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NOBEL PEACE PRIZE NOMINEE CALLS FOR COUNTRIES TO ADOPT CONVENTION ON TORTURE AT 12th WORLD CONGRESS ON PAIN

One of the world's leading experts on torture issues has urged over 45 countries to ban the use of torture in their nations, by calling upon them to sign the United Nations Convention Against Torture (UNCAT).

Having worked in the field of international humanitarian action for nearly 40 years, Dr. Inge Genefke was speaking at the 12th World Congress on Pain in Glasgow to drive home the issues surrounding torture and its victims, and to continue her international campaign against it.

The Nobel Peace Prize nominee described torture as the worst of all traumas experienced by a person and has called for the remaining countries not only to adopt the Convention, but for those who have already ratified it to follow and implement its articles into law within their countries.

Since its conception in 1984, UNACT has been ratified in over 140 nations, including the US, China, Russia, Israel, Turkey, Zimbabwe and Sudan, ensuring those who inflict torture upon another human being are punished by national legal procedures. However there is evidence that torture is still performed in more than 100 countries worldwide, causing pain and suffering for many millions of people.

Dr. Inge Genefke commented: "It often goes unrecognized that torture is not something of the past but is in fact, is very much a part of our world today. It is carried out in more than 100 countries and is a tool used to break a human being down. It is the cruelest and yet most effective instrument of power in our world.

"I urge those countries who have not yet signed up to the Convention on Torture to do so, and I call on all ratifying countries to do as they preach - to implement the Convention effectively in their national legislation, and to follow it. Only this way will we work more effectively to prevent the use of torture and the intolerable pain that it brings to its victims.

“The torture victim is the loneliest person in the world and its use never solves problems but instead creates hatred. For these reasons, I am extremely passionate about my fight against it, and by trying to help those who have suffered pain at the hands of torture is simply the most rewarding work I can do.”

Dr. Genefke’s dedication to working with the victims of torture and securing help for them led her to found the Copenhagen Centre for Research and Rehabilitation of Torture Victims (RCT) and the International Council for Rehabilitation of Torture Victims (IRCT) in 1982 and 1985. Decades of research and experience from working with victims has led Dr. Genefke to understand that many victims of torture suffer not only from pain, but specifically from chronic pain. Victims suffer not only unbearable physical and psychological pain, but they also suffer trauma from the fact that torture cannot be escaped, and because it is being carried out by another human being.

This year, Dr. Genefke will receive the International Association for the Study of Pain (IASP) John Loeser Distinguished Lecture award as recognition for her fight against the use of torture across the world. IASP is a global organisation dedicated to highlighting and addressing the issue of chronic, acute, and cancer pain through advocacy, and by supporting research and developing programmes to improve the standard of pain relief worldwide.

IASP President Dr. Troels S. Jensen said: “Dr. Genefke has worked tirelessly to campaign against the use of torture and to help those who have fallen victim to both the mental and physical pain it can cause. It is because of her work that we are able to not only understand the true effect that torture has on people, but also that it remains widespread throughout the world today. This year, IASP is delighted to honour Dr. Genefke with the Special Prize for Lecturers at the 12th World Congress on Pain, and we wish her the very best of luck with her deserving Nobel Peace Prize nomination.”

The 12th World Congress on Pain is taking place at the Scottish Exhibition & Conference Centre (SECC) from 18th to 22nd August. The Congress is a biennial event attracting more than 5,000 experts in the field of pain and pain management from more than 60 countries. The programme for this weeklong gathering will address more than 1,000 different areas, ranging from post traumatic stress and pain through to pain treatment in the developing world.

For more information on the Congress, pain issues, and the treatment of pain, please visit IASP's website at www.iasp-pain.org.

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Issued on behalf of IASP by Trimedia. For further information on IASP or Dr. Inge Genefke, please contact Laura McKenzie or Iona Matheson by calling 0131 226 2362 or 0141 331 6620. Alternatively please email laura.mckenzie@trimediauk.com or iona.matheson@trimediauk.com

Notes to Editors:

About IASP:

IASP was founded in 1973 and is an international, non-profit organization with its world headquarters in Seattle. It has more than 7,000 members from 114 nations, and many of them are the world's premier experts in the field of pain.

IASP's members include basic scientists, physicians, dentists, psychologists, nurses, physical therapists, pharmacists, and other health professionals working in the pain field. IASP is focused on research and treatment of all types of pain, including acute, chronic, and cancer-related, and its official journal, *PAIN*, is the world's leading journal on the subject.

About Dr. Genefke and the IRCT:

Born in Denmark, Dr. Inge Genefke has devoted her career specifically to the treatment and rehabilitation of victims of torture. She graduated from the University of Copenhagen in 1965 with a degree in Medicine and carried out Research posts in various European towns before returning to Denmark.

In 1973, when Amnesty International urged physicians worldwide to speak out against torture and provide more support to its victims, she took action, co-founding the organization's Danish Medical Group of Amnesty International the following year. This group's groundbreaking investigations led to the establishment of other torture-related medical groups around the world. In 1979, members of the Danish medical group obtained permission to admit and examine torture victims at Copenhagen University Hospital, in Denmark. Three years later, in 1982, Genefke founded the Rehabilitation and Research Centre for Torture Victims (RCT) in Copenhagen as an independent institution with its own premises.

In response to a growing need for global support and assistance in the rehabilitation of torture victims, the International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims (IRCT) was founded in 1985, initially as the international arm of the RCT, and, from 1997, as an international and independent organisation to support the rehabilitation of torture victims and work to prevent torture worldwide.

Based in Denmark, the IRCT works in collaboration with 136 members, which include rehabilitation centers and programmes worldwide. The IRCT also works in partnership with governments, human rights organisations, health professional organisations, and intergovernmental organisations.

The IRCT strives to promote a world that values and accepts shared responsibility for the eradication of torture. In support of this vision, the IRCT:

- raises awareness of the rehabilitation needs of torture victims,
- promotes and supports the establishment of treatment facilities around the world,
- works for the prevention of torture and an end to impunity,
- documents the impact and consequences of torture, and
- works to increase funding for rehabilitation centres and programmes worldwide.

Today, the IRCT network embraces 136 rehabilitation centres and programmes from all over the world, representing an international movement against torture and for victims of torture. They provide support and hope, and act as a symbol of triumph over the terror of torture.