A Sample Resolution on Torture

WHEREAS, torture is immoral, it violates the intrinsic dignity of the human being who is made in the image of God (Gen 1:26-28). The human person is a creation of God. Every inch of the human body and every aspect of the human spirit comes from God and bears witness to his handiwork. Human dignity (value, worth) comes as a permanent and ineradicable endowment of the Creator, to every person. Recognition of the intrinsic dignity of the human being requires a corresponding restraint in our behavior toward all human beings. (1)

WHEREAS, torture is evil, the biblical mandate is clear that evil must cease and evil deeds must stop. "Cease to do evil, learn to do good, seek justice, rescue the oppressed, defend the orphan, and plead for the widow." (Isaiah 1:17 NRSV) “Anyone who nurses anger against his brother must be brought to judgment. If he abuses his brother he must answer for it in court.” (Matthew 5: 22 NEB)

WHEREAS, torture is wrong without exception, ***CITE YOUR OWN DENOMINATION’S STANCE ON TORTURE*** (The Social Principles of the United Methodist Church remind church members that the "use of detention and imprisonment for the harassment and elimination of political opponents or other dissidents violates fundamental human rights. Furthermore, the mistreatment or torture of persons by governments for any purpose violates Christian teaching and must be condemned and/or opposed by Christians and churches wherever it occurs." (2))

WHEREAS, torture is illegal, it is against our country’s international law and treaty obligations, including the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the United Nations Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. The latter prohibits "...any act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person for such purposes as obtaining from him or a third person information or a confession, punishing him for an act he or a third person has committed or is suspected of having committed.” (3)

WHEREAS, torture is ineffective, it produces information that may be inaccurate, unhelpful, and even misleading for intelligence gathering purposes. The person being tortured will say anything, particularly what they think the interrogator wants to hear in order to make the physical and psychological torment stop. In addition, the systematic use of torture and failure to take responsibility for it have damaged the moral standing of our government, perhaps irreparably. (4)

WHEREAS, the North Carolina Commission of Inquiry on Torture found that Aero Contractors Ltd. based in Smithfield, NC secretly transported (“extraordinarily rendered”) at least 49 individuals, who had been forcibly kidnapped, to international CIA “black sites” or foreign custody, where they experienced beatings, prolonged stress positions, temperature extremes, long-term isolation, various water tortures, mock execution, and sexual abuse. (4)

WHEREAS, the CIA kidnapping, rendition, and torture program depended on North Carolina’s private citizens and public infrastructure. (4)

WHEREAS, the silence of county and state government officials about the torture flights makes them complicit in the rendition and torture of detainees. It is effectively their endorsement of those illegal activities.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that this ***NAME OF GROUP*** does

1. Reaffirm its opposition to torture and requests its member districts and churches to
   1. invite a speaker from NC No Torture Program of the NC Council of Churches to introduce the program and the issues of torture in local churches
   2. study and learn about the use of torture throughout church history and its banning in the 20th century
   3. to study and learn about the use of torture after 9/11/2001, including North Carolina’s role in the Rendition, Detention, and Interrogation (RDI) program. (www.nctorturereport.org)
2. Engage in our Christian belief of confession, repentance, and reconciliation so that we will better understand our state’s complicity in programs of torture and work to stop present and future programs of torture.
3. Learn about the use of torture in jails, prisons, immigrant detentions, and domestic settings, etc. Use the curriculum provided through the NC Council of Churches
4. Pray for each of the 49 named persons who were kidnapped in the Aero planes and their families.
5. Sign one of the two available petitions, [People of Faith](http://www.ncchurches.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Petition-on-Torture-by-People-of-Faith.pdf) or [NC Stop Torture Now](http://www.ncchurches.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/NC-Stop-Torture-Now-Petition.pdf) that call on Governor Cooper and Attorney General Stein to hold Aero Contractors accountable for its illegal actions; provide acknowledgment, redress, and reparation to its victims; and prevent further NC support for torture.
6. Support and become active in the ministry of ***YOUR LOCAL PEACE AND JUSTICE GROUP***, NC Council of Churches and NC Stop Torture Now, nonprofit organizations.

Footnotes:

1. Gushee, David P. 2006. Against Torture: An Evangelical Perspective. Theology Today 63:349-364
2. The United Methodist Church, Social Principles ¶ 164A)
3. Part I, article 1 of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
4. Torture Flights: North Carolina’s Role in the CIA Rendition, and Torture Program, report by the NC Commission of Inquiry on Torture, September, 2018, www.nctorturereport.org