

Indefinite Detention and Torture Continues In Your Name!

Has Obama put an end to torture, rendition, and indefinite detention?
Facts you need to know:

1 Obama admits Bush officials tortured, but refuses to prosecute them.

Cheney has bragged about authorizing water boarding of detainees. In January 2009, Obama told ABC's George Stephanopoulos, that he believed water boarding was torture. Torture is a violation of Geneva Conventions. The Obama administration is, therefore, not only morally, but legally, required to prosecute Bush Regime officials for torture.

2 Under Obama, the U.S. is still holding detainees without charges or trial.

During the campaign Obama declared habeas corpus to be **“the foundation of Anglo-American law.”** Habeas corpus is your right to challenge your detention. It is a 900-year-old right. Without habeas corpus there are no restraints on a government's powers to detain and punish.

Contrary to his rhetoric, the Obama administration is continuing the Bush Regime's policies of denying prisoners habeas corpus rights and has **even adopted the same arguments made by Bush.** In February 2009, the Obama administration declared in Federal Court that it would not grant habeas corpus rights to detainees in U.S. custody in Bagram, Afghanistan.

In March 2009 Obama's Justice Department claimed that Guantanamo prisoners who were detained before June 2008 had no habeas corpus rights. On May 21, 2010 the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia ruled in favor of the Obama administration, holding that three prisoners who are being held by the U. S. at Bagram Air Base in Afghanistan cannot challenge



their detention in U.S. courts.

3 Don't be fooled just because Obama isn't using the term “enemy combatant”

The Obama administration will no longer use the term “enemy combatant,” but it's a change in name only: in the same court filing in which it made this announcement, Obama's Justice Department made clear that it would continue to detain prisoners at Guantanamo without charge. As the NY Times put it:

“[T]he [Obama] Justice Department argued that the president has the authority to detain terrorism suspects there without criminal charges, much as the Bush administration had asserted. It provided a broad definition of those who can be held, which was not significantly different from the one used by the Bush administration.”

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Meanwhile, Obama's executive orders do not ban indefinite detention. In addition, at his confirmation hearing, Obama's Attorney General Eric Holder said: "There are possibly many other people who are not going to be able to be tried but who nevertheless are dangerous to this country... We're going to have to try to figure out what we do with them." Holder suggested prisoners could be detained for the length of their war of terror which, as we know, has no set end point.

4 Guantanamo is still open. The prison at Bagram is growing and torture is being committed.

According to Reuters, abuse of prisoners worsened shortly after the election of Obama:

"Abuses began to pick up in December 2008 after Obama was elected, human rights lawyer Ahmed Ghappour told Reuters. He cited beatings, the dislocation of limbs, spraying of pepper spray into closed cells, applying pepper spray to toilet paper and over-forcefeeding detainees who are on hunger strike."

Earlier this year Scott Horton reported in Harper's Magazine on three murders of detainees in 2006 at Guantanamo that the military tried to cover up as suicides. More is coming out about torture at Bagram Detention Center in Afghanistan. Recently Andy Worthington reported on the detention and torture of three teenagers in his article, "Torture and the 'Black' Prison," or What Obama is Doing at Bagram (Part One)."

On June 7, 2010 Chris Floyd of **Empire Burlesque** wrote that under the Bush Regime medical personnel experimented on detainees

to prove that the techniques used did not constitute torture. The chilling history of Nazi medical experimentation on those in concentration camps lurks in this revelation. (<http://chris-floyd.com/articles/1-latest-news/1976-echoes-of-mengele-medical-experiments-torture-and-continuity-in-the-american-gulag.html>)

This is a violation of Geneva Conventions and there is evidence that these experiments are going on under Obama.

5 Obama is continuing rendition.

During his confirmation hearing, new CIA director Leon Panetta made it clear the Obama administration will continue rendition. Rendition is the practice of kidnapping somebody in one country and shipping them to another country for detention. Michael Ratner, president of the Center for Constitutional Rights (CCR), said "Rendition is a violation of sovereignty. It's a kidnapping. It's force and violence... Once you open the door to rendition, you're opening the door, essentially, to a lawless world."

Obama supporters have attempted to draw the distinction between this practice and "extraordinary rendition," defined as the practice of transferring somebody to another country knowing that they will be tortured. During his confirmation hearing, Leon Panetta said that under the Bush administration, "There were efforts by the CIA to seek and to receive assurances that those individuals would not be mistreated." So Panetta is embracing the practices of the Bush Regime by continuing rendition!

Panetta then added, "I will seek **the same kind of assurances** that those individuals will not be mistreated." (emphasis added)

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