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## Surviving Torture in Amerika By Queen Jennifer Gann

The UN Rapporteur on Torture and Abuse has asked all member countries of the United Nations to stop their use of solitary confinement, or severely limit its use to no more than 15 days, because of the long-lasting mental health effects. The U.S. is the world's number one utiliser of solitary confinement, keeping its prisoners isolated for months, years, and sometimes decades, within a nationwide network of control units.

I am a survivor of torture and abuse in the California state prison system, having been incarcerated for 23 years, and have spent more than 15 years in the different Administrative Segregation Units (ASU) and Security Housing Units (SHU) such as Pelican Bay State Prison and Tehachapi.

In 1995, the U.S. District Court, Northern District of California, in San Francisco, issued its ruling in the class-action lawsuit of Madrid v. Gomez against the California Department of Corrections (CDC) prohibiting the abuse, torture, and deprivation of mental health care of prisoners at Pelican Bay - SHU.

In 2002, I suffered a complete mental breakdown and attempted suicide after 10 years of solitary confinement. After twice being hospitalized at the Department of Mental Health (DMH) unit in Vacaville, and ten years of psychiatric therapy, I still suffer the symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) due to my nightmarish experience.

For this reason, we should abolish control units and end torture of prisoners in Amerika.