

Human Rights Group Demands U.S. Investigate Torture by George W. Bush Administration



New York, December 2 (RHC)-- Human Rights Watch has called on the United States to investigate torture by the Central Intelligence Agency during the administration of former U.S. President George W. Bush.

The rights group named 21 U.S. officials "who created, authorized, and implemented the CIA program" in its report, saying they should "be among those investigated for conspiracy to torture as well as other crimes."

In addition to Bush, the list includes Vice President Dick Cheney, National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice, CIA Director George Tenet as well as an individual identified as "CTC Legal" in the U.S. Senate report on CIA torture program released last year.

"It's been a year since the Senate torture report, and still the Obama administration has not opened new criminal investigations into CIA torture," Kenneth Roth, executive director of Human Rights Watch, said in a statement. "Without criminal investigations, which would remove torture as a policy option, Obama's legacy will forever be poisoned."

In December 2014, the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence published a redacted report on the Central Intelligence Agency's torture program against detainees allegedly implicated in the September 11, 2001 attacks but nothing has been done ever since to bring the perpetrators to justice.

"Many detainees were held by the CIA in pitch-dark windowless cells, chained to walls, naked or diapered, for weeks or months at a time. The CIA forced them into painful stress positions that made it impossible for them to lie down or sleep for days, to the point where many hallucinated or begged to be killed to end their misery. It used "waterboarding" and similar techniques to cause near suffocation or drowning, crammed detainees naked into tiny boxes, and prevented them from bathing, using toilets, or cutting their hair or nails for months," the rights group's report read.

"If the United States with its established democracy and stable political system can flout its legal obligation to prosecute torture, it undermines respect for the rule of law the world over," Roth said. "Government officials who went shopping for and helped to craft legal opinions justifying the unjustifiable shouldn't be able to rely on those opinions to shield themselves from liability."

He further called on the Barack Obama administration to bring the torturers to justice even if they are "senior officials." The executive director of Human Rights Watch said: "In the face of the Obama administration's refusal to investigate and prosecute senior officials responsible for these serious crimes, other countries should proceed. If President Obama won't prevent a dangerous precedent of impunity for torture, other countries should step in."

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