

Human Rights Watch

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

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2004/05/06/us-open-detention-facilities-stop-torture>

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(New York) The U.S. government should allow human rights organizations to monitor detention facilities in Iraq and elsewhere in order to bring a stop to the mistreatment of prisoners, Human Rights Watch said in [a letter](#) to Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld today.

Torture flourishes in the dark, said Kenneth Roth, Executive Director of Human Rights Watch. If the Bush administration really wants to put a stop to torture in U.S. detention facilities, it has to open them up to outside scrutiny.

Human Rights Watch called on the U.S. government to reveal all places of detention where security or terrorist suspects are being held, and to permit independent, impartial and public investigations of all facilities where the U.S. military and intelligence community are holding detainees.

Human Rights Watch requested access for its investigators to all U.S. detention facilities, wherever security or terrorist suspects are being held, on whatever grounds. Human Rights Watch has repeatedly sought to visit U.S. military detention facilities including in Iraq, [Afghanistan](#), and [Guantanamo Bay](#) without success.

The United States has lost the ability to ensure that its own investigations will be considered impartial and independent, Roth said. Independent monitoring organizations report their findings publicly, and that's very important in this climate.

Human Rights Watch also called on Secretary Rumsfeld to ban all stress and duress interrogation techniques in all U.S. detention facilities anywhere in the world. Stress and duress techniques, such as extended sleep and sensory deprivation, forced standing, binding detainees in painful positions, and holding detainees naked, are explicitly designed to inflict pain and humiliation.

By ratcheting up the detainees pain and discomfort, stress and duress techniques almost invariably lead to far more serious mistreatment, said Roth. Their use clearly contributed to an environment in which some U.S. military personnel believed even more shocking abuse would be tolerated.

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