

# Physicians for Human Rights

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

<https://phr.org/issues/torture/prevention/>

## Policy Issue Resources

For three decades, PHR has been a leader in the medical investigation and documentation of torture and ill-treatment. We spearheaded the international effort to develop the [Istanbul Protocol](#), the United Nations standards for documenting torture and ill-treatment. Our investigations of torture have spanned countries and regions across four continents, including [Afghanistan](#), [Chechnya](#), [India](#), [Iraq](#), [Kosovo](#), [Mexico](#), [Sudan](#), [Turkey](#), the [United States](#), and [Zimbabwe](#), among others. We and our partners have taught thousands of medical professionals around the world how to use the power of forensic documentation to expose torture and to bring torturers to justice.

Since the launch of the U.S. war on terror following the September 11, 2001 attacks, PHR has investigated and exposed the severe health impact of the governments illegal and inhumane interrogation and detention practices on [national security detainees](#). In [a groundbreaking series of reports and papers](#), we showed how the United States enhanced interrogation and other torture techniques inflicted profound and long-lasting psychological and physical pain and trauma on the men it targeted.

Where [sexual violence](#) is used as a weapon of war, we make sure that medical and legal professionals know how to document this heinous form of torture. In places like [Syria](#) and the Rohingya refugee camps in [Bangladesh](#), PHR-trained professionals are compiling forensic evidence of torture so that the perpetrators can one day be held to account.

We also document torture and ill-treatment suffered by [U.S. asylum seekers and immigrants](#). As the U.S. administration steps up its assault on immigrants and asylum seekers, PHR medical experts are using their skills to highlight the profound and lasting harm caused by inhumane [family separation and detention](#). A recent studies of refugees showed that family separation has a health impact similar to being beaten or tortured.

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