

WASHINGTON, DC - Congressman Steny Hoyer (MD-05) and members of Maryland's Congressional delegation Senator Benjamin L. Cardin and Reps. Eijah E. Cummings (MD-07), Chris Van Hollen (MD-08), John Sarbanes (MD-03), and Donna Edwards (MD-04) joined the Maryland-based [Advocates for Survivors of Torture and Trauma \(ASTT\) today](#) in the U.S. Capitol to show support for victims of torture. Today is the U.N. International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, which was created to highlight the needs of torture survivors. There are an estimated 40,000 victims of torture living in the Washington/Baltimore region. Below are Rep. Hoyer's remarks as prepared for delivery.

"Today, on the United Nations' International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, we join millions around the world in solidarity with those victims.

"But what can an American say about torture? What can we say with a clean conscience? What can we say with a straight face?

"What can we say after waterboarding- 'controlled death'-has been endorsed at the highest levels? What can we say after an American Attorney General called the Geneva Conventions 'quaint'? What can we say after hypothermia at Guantánamo, after humiliation at Abu Ghraib, after secret prisons and extraordinary rendition and unlimited detention?

"After all that, how much weight can our words possibly carry? No matter how pure our intentions, no matter how noble our words, it is clear that our reputation has been sullied. And that fact is written into our history with indelible ink.

"But do you know what else is indelible? The America that for generations was the world's foremost advocate for human rights and voice for the oppressed. The nation in which George Marshall declared that *'Respect for the reign of law...is expected to follow the flag wherever it goes.'* The country in which Robert Jackson said of our greatest enemies, *'To pass these defendants a poisoned chalice is to put it to our own lips as well.'*

"That, too, is indelible. That, too, is our history. And we will reclaim it.

"Today, in the Capitol, we honor the Advocates for Survivors of Torture and Trauma for

helping us to live up to our most humane traditions. Thank you for speaking loudly against torture, for keeping faith with the unjustly imprisoned, and for binding up their wounds. There are some 40,000 of them in Washington and Baltimore alone; they have come here from around the world, and now they live as our neighbors. You have treated survivors and comforted their families. As long as there is torture anywhere in the world, you will have our support.

"But in the end, our goal is to put you out of business. And I'm sure it's your ambition, too. With your help, and with the renewed strength of American example, let us work for the day when the practice of torture is a shameful fact of history-and nothing more."

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