

Human Rights Watch

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

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/03/17/un-human-rights-council-joint-ngo-statement-demanding-full-transparency-and> **Public Facing Advocacy Writing**

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Statement delivered under the Item 4 Interactive Dialogue

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This is the first Council session after the release of the summary of the U.S. Senate Select Committee on Intelligence Study of the CIAs Detention and Interrogation Program. The Senate torture report reveals information relating to the commission of serious crimes under U.S. and international law, including torture, unlawful killing, enforced disappearance, and sexual assault.

The [US](#) governments decision to partly declassify and make public the summary of the Senate torture report is an important first step. The full report must also be released. And transparency must be followed by accountability measures. Failure to conduct a comprehensive criminal investigation would contribute to the notion that torture remains a permissible policy option, undermine bedrock principles of international law and foster a culture of impunity.

These despicable acts of torture, at times referred to as enhanced interrogation techniques, and other horrific crimes were part of a deliberate, coordinated government program authorized at the highest levels of the Bush administration. These practices by the United States damaged not only that country, but others as well, as the CIAs detention and interrogation program paid other countries to host secret prisons where foreign nationals were tortured.

Continued impunity is a dark chapter in American history that threatens to undermine the universally recognized prohibition against torture and other abusive treatment and sends the dangerous message to U.S. and foreign officials that there will be no consequences for future abuses.

President Barack Obama said America should look forward, not backwards. We strongly disagree. Bringing justice to victims has been possible even in post- authoritarian settings, as experiences in [Latin America](#) demonstrate. International law prohibits granting immunity to officials involved and no exceptional circumstance whatsoever can be invoked to justify torture.

We therefore call on the United States to appoint a special prosecutor to investigate those responsible for acts of torture and other grave abuses.

This Council must demand nothing less than full accountability and transparency. The world has much to gain from rejecting impunity, returning to the rule of law and providing adequate redress including reparation and apology to the hundreds of people so brutally abused.

Statement by

American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)

Arab Center for the Promotion of Human Rights (ACPHR)

Asian Legal Resource Centre (ALRC)

Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (CIHRS)

Center for Constitutional Rights (CCR)

Centro de Estudios Legales y Sociales (CELS)

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East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project (EHAHRDP) Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights (EIPR)

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Liberty
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Polish Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights
Reprieve
US Human Rights Network (USHRN)
Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA)
World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT)

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