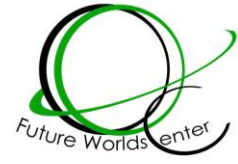




**Unit for the
Rehabilitation
of Victims
of Torture**



Future Worlds Center, Humanitarian Affairs Unit Press Release
Unit for the Rehabilitation of Victims of Torture (URVT)

News hook: Cyprus celebrates International Day in Support of Torture Victims

Supporting victims and survivors of torture in Cyprus in their quest to integrate into Cypriot society is fundamental to the importance we attach to our basic human rights in Cyprus and also a measure of our compassion and civility as a member state of the European Union.

Local Cypriot NGO raises awareness that victims and survivors of torture are living among us in Cyprus and need our support

(Nicosia 23 June 2010): 26 June is recognised as the “International Day in Support of Torture Victims”, in honour of the United Nations Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. The Convention against Torture is an international human rights instrument, under the review of the United Nations that aims to prevent torture around the world.

This special day is dedicated to remember and support the victims and survivors of torture around the world. In Cyprus, the Unit for the Rehabilitation of Victims of Torture (URVT), which is the only treatment centre for survivors of torture in Cyprus operates under the Humanitarian Affairs Unit of Cypriot Non-governmental Organisation, Future Worlds Center (FWC).

URVT was established in 2006 and it is co-funded by European Refugee Fund (ERF) and the Government of Cyprus. URVT provides multidisciplinary treatment and rehabilitation services that include social counselling, psychological support, legal advice and medical treatment for the victims and survivors of torture and their families. URVT's also aims to increase public awareness about torture and rehabilitation and utilizes 26 June as an opportunity to raise awareness about this issue and to remind all people living in Cyprus that victims and survivors of torture are living among us and need our support.



ΑΛΛΗΛΕΓΓΥΗ, ΠΡΟΟΔΟΣ, ΕΥΗΜΕΡΙΑ – SOLIDARITY, PROGRESS, PROSPERITY

Torture is an extremely cruel and inhuman way to obtain information or confession, to revenge or punish a person or to create terror and fear among a population. Torture methods are both physical and psychological. It can include beatings, restriction of water and food, stretching, electric shocks to different body parts, suffocation in water, rape, burns, restriction of movements and other countless horrible methods. It is important to notice, that there are extremely painful torture methods, such as falanga, that leaves only few marks to the body. This way torturers want to make sure that identification of torture is difficult to detect.

Psychological methods of torture includes for example verbal assaults and humiliation, threats, mock executions, isolation, witnessing the torture of others or not getting any information about what will happen next – whether they will be tomorrow alive or dead. Psychological scars of torture are deeply affecting to its victims' lives. Many suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), which includes symptoms such as flashbacks, severe anxiety, insomnia, nightmares, depression and memory lapses. Many suffer from lack of trust in other people and because of the humiliation they endured, they may feel guilt and shame as well.

Survivors of torture face several post-migratory difficulties that worsen their psychological condition and even cause re-traumatizing effects. Supporting victims and survivors of torture in Cyprus in their quest to integrate into Cypriot society is fundamental to the importance we attach to our basic human rights in Cyprus and also a measure of our compassion and civility as a member state of the European Union. They survived from torture, but they can not survive from our rejection.