

National Religious Campaign Against Torture

Torture, Former Combatants, Political Prisoners, Terror Suspects, & Terrorists

<https://nrcat.salsalabs.org/nationalpledge-endsolitary/index.html>

Campaign and Advocacy

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On any given day, tens of thousands of adults and children are subjected to solitary confinement in U.S. prisons, jails and immigrant detention centers, in conditions that constitute torture according to the United Nations, leading medical and mental health experts, and other developed countries. As religious organizations, individual members of faith communities, and people of conscience, we join in *A Moral Call to End the Torture of Solitary Confinement*.

Contrary to popular belief that solitary confinement is only used in response to violent behavior, incarcerated people are far more likely to be placed in solitary for non-violent disciplinary reasons, because of a need for protection, or because corrections staff misinterpret their symptoms of mental disability as an act of defiance or rule breaking. Medical experts have stated that people incarcerated in isolation for extended periods experience symptoms akin to delirium, and the impact on those with mental and physical disabilities is especially damaging. Recent studies have revealed that people of color are even more over-represented in solitary than they are in the prison population in general and receive longer terms in solitary than white people for the same disciplinary infractions.

Our various faith traditions hold in common a belief in the inherent dignity and worth of each human person. Complete isolation violates basic religious values of redemption, compassion, and restorative justice. In solitary, people are often detained in a cell by themselves, or with one other person, for 22 hours per day. Extended solitary confinement is globally recognized as torture. Cut off from any normal human interaction, enduring sensory and physical deprivation, many describe the experience as being buried alive. The [United Nations' Nelson Mandela Rules](#) prohibit the use of solitary confinement beyond 15 consecutive days in all circumstances and call for its abolition for women, children and individuals with mental and physical disabilities. Article I of the UN Convention Against Torture prohibits policies and practices that constitute cruel, inhuman or degrading punishment. Yet in the U.S. prisons, jails and detention centers people can be held in these conditions for months, years, or even decades.

Solitary confinement is torture. As religious leaders and people of faith and goodwill across the United States, we issue this moral call to end the torture of solitary confinement in all 50 states, in the federal prison system, and in immigrant detention centers. We call upon the Biden Administration, the U.S. Congress, state legislators, and departments of corrections to end this destructive practice that violates basic principles of human rights and the inherent God-given and Divine human dignity bestowed on all.

Yes, I endorse the *National Pledge: A Moral Call to End the Torture of Solitary Confinement*.

By completing this form, I agree to receive occasional emails from NRCAT and can opt-out at any time.

#StopSolitary
#EndTorture

Please share with anyone else who might be interested in the work we do.