**General Election 2015: Stand up to Stop Torture**

Torture is abhorrent, barbaric and inhumane. It can never be justified. It is wrong, self-defeating and poisons the rule of law, replacing it with terror. For more than 50 years, Amnesty International has been fighting to stamp out torture. Torture is banned under International law, but all over the world people continue to be tortured. Together we can stop it.

Over the last five years, Amnesty International has reported on **torture and other forms of ill-treatment in at least 141 countries** from every region of the world. The secretive nature of torture means the true number is likely to be higher still.

**Torture prevention is currently a priority for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office** (FCO). The FCO’s Torture Prevention Strategy includes a campaign to press countries to sign up to international agreements such as United Nations Convention against Torture.

There is **no guarantee that our government will prioritise this issue**. We need to get as much support from Prospective Parliamentary Candidates as possible to ensure this issue is a priority for the next UK government.

**What is torture?**

Electric shocks. Beatings. Rape and sexual violence. Humiliation. Mock executions. Burning. Sleep deprivation. Water torture. Long hours in contorted positions. Use of pincers, drugs, and dogs. The very words sound like the stuff of nightmares. But every day and across every region of the world, these unimaginable horrors are the reality for countless men, women and children.

**How can we Stop Torture?**

Torture and other ill-treatment are prohibited always, everywhere and against anyone. All governments must ensure protective mechanisms to prevent and punish torture. Without these safeguards, such as access to a lawyer, independent medical examinations or access for independent experts to visit a detention centre**, torture thrives.**

The Stop Torture campaign seeks to create improvements on torture across the world but focuses on five countries in particular, where torture is a major concern; Nigeria, Mexico, the Philippines, Morocco and Uzbekistan.

**Inquiry into alleged UK involvement in torture**

The release of the US report on CIA torture reveals how they used waterboarding, ‘rectal feeding’, mock executions, sleep deprivation, stress positions and other cruel and degrading treatment against detainees. But we still don’t know how deeply the UK was involved. The UK government needs to properly investigate the truth.

UK government’s ability to deliver on the Torture Prevention Strategy will be intrinsically linked to whether it delivers on its commitment to an adequate investigation into allegations of UK complicity in torture and other abuses. We continue to urge the UK government to establish a human rights compliant inquiry on alleged UK involvement in human rights violations, including torture and other ill-treatment of detainees held overseas.

**Justice for Moses and Miriam**

In [Nigeria](http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/AFR44/005/2014/en), police and military personnel use torture as a matter of routine. Police arrested and tortured Moses Akatugba in 2005 when he only 16 years old. Moses said police beat him, shot him in the hand, and hung him by his limbs . Moses states he only signed a confession agreeing he was involved in a robbery because of the torture. In November 2013, after waiting eight years for a verdict, Moses was sentenced to death. His allegations of torture were never investigated.

**Miriam López Vargas**, a 31 year-old mother of four, was abducted from her hometown of Ensenada, Mexico, by two soldiers in plainclothes, and taken to a military barracks. She was held there for a week, raped three times, asphyxiated and electrocuted to force her to confess that she was involved in drug-related offences. Three years have passed, but none of her torturers have been brought to justice. In [Mexico](http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/AMR41/015/2014/2014/) the government argues that torture is the exception rather than the norm, but in reality abuse by police and security forces is widespread and goes unpunished.

**What you and your group can do**

1. Meet with all the candidates running for election in your constituency. Ask them to stand up to stop torture, commit pressing for torture prevention a priority for the next government and if they will protect the Human Rights Act if elected (see separate General Election 2015: Human Rights Act briefing).
2. If you can’t meet them all then please do write to them and let us know what they say in reply.
3. You can order resources including pledge cards for you group to sign from TFS. (You can order pledge cards with code GE001, this resource is free. Just call 01788 545553).
4. Let us know what you candidates think of the stop torture and HRA campaigns. You can email feedback to [lobbyfeedback@amnesty.org.uk](mailto:lobbyfeedback@amnesty.org.uk) or post C/O Laura Trevelyan 17-25 New Inn Yard, London, EC2A 3EA.