torture is still widely tolerated or even practiced by Governments, and impunity persists for the perpetrators. The International Day in Support of Victims of Torture is an occasion to reaffirm the right of all men and women to live free of the fear of torture. There is no justification for torture or any form of cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment in any society, at any time, under any circumstance.

I urge all United Nations Member States that have not yet done so to ratify and implement in good faith the Convention against Torture and the provisions of its Optional Protocol. I also appeal for all Members States to invite the Special Rapporteur on Torture to visit places where persons are deprived of liberty in their country and to extend their cooperation to allow full and unhindered access.

This Day is also an opportunity to express solidarity with torture victims and their families, and to reiterate the need for all Governments to commit to full redress and rehabilitation for all victims of such abuses. The United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture supports organizations that assist victims of torture and their families. I thank all donors to the Fund and encourage them to continue to support its important work.

On this International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, let us reaffirm the inalienable rights and dignity of all men and women. Let us step up the fight against torture and cruel, degrading and inhuman treatment and punishment, wherever they occur.