

“Segregation, isolation, separation, cellular, lockdown, Supermax, the hole, Secure Housing Unit (SHU)... whatever the name, solitary confinement should be banned by States as a punishment or extortion technique,” said today the United Nations Special Rapporteur on torture, Juan E. Méndez, to the UN General Assembly.

“Solitary confinement is a harsh measure which is contrary to rehabilitation, the aim of the penitentiary system,” the rights expert stressed presenting his first interim report* to the General Assembly. In it, he examines the practice of solitary confinement “which is global in nature and subject to widespread abuse.”

There is no universal definition for solitary confinement because the degree of social isolation varies with different practices. However, for the Special Rapporteur, it is “any regime where an inmate is held in isolation from others (except guards) for at least twenty-two hours a day.”

“Social isolation is one of the harmful elements of solitary confinement and its main objective. It reduces meaningful social contact to an absolute minimum,” Mr. Méndez said. “A significant number of individuals will experience serious health problems regardless of the specific conditions of time, place, and pre-existing personal factors”.

“Indefinite and prolonged solitary confinement, in excess of fifteen days, should also be subject to an absolute prohibition,” the expert said noting that scientific studies have established that some lasting mental damage is caused after a few days of social isolation.

The Special Rapporteur also called for an end to the practice of solitary confinement in pre-trial detention based solely on the seriousness of the offense alleged, as well as a complete ban on its use for juveniles and persons with mental disabilities. (...)

The article:

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=11506&LangID=E>

Informazione di base:

<http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tortura>

Passato...prossimo:

http://www.fabiomanzione.it/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=2188:I-a-bad-science-che-giustifica-la-tortura&catid=46:diritti-umani&Itemid=105

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Arts & Human Rights - Torture and torments:

<http://www.photo.rmn.fr/c/htm/CDocT.aspx?V=CDocT&E=2C6NU0OT3CG3&DT=ALB>