



Proclamation: United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture

Location: Amherst, MA

Approved: 06/27

WHEREAS, June 26 is the day on which the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment came into force in 1987; and

WHEREAS, the Government of the United States ratified the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment in 1994, making the Convention part of U.S. law; and

WHEREAS, torture degrades everyone involved—policymakers, those represented by the policymakers, perpetrators, and victims; and

WHEREAS, torture contradicts our nation's most cherished ideals and the rights of individuals during times of global conflict, which have long been protected under international law, such as the Geneva Conventions and those provisions of the United States' Constitution, such as the Fifth Amendment ban on self-incrimination, the Eighth Amendment ban on cruel and unusual punishment, and the Fourteenth Amendment guarantee of equal protection under the law; and

WHEREAS, thirty-eight retired military leaders, including two former Chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, have spoken publicly against torture saying, "If degradation, humiliation, physical and mental brutalization of prisoners is decriminalized or considered permissible ... we will forfeit all credible objections should such barbaric practices be inflicted upon American prisoners"; and

WHEREAS, security experts such as FBI special agent Jack Cloonan, torture victim Senator John McCain (R-AZ), former Army JAG Major General Thomas Romig, and Air Force Major and interrogator Matthew Alexander (pseudonym) have stated that abuse of U.S. detainees encourages recruitment by terrorist groups; and

WHEREAS, citizens of Amherst, Massachusetts, along with groups such as Pioneer Valley No More Guantánamos, Amnesty International, and Pioneer Valley Coalition Against Secrecy and Torture are participating in efforts to oppose torture; and

WHEREAS, the United Nations has proclaimed June 26 the United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture; and

WHEREAS, the United Nations appeals to all Governments and members of civil society to take action every year to defeat torture and torturers everywhere,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT we, the Amherst Select Board, do hereby stand against all forms of torture and inhuman treatment and do proclaim June 26, 2010, as United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, recognizing victims of torture and those who fight against torture.

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