



June 16, 2009

**June 26: A Day to Recognize and Support the Struggles and Successes of Immigrant Survivors of Torture...**

## **Project's June 26 Public Service Announcement Honored by Anti-Torture Advocacy Group**

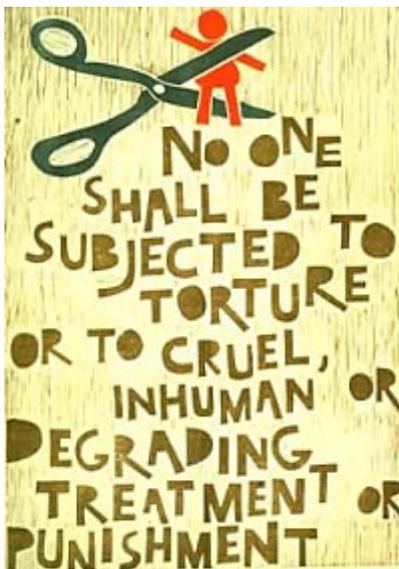
We're proud to announce that the International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Survivors has chosen a Public Service Announcement we created as a winner in its 2009 competition. Our winning PSA will be shown worldwide in conjunction with the United Nations' **International Day in Support of Victims of Torture**, June 26, 2009. The IRCT jury said that the Project's 30-second spot, *Be a Part of the Solution*, "was uplifting, dignified, and presented the cause of our anti-torture movement very well."



Though we learned about the IRCT competition only a month before the deadline, Project Director Ben Achtenberg and his son Jesse – also a filmmaker – took advantage of footage already shot for our documentary *Refuge: Caring for Survivors of Torture*, including images filmed at the annual tree-planting ceremony sponsored by the **Center for Victims of Torture**, in Minneapolis, and during the 24-hour vigil and day of solidarity held by the **Torture Abolition and Survivors Support Coalition** in Washington, DC.

"This is a day on which we pay our respects to those who have endured the unimaginable. This is an occasion for the world to speak up against the unspeakable. It is long overdue that a day be dedicated to remembering and supporting the many victims and survivors of torture around the world."

— **Former U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan**



United Nations Image by Octavio Roth

According to the IRCT, past spots have appeared on dozens of TV channels in more than twenty countries, reaching an estimated 300 million viewers. The Refuge Media Project's winning spot can be seen on **YouTube** or on our own website.

**About the IRCT:** Based in Denmark, the **International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Survivors** has 142 member organizations throughout the world: rehabilitation centers and related programs through which health professionals promote and support the rehabilitation of torture victims and work for the prevention of torture. "Each year we reach 100,000 torture survivors and their families," says Brita Sydhoff, IRCT Secretary General, "but there are many more who need our support: people whose only crime was to speak up against oppression, to be poor, or simply to be in the wrong place at the wrong time."

**Project Update:** Earlier this spring, the Refuge Media Project crew returned to Atlanta, to revisit some of the folks we met with and filmed a year ago, and to further document the work of the **Center for Torture and Trauma Survivors**, a project of the DeKalb County Board of Health. During an intense five days of filming we had the opportunity to talk with staff, volunteers, and survivors from Guinea, Iraq, Nigeria, Burma, and Nepal. We'll have more to report in our next newsletter – after we've had a chance to recover.

At this point, we have more than 100 hours of truly extraordinary interviews, which our dedicated interns are struggling to catalog and transcribe. In coming months we will be focused on putting it all together — and since we're aiming at a final length of between a half-hour and an hour, you can see that we've got our work cut out for us.



**We Need Your Support!** Although we will of course be seeking further funding from foundations, in these difficult economic times our individual donors are our lifeline. **Please support the Refuge Media Project and help us spread the word. Share this message with friends, family, and colleagues, and encourage them to sign-up for our email newsletter or make a tax-deductible donation.**

**About Us:** Through the creation and distribution of video and other educational resources, the Refuge Media Project will educate, inspire, and empower healthcare, mental health, and social service professionals and students to better meet the needs of survivors of torture living in the United States, a growing and increasingly vulnerable population. We are completing production and will soon be in post-production of our video documentary, *Refuge: Caring for Survivors of Torture*. Upon completion, we will carry out an extensive media-based educational campaign in partnership with survivor treatment centers and other organizations working with immigrants. The project will generate increased awareness, concern, and support for the work of such groups in communities throughout the United States. **Learn more...**

Follow the progress of the film through our **Project Updates**  
**Learn more** about organizations serving torture survivors  
Locate recent **publications** and **DVDs** dealing with Torture  
Check out new additions to our **Image Galleries**

**Thanks for your help!**

**Ben Achtenberg, Producer / Project Director**  
[www.refugemediaproject.org](http://www.refugemediaproject.org)