

# Q-CAT

# QUAKER CONCERN FOR THE ABOLITION OF TORTURE

## MARCH 2019

## NEWSLETTER No.35

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

### Update

#### **Association for the Prevention of Torture** [www.apr.ch](http://www.apr.ch)

The APT, together with Anti-Torture Initiative (ATI) and the Norwegian Centre for Human Rights (NCHR) have launched a three-year process to develop a set of guidelines on investigative interviewing by law-enforcement officials and on the implementation of associated legal and procedural safeguards. These guidelines aim to reduce the well-documented risk of mistreatment and coercion that persons face during questioning by law enforcement, and during the first hours of custody.

The anticipated guidelines are intended to provide practical guidance to law-enforcement on the conduct of effective, ethical, and non-coercive interviews. At the same time they will promote the effective implementation of legal and procedural safeguards, associated with questioning. In this way, the guidelines will be an important tool for ensuring that persons questioned for investigative purposes are not subjected to torture or other forms of ill-treatment.

Ray Bull's talk at our November conference was concerned with exactly this subject (see Briefing No 60 January 2019)

#### **Freedom from Torture** [www.freedomfromtorture.org](http://www.freedomfromtorture.org)

Further to our item on Sri Lanka in the December Newsletter, Freedom from Torture issued a report in February 2019 *Too little change: ongoing torture in security operations in Sri Lanka*. This is based on 16 cases of Sri Lankan nationals detained and tortured between 2015 and 2017. Drawn from expert medico-legal reports undertaken by their doctors, research found that all 16 people were tortured by state officials during interrogation to extract information about alleged ongoing links to the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) or anti-government activity. No one was charged under anti-terror, or any other, legislation. All experienced physical and psychological forms of torture including beating with instruments, burning and asphyxiation. Freedom from Torture is calling on the Sri Lankan government to make the 'zero tolerance' policy on torture a reality.

#### **Redress** [www.redress.org](http://www.redress.org)

Redress has coordinated submissions from about 90 individuals and organisations, including Q-CAT (see December Newsletter), to be made to the UN Committee against Torture for consideration in their forthcoming review of the UK. It is titled *UK implementation of the UN Convention against Torture: Civil society alternative report to the UN Committee against Torture, March 2019*. We hope that the important material here will be the subject of one of our Briefing Papers.

#### **Q-CAT Trustees**

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## EVENTS

### Nicholas Mercer to speak at Durham University

This year's Irvine Lecture on Human Rights is to be given by Nicholas Mercer and titled Human Rights on the Battlefield. When Command Legal Advisor for the HQ 1st (UK) Armoured Division during the Iraq war in 2003 he reported to the relevant military authorities that detainees were being seriously mistreated by UK troops, but was not satisfied that effective action was taken to stop such illegal treatment. As a result of his stand against the inhuman and degrading treatment of prisoners of war in Iraq he has received a number of awards. There will be a question and answer session after the lecture.

Date: Friday 15<sup>th</sup> March Time 18.00 to 19.00

Place: Hogan Lovells Lecture theatre (PLC048) Law School, Durham University, Stockton Road, Durham DH1 3LE Book at <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/human-rights-centre-annual-irvine-lecture-tickets-57679889101>

This an unusual opportunity to hear an ex-military lawyer with direct experience of trying to reduce illegal practices. If you live within reach of Durham do consider coming. Some of us are planning to be there. Please introduce yourself.

### Q-CAT at Britain Yearly Meeting

We will be holding a session on Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> May at 12.30 and hope some of you will come and join us. We hope this will be a chance to discuss together Q-CAT's work and particularly how to help Quakers, especially those who are reluctant to engage with the topic, to become more involved.

### Protest at the Arms Fair (Defence and Security Equipment International)

We plan a Q-CAT presence in September as part of what is hoped to be a big Quaker turnout supporting national efforts to close down the Fair. This takes place every two years and brings all the biggest arms companies to East London.

Q-CAT's particular angle is protesting against UK companies selling equipment which can be used for torture. A number of us were part of the action in September 2017 and we would like to involve even more of our supporters this time. Our slogan would be **UK must not sell tools for torture**.

The Fair runs from 10<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> September. Details of the protest are not yet available but it will probably be in the week beginning 2<sup>nd</sup> September. **Will you join us?**

See also [www.rootsofresistance.org.uk](http://www.rootsofresistance.org.uk)

### Cycle Against Torture 2019

There are still places for cyclists available on the Freedom from Torture *Cycle Against Torture* taking place in July 2019. This is happening in relays from Hastings to Edinburgh. There are also opportunities to help on the way and thus show Q-CAT support. Barbara Forbes, one of our Trustees will be helping to coordinate the three days in Birmingham but it would be good if Friends in the other stopping points could be involved and could help to promote Q-CAT. Although it is fund-raising for FFT, the organisers are also keen to include us! Website: <https://edinburghfft.org/cycle2019/>. Queries can be directed to [cyclefft2019@gmail.com](mailto:cyclefft2019@gmail.com).

To receive newsletters and briefings by email contact: [from.qcat@hotmail.com](mailto:from.qcat@hotmail.com) and include your Local and Area Quaker Meetings if appropriate.

To receive them by post if emailing is not possible for you: Jane Laxton, 79 Wellington Road, New Brighton, Wirral CH 45 2NE

The next Briefing is due out in mid-April and the next Newsletter at the beginning of June.