

Q-CAT

QUAKER CONCERN FOR THE ABOLITION OF TORTURE

MARCH 2022

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**Torturers must never be allowed to get away with their crimes,
and systems that enable torture should be dismantled or
transformed. UN Secretary-General António Guterres**

Holding perpetrators of torture to account – delays and successes

Under the heading “Calls mount for release of full Senate report on the torture of Abu Zubaydah, to counter a narrative too many Americans still believe – that torture works” the Guardian had a lengthy [report](#) online 29/1/22. In 2014 the Senate Intelligence Committee reported on its seven-year investigation into the post 9/11 torture programme of the CIA, which report has still not been released except in brief summary. However it is known that Abu Zubaydah was a guinea-pig for the enhanced interrogation techniques devised by Mitchell and Jessen for this programme. He gives details of his horrific [treatment](#).

Ali Soufan was one of the first US officials to interrogate Zubaydah at a black site. He did so using conventional interrogation methods that would be familiar to students of Law & Order. He learned everything he could about his subject, spoke in the prisoner’s own language (Arabic), built up a rapport with Zubaydah, and played mind games on him such as giving him the impression that the FBI knew much more about his activities than in fact they did. All without recourse to force, violence or humiliation. “We did not need torture to get information,” Soufan told the Guardian. But in spite of that the torture regime was begun.

A further [report](#) online 3/3/22 says that the US supreme court has ruled that the two psychologists cannot testify in a case Abu Zubaydah is bringing in Poland, where one of the major “black sites” was located. (He has already been paid €100,000 by the Lithuanian government for his treatment in a “black site” in that country.)

British role in Zubaydah’s torture and in post-9/11 rendition

In a letter to the Guardian (online 30/1/22) Stephen Timms and Andrew Tyrie, of the All-party parliamentary group on extraordinary rendition say that “UK intelligence agencies played a key role in his interrogation, despite knowing that he was subject to unlawful torture. Yet we still do not know the full extent of the British role in torture and unlawful rendition during this era”. They point to the unacceptable situation that the Intelligence and Security Committee

Trustees

Juliet Morton, Convenor	43 Embankment Rd, Kingsbridge, Devon TQ7 1LA	juliet@mortonpg.plus.com
Michael Hutchinson, Acting Treasurer,	32 Riddrie Knowes, Glasgow G33 2QH	mjhriddrie@btinternet.com
Jane Laxton, Newsletter Ed.	79 Wellington Road, New Brighton, Wirral CH45 2NE	janelaxton@hotmail.co.uk
Barbara Forbes	John Cockcroft	Joseph Irwin

Website www.q-cat.org.uk or www.qcat.org.uk

was thwarted in its attempts to examine Britain's role in torture and unlawful rendition following 9/11.

President of Interpol accused of torture

The Guardian online 18/1/22 [reports](#) that as al-Raisi takes up his role as president of Interpol (ref. our Newsletter for December) with a visit to the HQ in France, torture complaints have been made against him on behalf of Ahmed Mansour, who is serving a 10-year sentence in UAE and, separately, on behalf of two Britons Matthew Hedges and Ali Issa Ahmad. The latter's lawyer says "Al-Raisi's presence on French territory triggers the universal jurisdiction of French courts and immunity cannot be invoked".

Syrian convicted of torture by German court

Anwar Raslan, a former colonel loyal to the Syrian regime who later defected and gained asylum in Germany, was deemed by the judge at Koblenz higher regional court to have verifiably overseen the murder of at least 27 and torture of at least 4,000 prisoners at a detention facility in Damascus. He was sentenced to life imprisonment. (Guardian online 13/1/22 [report](#))

It is the first case to find a senior official in the regime of Bashar al-Assad guilty of crimes against humanity. The ruling was welcomed as a symbolic step towards justice by torture survivors.

A date for your diary!

Saturday 18th June 11.00 to 12 30

We are planning a **Zoom get-together for Q-CAT supporters**,

so we can feel more connected with each other,
so we can find out what you think we could be doing,
so you can ask Trustees questions.

Think of it as a coffee and cake meet-up but in this case
you will have to have your own refreshments!

We hope this might lead to a wider Conference, perhaps at the beginning of next year.
Further details and booking arrangements will be available later.

*SHRIEK WHEN THE PAIN HITS
DURING INTERROGATION. REACH
INTO THE DARK AGES TO FIND A
SOUND THAT IS LIQUID HORROR,
A SOUND OF THE BRINK WHERE
MAN STOPS AND THE BEAST
AND NAMELESS CRUEL FORCES
BEGIN. SCREAM WHEN YOUR
LIFE IS THREATENED. FORM A
NOISE SO TRUE THAT YOUR
TORMENTOR RECOGNIZES IT AS A
VOICE THAT LIVES IN HIS OWN
THROAT. THE TRUE SOUND TELLS
HIM THAT HE CUTS HIS FLESH
WHEN HE CUTS YOURS, THAT
HE CANNOT THRIVE AFTER HE
TORTURES YOU. SCREAM THAT HE
DESTROYS ALL KINDNESS IN YOU
AND BLACKENS EVERY VISION
YOU COULD HAVE SHOWN HIM.*

We found this piece when we visited an exhibition at Tate Liverpool. It is part of an installation by Jenny Holzer of a number of different "Inflammatory Essays" originally fly-posted across New York City so people could stumble across them by chance, hopefully react and maybe consider doing something useful.
Jane and Juliet

REDRESS has a new [bulletin](#) out.

They write:
In this bulletin, we feature some positive updates on our areas of work. This includes our initiatives in our Reparation programme, such as [Magnitsky Sanctions](#) project, through which we seek to impose a financial cost on the perpetrators of torture with travel bans and asset freezes. Another is the [Asset Recovery](#) project, where we are developing pilot cases to explore legal routes to seize assets from human rights abusers and redistribute them as reparations to their victims. Also highlighted is the story of [Tariku Asefa](#), which reminds us that much more remains to be done to repair the harm experienced by those who have survived the horrors of torture and enable them to rebuild their lives and regain their place in society.