



## STATEMENT ON TORTURE

British Quakers are deeply concerned at the continued existence of torture and at recent attempts to justify it, in the context of the "war on terror," by countries that would previously have condemned it.

Torture is humiliating and degrading treatment, that aims not just to break a person's body but to break their spirit as well. The deliberate harming of people who are helpless denies the divine light that lives within us and moves us to love and peace. Both the torturer and tortured share this divine light. By ignoring torture, we take the side of the torturer.

Quakers worldwide have worked for the abolition of torture over many years. In 1976 the world body of Quakers (Friends World Committee for Consultation, FWCC) declared itself "to be utterly opposed to the use of torture, and determined to spare no effort to bring it to an end". We welcome its prohibition in the UN Convention Against Torture, the European Convention Against Torture and the affirmation of this principle by the Judicial Committee in the House of Lords.

We remain concerned at the systematic use of torture in many parts of the world and the culture of fear that it engenders beyond those who are its direct victims. We once more affirm our total and unqualified condemnation of such odious abuse of power. Our hearts and prayers go out to its victims and to those who inflict or condone it.

In particular, we ask our own government to do all in its power:

- to prevent the use of all forms of torture
- not to present evidence in our courts that may have been extracted by torture
- to refrain from deporting foreign nationals to countries that practise torture, regardless of any memoranda of understanding that may exist between them
- and to undertake no act that might encourage or condone torture anywhere in the world.

**AGREED BY QUAKERS IN BRITAIN**

*February 8th 2007*

*Sent on behalf of Quakers in Wales*