



Forum of Conscience

PRESS RELEASE

International Day in Support of Victims of Torture 26 June 2009

Torture and other forms of ill-treatment can never be justified under any circumstances

SIERRA LEONE: NO MORE WORDS: WE WANT ACTION!

Freetown - Geneva, 26 June 2009. On the occasion of the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, the World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT) and its member organisation in Sierra Leone, Forum of Conscience (FOC) jointly call upon the Government of Sierra Leone to show its commitment by following through with the recommendations of the Bintumani Stakeholders Consultations of June 2006.

In July 1999, the Lome Peace Agreement put an end to the brutal conflict that broke out in Sierra Leone on 23 March 1991 and made up about 4.5 million direct and or indirect victims as a result of the conflict.

On 26 June 2006 in Freetown, FOC, OMCT and Redress (Seeking Reparation for Torture Survivors) organised in collaboration with National Commission for Social Action (NaCSA) a Seminar at the Conference Hall of The Bintumani Hotel in order to work out practical issues and urge the Government of Sierra Leone to set up a Special Fund for War Victims within the shortest delays, as provided in the Lome Peace Agreement (article xxvi) and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Report.

Out of eight recommendations that were drawn that day, the Government of Sierra Leone two year later has addressed four.

However, the following recommendations from the Bintumani Stakeholders Consultations remain to be taken into consideration by the Government of Sierra Leone:

- **Conduct of a nationwide census of war victims;**
- **Undertaking of a study tour of countries with experience in victims reparations to identify and adopt best practices;**
- **Putting in place of mechanisms for fundraising on a sustainable basis.**

Future challenges for local organisations is to advocate the Government, in order to prevent revenge and recurrence of the trauma caused by the war, and to provide the victims with basic welfare facilities to restore their lost dignity in accordance with human rights standards such as the UN Basic Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Remedy and Reparation for Victims of Gross Violations of International Human Rights Law and Serious Violations of International

On this specific day dedicated to the victims of torture and other forms of ill-treatment, both organisations recall that the victims concerned must be ensured the right to an effective remedy for the human rights violations suffered as well as the right to full redress, including compensation and rehabilitation.

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