

New York, US, June 26 □ (Infosplusgabon) - The UN Secretary-General António Guterres has described torture is an “egregious abuse of human rights”, as the world on Friday marks the International Day in Support of the Victims of Torture.

Although international law “unequivocally prohibits torture in all instances”, the UN chief pointed out that it nevertheless continues in many countries, “even those where it is criminalised”, a UN statement said.

Torture seeks to annihilate a victim’s personality and denies a human being of his or her inherent dignity, he added.

The statement noted that concerns about protecting national security and borders are increasingly used to allow torture and other forms of cruel, degrading and inhuman treatment.

And its pervasive consequences often go beyond the isolated act on an individual to be transmitted through generations, leading to cycles of violence, it said.

From the outset, the UN has condemned it as one of the vilest acts perpetrated by human beings on their fellow human beings.

“On this International Day in Support of the Victims of Torture, human rights defenders and survivors of torture around the world take the opportunity to speak out against this abhorrent denial of human dignity and they act to remember and support its victims,” Mr. Guterres said in his message.

The statement stressed that torture is absolutely banned under all relevant legal instruments and cannot be justified under any circumstances.

Its prohibition forms part of customary international law, which means that it is binding on every member of the international community, regardless of whether a State has ratified international treaties that expressly prohibit the practice or not, according to the UN.

Moreover, the systematic or widespread practice of torture constitutes a crime against humanity.

“Torture diminishes everyone and everything that it touches, including torturers and the systems and States where it occurs,” maintained the top UN official. “Torturers must never be allowed to get away with their crimes, and systems that enable torture should be dismantled or transformed”.

To transition from horror to healing, victims of torture require prompt and specialised programmes.

“Victims and survivors and their families must be empowered and assisted to seek justice for their ordeal,” Mr. Guterres asserted.

The UN Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture, channels funding to assist victims of torture and their families by awarding hundreds of grants to civil society organizations worldwide for medical, psychological, legal, social and other assistance.

It contributes to the rehabilitation, reparation, empowerment and access to remedies for nearly 50,000 torture survivors each year.

“To that end, I commend the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture and call for its replenishment,” added the UN chief.

The UN said the dedicated day offers an opportunity for everyone, everywhere, to unite in support of the hundreds of thousands of people around the world who have been tortured and those who are still being abused today.

“On this International Day, let us honour the victims of torture and commit to work to achieve a world where such abuse cannot happen”, the Secretary-General said.

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