

# Physicians for Human Rights

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

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

### Policy Issue Resources

Torture is the intentional infliction of severe mental or physical pain or suffering, by or with the approval of state agents. Torture breaks peoples bodies and minds, rips apart communities, and destroys democratic institutions and the rule of law. Since our founding in 1986, PHRs core mission has included investigating, documenting, and reporting the devastating consequences of torture on individuals, institutions, and society.

Torture and ill-treatment often have serious health consequences for their victims. Sometimes they leave physical scars; often they result in profound and long-term psychological trauma. Health professionals can detect signs of physical and mental abuse that are not evident to traditional investigators. As such, they can play a critical role in preventing torture and ensuring accountability.

Across the globe, PHRs work provides physical and psychological proof of torture and ill-treatment. We validate survivors voices, investigate abusive detention and other practices, and expose medical professionals who enable or participate in torture. We empower communities around the world to document evidence, so that torturers can be brought to justice and these abusive practices can end.

This is how we work:

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Physicians for Human Rights 2022