

29th Session of the UN Human Rights Council – June 15 - July 3, 2015

New call from national and international rights groups on the need to ensure accountability for the U.S. CIA Torture Program

Item 4 – Interactive Dialogue

Last December, the U.S. Senate Select Committee on Intelligence released the summary, findings and conclusions of its four-year investigation into the Detention and Interrogation Program operated by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). Since then, the international human rights community has reiterated the call for full transparency about and accountability for this unlawful program, in which systematic human rights violations, including the crimes under international law of torture and enforced disappearance were committed. Last March, more than 20 human rights groups called on the Council to take action and demand that the United States fulfill its international human rights obligations on truth, accountability and remedy, including by appointing a special prosecutor to conduct a comprehensive and credible criminal investigation of alleged serious crimes described in the report and to establish a special fund to compensate victims.

Last month, during the United States' UPR session, a significant number of Member-States joined civil society's call and raised the issue of accountability and reparations for the use of torture and other human rights violations in the context of U.S. counter-terrorism policies and practices.

They also emphasized the need to end indefinite detention and close the Guantánamo detention facility, one of the remaining examples of the unlawful actions taken in the name of national security since the attacks of 11 September 2001. Delivering justice for the victims and ending indefinite detention in Guantánamo are both issues that still require more decisive and urgent action from the Obama administration.

On 26 June, the world will mark the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture. The U.S. government was a strong supporter of the adoption of the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (UNCAT), which is commemorated every year on this day. The United States is also a generous contributor to the U.N. Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture. But the U.S.'s failure to hold accountable those responsible for the CIA program of torture and enforced disappearance, to ensure the victims' rights to truth and reparations, and to take other actions to ensure non-repetition of these heinous crimes leaves the U.S. in violation of its own obligations under UNCAT and other international instruments and is a serious blow to the international human rights system, in general, and to the global effort to eradicate torture and enforced disappearance, in particular.

During its next session, the Council will adopt the Working Group report on the U.S. UPR. We call on the Council to send a strong message against impunity for torture and enforced disappearances and demand that the United States take measures to meet the full spectrum of its obligations under international law to ensure accountability, transparency, reparations and non-repetition, including declassification of the full Senate report on the CIA detention program, independent comprehensive criminal investigation, and the issuing of apologies and

compensation to victims of enforced disappearance, torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment.

Continued impunity is a dark chapter in the history of the United States 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. Other governments implicated in the CIA torture program must also be held accountable and are obligated to conduct independent investigations, hold perpetrators accountable, and provide effective remedies to victims of torture, enforced disappearance and other human rights violations.

We know from the experiences of civil society groups and survivors of torture around the world that the struggle for accountability for human rights violations and the search for truth can be a long and difficult journey. Yet the United States has much to gain from rejecting impunity, returning to the rule of law, and providing adequate redress to the dozens and dozens of people it so brutally abused.

We hope the United States will follow that path.

Submitted by:

American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)
Centro de Estudios Legales y Sociales (CELS)
Conectas Direitos Humanos
Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA)

Endorsed by

Abogadas y Abogados para la Justicia y los Derechos Humanos, A. C
Abuelas de Plaza de Mayo
Acción Solidaria en VIH/Sida
Advocates for U.S. Torture Prosecutions
African Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies
Ágora Espacio Civil Paraguay
Allard K. Lowenstein International Human Rights Clinic, Yale Law School
Amnesty International
Appeal for Justice
Asociación de Familiares de Presos y Desaparecidos Saharaui
Asociación MINGA
Asociación para la Prevención de la Tortura
Asociación Pro derechos Humanos
Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies
Center for Constitutional Rights
Center for Justice and Accountability
Center for Victims of Torture
Centre for Human Rights
Centro de Derechos Humanos de las Mujeres, A. C.
Centro de Documentación en Derechos Humanos “Segundo Montes Mozo S.J.”
Centro de Políticas Públicas y Derechos Humanos

Centro por la Justicia y el Derecho Internacional
Centro Regional de Derechos Humanos y Justicia de Género - Corporación
Humanas
Civilis Derechos Humanos
Colectivo de Abogados "José Alvear Restrepo"
Coletivo PESO/Periferia Soberana
Comisión de Justicia y Paz
Comisión Ecuménica de Derechos Humanos
Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative
Consultoría para los Derechos Humanos y el Desplazamiento
Coordinadora Nacional de Derechos Humanos
Corporación Sisma Mujer
Defensa de Niñas y Niños- Internacional
Diyarbakir Bar Association
Due Process of Law Foundation
Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights
European Center for Constitutional and Human Rights
Four Freedoms Forum & Hawai'i Institute for Human Rights
Fundación Myrna Mack
Fundar. Centro de Análisis e Investigación A.C
Gillis Long Poverty Law Center - Loyola University New Orleans College of Law
Global Justice Clinic, NYU School of Law
Grupo de Mujeres de San Cristóbal de las Casas
Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights
Human Rights Committee of the Law Society of England and Wales
Human Rights Institute of Columbia Law School
Human Rights Law Network
Human Rights Watch
Instituto Braços - Centro de Defesa de Direitos Humanos de Sergipe
Instituto Brasileiro de Ciências Criminais
Instituto de Estudios Comparados en Ciencias Penales de Guatemala
Instituto de Estudios Legales y Sociales del Uruguay
Instituto Internacional de Derecho y Sociedad
Instituto Migrações e Direitos Humanos
Instituto Pro Bono
International Center for Advocates Against Discrimination
International Commission of Jurists
International Federation for Human Rights
International Human Rights Clinic, Harvard Law School
International Human Rights Program, Boston University School of Law
International Justice Network
International-Lawyers
Justice Studies Department -Northeastern Illinois University
Kenya Human Rights Commission

KontraS (Commission for the Disappeared and Victims of Violence) in Indonesia
Laboratório de Análise Política Mundial
Legal Resources Centre
Madres Linea Fundadora
Meiklejohn Civil Liberties Institute
Minority Rights Group International
Movimiento Autónomo de Mujeres
National Lawyers Guild
North Carolina Stop Torture Now
Observatorio Venezolano de Prisiones
Oficina Jurídica Para la Mujer
Partnership For Justice
Paz y Esperanza
PEN American Center
Physicians for Human Rights
Plataforma Interamericana de Derechos Humanos, Democracia y Desarrollo
Programa de Pós Graduação em Segurança Pública e Direitos Humanos da
Universidade Federal de Rondônia
Programa Venezolano de Educación Acción en Derechos Humanos
Psychologists for Social Responsibility
Quaker House
Reprieve
Santa Clara University School of Law, International Human Rights Clinic
Seguridad en Democracia
Sociedade Maranhense de Direitos Humanos
The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights
The Woodhull Sexual Freedom Alliance
Torture Abolition and Survivors Support Coalition (TASSC) International
Unidad de Protección a Defensores y Defensoras de Derechos Humanos de
Guatemala
Unión Nacional de Mujeres Guatemaltecas
Unitarian Universalist Service Committee
US Human Rights Network
Women's Link Worldwide
World Organization Against Torture