

# Human Rights Watch

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

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2005/05/10/egypt-suspects-sent-back-face-torture>

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Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Yemen, and Other Countries Have Rendered Suspects to Egypt

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Scores of alleged Islamist militants have been sent back to Egypt, where they have faced torture and serious mistreatment, Human Rights Watch said in [a report](#) released today. The United States is among the countries that have rendered such suspects to Egypt.

The Egyptian government has held many of the suspects in prolonged incommunicado detention. In some cases, Egypt has refused to acknowledge the whereabouts of those persons, and even the fact that they were in custody, raising concerns that some of the suspects have been forcibly disappeared.

The 53-page report, *Black Hole: The Fate of Islamists Rendered to Egypt*, identifies some 60 individuals, mostly alleged Islamist militants of Egyptian origin, whom other states rendered to Egypt since 1994. The sending states have mainly been Arab and South Asian countries, but include Sweden as well as the United States.

Sending suspects to a country where they are likely to be tortured is strictly prohibited under international law, said Joe Stork, deputy Middle East director at Human Rights Watch. Egypt's terrible record of torturing prisoners means that no country should forcibly send a suspect there.

Human Rights Watch said that sending wanted individuals to Egypt is a clear violation of the international law that prohibits extraditing or otherwise transferring persons to a country where they face likely torture.

The report examines seven cases in detail, including two in which Egyptian security agents abducted Yemenis in Cairo, one of whom later ended up at the U.S. naval base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

Human Rights Watch cites cases, beginning in 1995, where the United States facilitated or played an operational role in sending wanted individuals to Egypt. A number of such cases happened since 2001 during U.S. President George W. Bush's administration.

Bush defended this practice at his press conference on April 28, without mentioning Egypt by name. We operate within the law, and we send people to countries where they say they're not going to torture the people, he said.

The U.S. Department of State's latest human rights report on Egypt, published in February, stated that torture and abuse of detainees by police, security personnel, and prison guards remained common and persistent, and detailed numerous cases.

The Bush administration knows full well that Egypt tortures people in custody, and that its promises not to torture a given suspect are not worth the paper they're written on, Stork said. This fig leaf doesn't hide U.S. complicity in the terrible abuses that await suspects sent to Egypt.

By promoting renditions to places like Egypt, Washington also sends a message to other states, in effect saying we don't care how abusive you are.

In a report published April 15, Human Rights Watch documented extensively how diplomatic assurances from governments known to practice torture cannot be trusted.

No government should seek or accept diplomatic assurances from Egypt when it comes to torture, Stork said. No state should send a wanted person to Egypt under any circumstances until it cleans up its act.

*Black Hole: The Fate of Islamists Rendered to Egypt* will be available in English at:

<https://www.hrw.org/reports/2005/egypt0505/>

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