

National Religious Campaign Against Torture

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

<http://www.nrcat.org/about/nrcat-press-releases/743-national-interfaith-anti-torture-group-applauds-constitution-project-report-on-detainee-treatment>

Public Facing Advocacy Writing

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National interfaith anti-torture group applauds Constitution Project report on detainee treatment

Washington, D.C. Today, the Constitution Projects Task Force on Detainee Treatment released the report of its investigation into the detention and treatment of suspected terrorists. The report, available online at detaineeetaskforce.org, is the product of more than two years of research and analysis by a bipartisan, independent panel of experts. As part of its mission opposing government-sponsored torture and its ongoing call for the establishment of a commission of inquiry investigating post-9/11 U.S. torture policies and practices, the National Religious Campaign Against Torture supports the Constitution Projects attention to and investigation into detainee treatment and is helping to make the public aware of the findings and recommendations in the Task Forces report.

The Task Force report addresses a number of important issues about the treatment of detainees (including the contorted legal analyses that provided cover for the decision to use torture, the accounts of eye witnesses to the many acts of torture, the unethical role of numerous medical professionals, the impediments to the work of the International Red Cross, and the location and number of torture sites), said Rev. Richard Killmer, executive director of the National Religious Campaign Against Torture. But the central finding is the unanimous, unequivocal agreement that what was done was in fact torture and violated our own laws, Constitution and treaties; that what happened was unprecedented; and that what happened requires a national response to acknowledge, condemn, repair, and prevent the future use of torture and cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment.

On behalf of the hundreds of diverse faith-based organizations that the National Religious Campaign Against Torture represents, we are proud to support the Constitution Project in its efforts to lay to rest any claims by perpetrators of U.S.-government-sponsored torture that what they ordered was not torture and that it didnt violate the law and international standards of human rights.

As the panel states, its conclusion is not based on an impressionistic approach to torture, but rather the conclusion is grounded in a thorough and detailed examination of what constitutes torture in many contexts, notably historic and legal. The Task Force states simply that the arguments that the nation did not engage in torture and that much of what occurred should be defined as something less than torture are not credible.

Among the Task Forces many recommendations presented in the report are passing legislation to make sure the United States never again engages in torture and the declassification of as much information as possible to reveal the truth about post-9/11 detention practices. The panel found that ongoing classification of these practices serves only to conceal evidence of wrongdoing and make its repetition more likely. The panel calls on President Obama to declassify information on torture and on the Senate Intelligence Committee to make public its 6,000 page bipartisan report, adopted in December after a three-year investigation. The high level of secrecy surrounding the rendition and torture of detainees since September 11, the Task Force report reads, cannot continue to be justified on the basis of national security.

The Task Force was a privately funded effort and reached its findings and conclusions based on the public record and interviews with eye witnesses and persons involved in the detention and interrogation; it did not have the subpoena authority the Senate Intelligence Committee did to force the sharing of testimony or classified documents.

The United States engaged in a policy of torture and cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment in violation of law, international treaties, and our basic values, said Linda Gustitus, president of the National Religious Campaign Against Torture. Our job now is to account for those acts, make amends for them , and put in place the laws that will ensure that they never happen again. The Task Force reaches those same conclusions, and the National Religious Campaign Against Torture thanks and commends its members for their valuable work.

The Task Forces full report is available at detaineeetaskforce.org; [NRCAT has produced a two-page summary](#).

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 320 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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