

Q-CAT

QUAKER CONCERN FOR THE ABOLITION OF TORTURE

SEPTEMBER 2016

NEWSLETTER No.25

Charity No 1093757

Our vision is to end torture and complicity in torture, upholding our testimony to peace and equality and working towards healing through reconciliation.

In the News

Unsurprisingly, though sadly, there are as ever ongoing stories in the press and on websites about past and present instances of torture.

- On 9th and 10th June the Guardian reported that the Crown Prosecution Service will not bring criminal charges against a MI6 officer for his part in the rendition and torture of Libyan dissidents, Abdel Hakim Belhaj and Sami al-Saadi, having decided there was insufficient admissible evidence. The victims and their lawyers have protested that the evidence against MI6 is overwhelming and that failure to bring charges is a damning indictment of British standards of justice.
- Another Guardian report, of 10th August related to the plea for freedom of Zayn al-Abidin Muhammed Husayn, held for 14 years in Guantanamo and whom the CIA has admitted to waterboarding in a Thai prison. His vast knowledge of CIA torture methods may make his ultimate release doubtful.
- Denial of medical treatment to prisoners in Tehran's Evin prison and some Iranian hospitals was highlighted in a letter from Amnesty International to the Guardian website dated 17th July. This is used as a means to pressure them into "confessing" to crimes or providing statements of "repentance". Just another aspect of torture?
- Torture in Turkey under Erdogan particularly since the attempted coup against him, and in Syria under Assad has frequently been mentioned e.g. on the Independent website on 22nd July and 17th August respectively.
- The Atlas of Torture website www.atlas-of-torture.org news headlines include two positive items: The UN torture prevention body is being allowed back into Ukraine after earlier being denied access to detention facilities; and a report of a study showing Torture Prevention Works. It also talks of the latest interim report of Juan Mendez, UN Special Rapporteur on Torture, to the UN General Assembly. He calls upon States to develop a universal protocol that promotes ethical, non-coercive and evidence-based interviewing practices, and aims at ensuring that no person is subject to torture, ill-treatment or coercion by setting minimum standards applicable to interviews conducted by all agents of all States. We highlighted his suggestions for 10 procedures in Newsletter No23, March 2016 in the article "Backsliding on the torture ban".

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Q-CAT Activities

Feeding the Darkness

Did you see the very interesting article with this title in *the Friend* of 29th July? The subtitle reads: Lynn and Dave Morris of Journeyment Theatre give an account of the creative and spiritual journey behind their recent production, 'Feeding the Darkness', commissioned by the Quaker Concern for the Abolition of Torture (Q-CAT). This will be uploaded to the website in due course along with other material about torture which has been published in *the Friend* from time to time. Bookings for the production are going well. We are advertising in *the Friend* in September and October as follows:

Feeding the Darkness
Shining a Light on State-Sanctioned Torture Through Story, Poem and Song

We invite your Meeting or group to host a performance of this powerful 65-minute play.

Premiered at Britain Yearly Meeting 2016, it portrays and explores the impact of state-Sanctioned torture on victims, their families, colluding bodies and perpetrators.

The play can be followed by a discussion with the actors. Suitable for ages 18+

For details and booking;
www.journeymenttheatre.com
lynnmorris32@yahoo.co.uk

"An hour it will be hard to forget"

Quakers and Torture: 10 Questions to get us thinking

Q-CAT Trustees can offer this workshop to your meeting and would be happy to hear from any meeting which would be interested. It starts with 10 Questions posted around the room, for people to look at and consider, about torture, about UK Government involvement and about Quaker attitudes and action. This is followed by what is usually a lively discussion. It lasts about 60 to 90 minutes, to suit the meeting. Contact Jane Laxton if you wish to know more and/or make a booking (contact details overleaf).

Website www.q-cat.org.uk

At last this is nearly ready and should "go live" in a couple of weeks. We hope you approve and will find it useful. We would be happy to receive any comments: to Juliet Morton on behalf of Trustees (contact details overleaf).

The next **Briefing** is due out in Mid-October and the next **Newsletter** at the beginning of December.

Trustees' Meeting

Trustees met on 5th September to consider a full agenda. The main item was a draft of a new constitution. This might sound rather dull but it is giving rise to useful discussion of Q-CAT's relationship with Britain Yearly Meeting, Meeting for Sufferings and Supporting Area Meetings. We also discussed some new ideas for the way ahead. Watch this space...

To receive newsletters by email contact Jane Laxton from.qcat@hotmail.com and include your Local and Area Quaker Meetings if appropriate.

To receive newsletters by post please send your name and address to Jane Laxton, 79 Wellington Rd., New Brighton, Wirral CH45 2NE