

National Religious Campaign Against Torture

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

<http://www.nrcat.org/about/nrcat-press-releases/1021-nrcat-responds-to-new-york-city-legislation-regulating-solitary-confinement>

Public Facing Advocacy Writing

Added **Rev. Laura Markle Downton, director of U.S. prisons policy and program at the National Religious Campaign Against Torture**, Faith leaders, in New York and nationally, are closely monitoring the issue of solitary confinement. We understand that more than 80 percent of those serving time at Rikers Island have not been convicted of any crime but are awaiting trial. The recent Department of Justice findings, which revealed that, under the previous administration, 27 percent of teens serving time at Rikers Island had been placed in solitary, is unconscionable. Though not an end in itself, we celebrate Mayor de Blasio's signing of the legislation requiring quarterly data reporting on who is in solitary at Rikers Island and under what conditions, because we recognize it as an important step in the process of ushering in humane alternatives. For the well-being of both staff and those who are confined, our communities of faith stand ready to support alternatives that respect human dignity and potential.

The National Religious Campaign Against Torture has been vocal in its opposition to solitary confinement on moral grounds. Earlier this year, the organization [submitted written testimony](#) to Congress in advance of a Congressional hearing on solitary confinement at the federal level, Reassessing Solitary Confinement II: The Human Rights, Fiscal and Public Safety Consequences.

The National Religious Campaign Against Torture (NRCAT) is a membership organization committed to ending U.S.-sponsored torture, and cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment. Since its formation in January 2006, more than 300 religious organizations have joined NRCAT, including representatives from the Catholic, evangelical Christian, mainline Protestant, Unitarian Universalist, Quaker, Orthodox Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, Bahai, Buddhist, and Sikh communities. Members include national denominations and faith groups, regional organizations and local congregations.

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