

DTT: a new development

The Detention Treatment Team (DTT) is a newly-formed branch of Adac which focuses on the long-term effects of detention and torture.

During its work Adac saw that people had very little information about what happens in detention and what it does to detainees in the short and long term. Although we heard many individual stories, studies needed to be done to look at the practices and effects of torture in detention in South Africa. This is important information to be used inside and outside the country. Adac worked along with the Institute of Criminology at the University of Cape Town on this project.

Adac's call for the abolition of detention and all the security laws is central to our work. However, detentions and torture are unlikely to end immediately. For example, in 1984, 1149 people were detained. This demonstrates the extent to which those struggling for a democratic South Africa are subject to detention and torture.

We therefore realized that the needs of those affected by torture must be met. Contact with groups concerned with the treatment of torture in other countries made us realize that it is useful to offer a service. Groups in South Africa and the Philippines are the first ones to offer a service to torture victims within the country of repression.

The Detention Treatment Team is made up of health workers and lay people. Working in the group are doctors, nurses, social workers, activists and other interested people.



The goals of the detention treatment are: Firstly, to treat torture victims - both those directly and indirectly affected. The kind of treatment depends on the needs of the individual. It may include counselling, exercise and medical check-ups. While we are joyfully treating ex-detainees now, we know that detention also affects the families, and that many people suffer different kinds of repression. The DTT is available if needed in this regard.

Secondly, it is to run education programmes. It is important to create in organisations an awareness of torture. People need to understand the problems of their comrades who suffer the effects of torture after being released from detention. A better understanding of torture will help people realize what their friends need. Knowledge of the torture process prepares activists who may be detained in the future so that they might cope better with the situation.

Thirdly, the group acts as a resource group on the treatment of torture. Studies are promoted. We work closely with all detention groups and other organisations.

A big problem is that the effects of torture in detention are underestimated and often denied. Many activists do not admit that they have been affected because they feel that it will show weakness. Some think that it is wasteful and unnecessary to give much attention to the changes in themselves. This attitude assists the state in its goal of breaking organisations and individuals who oppose apartheid. The Detention Treatment Team is therefore available to all who want help in returning to a full and active life.



ADAC

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TEAM

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