

Q-CAT

QUAKER CONCERN FOR THE ABOLITION OF TORTURE

SEPTEMBER 2018

NEWSLETTER No.33

Charity No 1093757

The Religious Society of Friends declares itself to be utterly opposed to the use of torture and determined to spare no effort to bring it to an end...
Hamilton Declaration 1976

Q-CAT Conference

This is fast approaching. **If you haven't booked yet please do soon.** It will be a good opportunity for us to get to know each other as a group of people with a common aim, as well as listening to interesting, experienced speakers and working out with them how we can take further action.

Quaker Concern for the Abolition of Torture Q-CAT Quaker Concern for the Abolition of Torture

Q-CAT Conference

at Friends House, opposite
Euston Station, London

**Saturday 3rd November
2018**

10.30 to 4.30
(coffee etc from 10.00)

Cost £10 (students £5)

To include refreshments and a light
lunch. Pay on arrival.

Places limited so book now at
from.qcat@hotmail.com or
Q-CAT 79 Wellington Road,
New Brighton, CH45 2NE

PREVENTING TORTURE – EFFECTIVE ACTION

Sessions will include:

Does torture prevention work?

Richard Carver, Oxford Brookes University

Successful police interviewing without the use of
torture

Laurence Alison, University of Liverpool

Can training troops in international law help to prevent
torture in armed conflict?

Elizabeth Stubbins Bates, Oxford University

A speaker from the National Preventive Mechanism:
an independent body set up by the government to
inspect places of detention through its members

What do we do next?

Chair: Barbara Forbes of Q-CAT and QARN (Quaker Asylum and
Refugee Network)

listen...learn...talk...plan...act

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From newspapers and websites

The Intelligence and Security Committee's report Detainee Mistreatment and Rendition 2001 – 2010, which we highlighted in Briefing No 58 *Britain Complicit in Torture* expressed the frustration that the Committee was hampered by restrictions placed by the Prime Minister on who they might take evidence from, and said "This Report is not, and must not be taken to be, a definitive account." Since then there have been calls from individuals and groups for an independent judge-led inquiry into the UK's role in rendition and torture.

Andrew Mitchell, MP former International Development Secretary, writing on the Conservative website www.conservativehome.com, says he has joined with other parliamentary colleagues to ask the Prime Minister to launch an inquiry. In his article he talks particularly about the UK's relationship with the US over security matters, about which he concludes that we must be vigilant in monitoring US practices in such areas and refuse to be involved in operations where there is a risk of torture or arbitrary detention. He adds that we must also fully confront our past involvement in torture and rendition and be clear about what happened so that lessons for the future are publicly acknowledged.

Reprieve, www.reprieve.org.uk takes a similar line. It has united with Amnesty International, Redress and Freedom from Torture to call for a judge-led inquiry. They say "The Report doesn't tell the whole story because the Prime Minister blocked access to key witnesses and stopped investigators asking about what happened on the ground... We can't stop future abuses without learning from our mistakes. Only an independent inquiry can get to the truth about torture."

The Guardian's legal affairs correspondent Owen Bowcott 6/9/18 www.theguardian.com/law/torture focuses on impunity granted to officers. He quotes the ISC Report "We have found that, when SIS [MI6] or GCHQ refer a consolidated guidance case [about detainees abroad] to ministers, they routinely seek, in parallel, an authorisation under Section 7 of the Intelligence Services Act 1994, which can provide protection for their officers from domestic, civil and criminal liability."

Editor's note: If you have not already done so please add your voice by asking your MP to press for an independent judge-led inquiry into the UK's role in rendition and torture.

Reports by Ben Emmerson QC, UN Rapporteur on countering terrorism, on his inspections of facilities and government actions in Sri Lanka and Saudi Arabia, quoted on the Guardian website on 23/7/18 and 6/6/18 respectively, showed continuing abuses, in each case denied by the authorities. On Sri Lanka he said that "impunity is still the rule for those responsible for the routine and systematic use of torture, and countless individuals are the victims of gross miscarriage of justice".

A letter to Sajid Javid, Home Secretary, signed by 30 of the main refugee groups and faith leaders, reported in the Guardian 11/7/18, protested against the systematic misapplication of standards of proof in assessing applications for asylum. Among other groups the organisations have documented cases of survivors of torture and sexual abuse not believed despite forensic medical reports. Sajid Javid is asked to take two immediate steps. The first is to ensure the terms of reference for the "Windrush lessons learned" review focus on the misapplication of the standard of proof as a problem in Home Office decision-making. Second, the Home Secretary is urged to agree to an independent public audit into asylum decision-making.

Trustees sought

Our current Trustees wish to expand the team and would like to hear from Friends who would be interested in being considered for this. We particularly wish to find someone part of whose role would be to act as Treasurer to Q-CAT but if this specific task is not for you please mention this when writing. We have a nominations procedure to follow.

Trustees share the work involved in running of the Concern, meeting in person four times a year currently in Liverpool or Birmingham. Overnight accommodation can be arranged with a local Friend. Travel expenses are paid either by your Area Meeting or from Q-CAT funds. The fact that you are reading this Newsletter leads us to think you are aware of the ethos, aims and work of Q-CAT but do ask for any further information you would like. Please write to our Convenor, Juliet Morton (details on the front page), to express your interest.

Freedom from Torture's Cycle Against Torture 2019

For the month of July next year a relay of cyclists will ride from Hastings to Edinburgh, via many places large and small. The purpose will be to raise awareness of Freedom from Torture's work, to connect with local groups and raise funds. Q-CAT Trustees hope there will be some ways in which we can support this, perhaps by encouraging our supporters to join in as cyclists, by offering accommodation and by taking part in activities on rest days. Any suggestions welcome. There will be more details in due course.

Q-CAT Trustees' Meeting 3rd September

Our recent meeting included a report on Q-CAT presence at BYM, detailed planning for the Q-CAT conference on 3rd November, appointment of new Trustees, progress with plans for a choral work, and a disappointing response to "opting-in" to the emailing list, requested due to the General Data Protection Regulation.

To receive Newsletters and Briefings by email contact: from.qcat@hotmail.com

To receive them by post if emailing is not possible for you: Jane Laxton,
79 Wellington Road, New Brighton,
Wirral CH45 2NE

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

DONATION TO Q-CAT (Charity No. 1093757)
To the Treasurer: David Mellor, 23 Ebberston Road
West, Rhos on Sea, Colwyn Bay LL28 4AP

Please accept the enclosed cheque/CAF voucher for
£.....payable to Q-CAT.

Name.....

Address.....

Postcode.....

If you are a taxpayer you can increase the value of your donation to Q-CAT by 25% at no cost to you. Please complete the Gift Aid Declaration (not applicable to CAF vouchers).

I would like my donation to be treated as Gift Aid. I confirm that I am a UK taxpayer, resident in the UK for tax purposes, and that I am paying an amount of income/capital gains tax at least equal to the tax the charity claims on my donation in the relevant tax year.

Signed.....

Dated.....