

Physicians for Human Rights

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

<https://phr.org/our-work/resources/anti-torture-update-take-action-to-end-torture/>

Public Facing Advocacy Writing

Nakissa Jahanbani on January 3, 2013

January 11, 2013, marks the 11th anniversary of the day detainees were first brought to the Guantanamo Bay detention facility. Today, 166 men are still held there in indefinite detention. Since 2002, many Guantanamo detainees have suffered human rights violations, including such torturous enhanced interrogation techniques as sensory manipulation, sleep deprivation, and prolonged solitary confinement. Most have not been charged with any crime, and none know when, or if, they will leave the prison, even though 55 of the men have been cleared for release or transfer.

Our government keeps Guantanamo open: The [National Defense Authorization Act 2013](#) (NDAA) recently passed by Congress and signed by President Obama does little to shut down the Guantanamo prison, though the president had promised to close it almost four years ago. Certain provisions in the NDAA make it nearly impossible to use government funds to transfer detainees out of Guantanamo, so the facility is likely to stay open indefinitely despite President Obama's signing statement criticizing these provisions.

We're halfway there: The Senate Select Committee on Intelligence (SSCI) recently adopted a report on its three-year investigation into the CIA's use of enhanced interrogation techniques at Guantanamo and other military detention facilities in Afghanistan and Iraq during the Bush administration. The adoption of the report is a victory for everyone who is against torture. Now, [the report needs to be declassified](#) so it can put to rest the claim that torture is a useful interrogation technique and can also lead to the creation of safeguards to help prevent torture from occurring. Senator John McCain [has urged](#) the report's declassification so that all Americans can see the record for themselves to finally close this painful chapter for our country.

Landmark ruling recognizes use of torture: The recent [ruling](#) in the case of [Khalid El-Masri](#) a German national mistaken for an Al Qaeda terrorist and detained and tortured by the CIA in the European Court of Human Rights is yet another win for the anti-torture community. The court is the first to rule that some CIA interrogation practices were tantamount to torture.

Torture, glorified: The recently released film Zero Dark Thirty is a blatant glorification of torture. Senators Diane Feinstein (D-California), John McCain (R-Arizona), and Carl Levin (R-Michigan) [co-authored a letter to Sony Pictures](#) stating their deep disappointment with the movie and labeling it as factually inaccurate, since information leading to the capture of Osama Bin Laden was not obtained from CIA detainees subjected to coercive interrogation techniques. We need to do all we can to fight the acceptance of torturous practices as useful methods of interrogation, as it seems many Americans still support such techniques. An informal [survey](#) last year found that 41 percent of Americans said United States should torture prisoners captured in the fight against terrorism, an increase from a similar poll in 2007.

With your help, we've taken small steps toward shining a light on torture that has been committed in our names. But, we must continue our work together to restore our human rights values. [Take action today to help prevent torture in the future!](#)

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