



**For Immediate Release:**  
Monday, June 26, 2006

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**REP. MCCOLLUM, TORTURE SURVIVORS HONOR ANNIVERSARY  
OF INTERNATIONAL TREATY BANNING TORTURE**

*Anniversary honored as torture treatment center speaks out against U.S. use of torture*

**ST. PAUL, MINN.** – Rep. Betty McCollum and survivors of torture joined the Center for Victims of Torture (CVT) today to recognize the anniversary of the United Nations Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

CVT called for rededicating efforts to end torture and provide protection and healing to victims of torture. The event was held at the State Capitol to remind people of the need to speak out against the use of torture and degrading treatment by the U.S.

CVT’s executive director, Douglas A. Johnson, encouraged Minnesotans to engage their public officials and ask candidates for Congress their position on current U.S. policies, including the treatment of detainees and the practice of extraordinary rendition, where detainees are sent to countries that torture, such as Syria and Egypt.

“Torture survives in a culture of fear and silence. We who live in a free society are responsible to speak out against our government’s use of torture,” said Douglas A. Johnson, executive director. “If the U.S. doesn’t live up to its obligations under the Convention Against Torture, how will we hold other governments accountable?”

The Convention entered into force on June 26, 1987. It established the Committee Against Torture, a key watchdog group; the Office of the Special Rapporteur, which monitors reports of torture from 60 to 70 countries each year; and the Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture, which helps fund rehabilitation and restitution efforts for survivors. To date, 141 nations are party to it. June 26 is celebrated as U.N. International Day in Support of Victims of Torture and is marked by events held in hundreds of countries around the world.

The Center for Victims of Torture is a nonprofit whose mission is to heal the wounds of torture on individuals, their families and their communities and to end torture worldwide. Founded in 1985, CVT was the first torture treatment center in the U.S., only the third in the world.

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