

National Religious Campaign Against Torture

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

<http://www.nrcat.org/about/nrcat-press-releases/1137-faith-leader-applauds-pope-francis-planned-visit-to-curran-fromhold-correctional-facility>

Public Facing Advocacy Writing

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Faith Leader Applauds Pope Francis Planned Visit to Curran-Fromhold Correctional Facility *Calls On Faith Community to Follow Pope Francis in Continuing to Shine Light on Torture In Prison*

WASHINGTON As Pope Francis begins his historic first trip to the United States he is about to make a powerful statement about the human dignity of the incarcerated. On Sunday, September 27, Pope Francis will visit the Curran-Fromhold Correctional Facility in Philadelphia to meet with incarcerated individuals and their loved ones. Previously Pope Francis has spoken out powerfully for the rights of incarcerated people, [calling confinement in high security prisons a form of torture](#) and saying that torture is a grave sin, but even more, it is a sin against humanity.

The National Religious Campaign Against Torture organizes people of faith Catholics, Protestants, Jews, Muslims, Buddhists, Sikhs and more to promote restorative justice and an end to torture, particularly the widespread torture of solitary confinement. In anticipation of Pope Francis historic visit to Curran-Fromhold, Rev. Ron Stief, executive director of NRCAT, released the following statement:

To see the reality of life in the United States, particularly for communities of color and the poor in this nation, the Pope must look to our prisons and places of confinement. The U.S. is a global outlier in our rate of incarceration and systemic use of solitary confinement. The Holy Father himself has spoken powerfully about the torture of solitary confinement and its devastating impacts - emotionally, physically and spiritually. On any given day in the United States, more than 80,000 people disproportionately people of color, individuals with mental illness and those living in poverty are held in solitary confinement. Too often, they remain invisible. Their cries remain unheard and their prayers remain unanswered.

I hope Pope Francis visit is a step toward rectifying this stain on our moral conscience. I hope that Pope Francis will hear the pain of incarcerated individuals and their families, hear directly of the suffering of solitary confinement, and share those stories with the world. And I hope that religious and political leaders will learn from Pope Francis and continue to shine a light on the human dignity of those in our jails and prisons and prioritize restoration and redemption.

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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