



Nsw Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors

International Human Rights Advocates to address United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, Sydney 26 June

IMMEDIATE RELEASE: The UN International Day in Support of Victims of Torture on 26 June marks the moment in 1987 when the UN Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (UNCAT), one of the key instruments in fighting torture, came into effect. Today, the convention has been ratified by 162 countries.

26 June every year is an opportunity to call on all stakeholders, including the UN Member States, civil society and individuals everywhere to unite in support of the hundreds of thousands of people around the world who have been victims of torture and those who are still tortured today. The day is part of a global movement to combat torture in all its forms, led by the [International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims](#) (IRCT).

The IRCT is a global network of torture and trauma rehabilitation centres in over 70 countries that has been fighting for a world without torture for over 30 years and raises funds to support crucial services and programs that provide rehabilitation to torture survivors.

Every year STARTTS holds an event to mark the day and play our part in raising awareness of the crime of torture and the right of victims to appropriate rehabilitation services.

This year distinguished international guest, Sekai Makisana Holland will join international human rights advocates and STARTTS CEO and president of the Copenhagen based IRCT, **Jorge Aroche**, for a panel discussion: ***Dangerous Times: Perspectives on Torture, Shifting Global Politics and Respect for Human Rights*** at 6:00pm AEST, Tuesday 26 June at Sydney Lower Town Hall.

“May I express my pleasant surprise and that of thousands of torture survivors in Zimbabwe, and express our thanks and appreciation to the International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims (IRCT) President Jorge Aroche and his Committee, for this important initiative, the launch of this global fundraising campaign, aimed at providing that critical support to torture victims everywhere. This fund will go a long way towards empowering some of this target group to reclaim their life after torture. We commit to be part of the Campaign to ensure its success,” said Ms. Holland. There are an estimated one million torture survivors in Zimbabwe according to Holland.

At a meeting of trauma experts in late 2017, Aroche [warned](#) in an interview with *El Pais*, “The situation of torture in the world is getting worse.”

Walkley award-winning journalist, **Richard Ackland AM** will moderate a conversation with visiting Former Zimbabwean Senator, torture survivor and activist, **Sekai Holland**, Former High Court Justice, Author of the UN Human Rights Council Report of the Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in North Korea, **Michael Kirby AC CMG** and Perth-based criminal human rights lawyer, former war crimes prosecutor, author and hostage Survivor, **Rabia Siddique**.

The panel will discuss their insights in relation to torture in the context of a shift to the right in global politics, where torture is seen as more acceptable, of increased attacks on human rights activists, journalists and human rights workers and of more people being forcibly displaced. The panel will also explore the right to rehabilitation and how torture as a practice can be prevented and combated.

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ENDS

or more information or to arrange interviews contact:
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STARTTS is a specialist, non-profit organization that for 30 years has provided culturally appropriate and cutting-edge psychological and psychosocial treatment and support to help heal the scars of torture and refugee trauma and rebuild their lives in Australia. Since its establishment in 1988, STARTTS has become peak body in the research, development and dissemination of innovative approaches for the rehabilitation of psychic trauma. www.startts.org.au

The Support Life After Torture Campaign is a fundraising initiative of the International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims (IRCT) to ensure that torture and refugee trauma rehabilitation services globally are able to continue to provide vital medical, psychological and social services. STARTTS is currently running the pilot phase of the campaign in Australia on behalf of the IRCT, of which it is a member. www.lifeaftertorture.org.au



See full bio of Sekai Holland at:
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sekai_Holland
<https://www.alumni.uts.edu.au/connect/luminaries/sekai-holland>