

National Religious Campaign Against Torture

Torture, Former Combatants, Political Prisoners, Terror Suspects, & Terrorists

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Public Facing Advocacy Writing

For Immediate Release:

Tuesday, June 8, 2010

National Religious Leaders Denounce Health Professionals' Involvement in Experiments on Detainees

People from all faiths demand a Commission of Inquiry to investigate the use of torture-including its use in medical experiments

[Listen to the audio of the press conference](#)

Washington, D.C. - National representatives from the Christian, Muslim and Jewish faiths joined together this morning to once again call for a nonpartisan Commission of Inquiry to investigate the use of torture, this time highlighting the use of torture in medical experiments.

This joint call to action was a response to yesterday's release of Physicians for Human Rights (PHR) new report, [Experiments in Torture: Human Subject Research and Evidence in the Enhanced Interrogation Program](#) (www.nrcat.org/phrtorturepapers) detailing allegations of medical experimentation on detainees.

"We have adamantly opposed and consistently spoken out against U.S.-sponsored torture. Torture is immoral and abhorrent, violating the teachings of all our religious traditions," said Rev. Richard L. Killmer, Executive Director of the National Religious Campaign Against Torture (NRCAT). "Just as adamantly, we now condemn these alleged acts of illegal and immoral experimentation. Separate and distinct from the torture, such medical experiments could themselves constitute war crimes and possibly crimes against humanity."

NRCAT, a membership organization consisting of more than 280 religious groups committed to ending U.S.-sponsored torture, and cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment, organized the press conference. Linda Gustitus, President of NRCAT participated on the panel with Dr. Ingrid Mattson, President of the Islamic Society of North America; Rev. Dr. Michael Kinnamon, General Secretary of the National Council of Churches; Rev. Richard Cizik, President of the New Evangelical Partnership for the Common Good; and Rabbi David Saperstein, Director of the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism.

"The essence of America is our commitment to the rule of law," said **Dr. Ingrid Mattson, President of the Islamic Society of North America**. "And as the Koran says, do not let the hatred of others swerve you from justice'. We must fight to protect the laws and treaties such as the Nuremberg Code."

PHR's new report uncovered and documented evidence of the involvement of CIA health professionals in performing experiments, without consent, on detainees in the custody of the U.S. following September 2001.

Such experimentation would violate the legal and ethical protections afforded by the Nuremberg Code, the Geneva Conventions, federal regulations governing human subject research-known as "The Common Rule"-and the federal War Crimes Act.

"With the Nuremberg Code we identified a set of boundaries so as to prevent people from taking the same disastrous path that was followed in World War II," said **Rabbi David Saperstein, Director of the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism**. "PHR's new report found that our country crossed the line by involving health professionals in experimentation. We need a comprehensive investigation so we can establish safeguards that will truly prevent violations in the future."

All of the panel participants acknowledged that their faiths do not agree on all things spiritually, politically and socially, but they do agree that torture goes against American values.

"These findings should disturb every person of faith," said **Rev. Richard Cizik, President of the New Evangelical Partnership for the Common Good**. "America is a country with the soul of a church, synagogue and a mosque, and these crimes violated our collective national soul."

The PHR report details how the experiments and the participation of health professionals in the interrogations of detainees were critical components for the fabrication of a legal framework construed to protect interrogators from prosecution for committing acts of torture. The experiments also served to refine the illegal torture practices used by the U.S. government.

"The evidence is absolutely shocking and repulsive," said **Rev. Dr. Michael Kinnamon, General Secretary of the National Council of Churches**. "Torture is an affront to God and the denial of the bedrock convictions of all people of faith."

NRCAT and the panel participants reiterated their call to the President and Congress to establish a Commission of Inquiry to undertake a

comprehensive investigation into the use of torture - including its use in medical experiments on detainees - and to pursue the steps required to ensure that U.S.-sponsored torture will never again be sanctioned and practiced.

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The National Religious Campaign Against Torture (NRCAT) is a growing membership organization committed to ending U.S.-sponsored torture, and cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment. Since its formation in January 2006, more than 280 religious groups have joined NRCAT, including representatives from the Catholic, evangelical Christian, mainline Protestant, Unitarian Universalist, Quaker, Orthodox Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, Baha'i, Buddhist, and Sikh communities. Members include national denominations and faith groups, regional organizations and local congregations.

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