

National Religious Campaign Against Torture

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

<http://www.nrcat.org/about/nrcat-press-releases/1076-did-american-psychological-association-collaborate-with-cia-to-endorse-torture>

Public Facing Advocacy Writing

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WASHINGTON A May 1, 2015 article by James Risen on the front page of the New York Times, "[American Psychological Association Bolstered C.I.A. Torture Program, Report Says](#)," cites a new report that gives firm evidence for something human rights activists have long suspected -- that the American Psychological Association consulted with the CIA to give "legal and ethical justification" for the post 9/11 CIA torture program.

Rev. Ron Stief, executive director of the National Religious Campaign Against Torture, released the following statement:

"For nearly a decade, the National Religious Campaign Against Torture has raised ethical concerns not only about the immorality of acts of torture, but about the moral culpability of those complicit in its justification and execution. The allegations reported by the New York Times on collaboration between the American Psychological Association (APA) and the CIA are just another in a long string of ethical transgressions from our nation's political, legal and medical leaders that show how deeply torture corrupts our core institutions.

Faith leaders and members of the clergy understand the responsibility of all those who provide counsel to maintain the bond of trust with those whom they serve. If, as the report suggests, the APA worked with the CIA to draft ethical guidelines to allow psychologists to participate in torture, the APA has severely jeopardized the public's faith in the profession it represents. Professional associations like the APA establish ethical guidelines on the behavior of their members every day, and in this case, the APA not only got it wrong, they undercut the moral standards of an entire field.

Beyond this immoral collaboration of the APA and the CIA, though, it is even more problematic to see the lengths to which the CIA and the Bush Administration went to influence the outcome of what should have been an independent discussion of the role of psychologists regarding the torture of U.S. held detainees. Of course, the National Religious Campaign Against Torture would have hoped for a better outcome in a discussion not swayed by the interests of the CIA, but now the world will never know.

While it is deeply immoral for any professional body to draft guidelines calling it ethical for its members to participate in torture, a deeper question remains: How will the APA make amends for the harm it has done and restore the trust placed in its profession? And will other professional medical, legal and even military associations learn by example that ethics should never be for sale, for any reason?"

***The National Religious Campaign Against Torture (NRCAT)** is a membership organization committed to ending U.S.-sponsored torture, and cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment. Since its formation in January 2006, more than 300 religious organizations have joined NRCAT, including representatives from the Catholic, evangelical Christian, mainline Protestant, Unitarian Universalist, Quaker, Orthodox Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, Bahai, Buddhist, and Sikh communities. Members include national denominations and faith groups, regional organizations and local congregations.*

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