

From [Physicians for Human Rights](#)

A broad coalition of human rights, health, and religious groups filed a formal complaint today with the US Department of Health and Human Services Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) against the Central Intelligence Agency. This action is in response to new revelations by Physicians for Human Rights that the CIA allegedly engaged in illegal human subject research and experimentation on detainees as part of Bush-era interrogation practices. The CIA has denied the allegations and has refused to investigate evidence of experimentation presented by Physicians for Human Rights in a report entitled *Experiments in Torture: Evidence of Human Subject Research and Experimentation in the "Enhanced" Interrogation Program*. The report is available at <http://phrtorturepapers.org/?p=430>

The following groups have joined the OHRP complaint so far:

- Physicians for Human Rights
- Amnesty International USA
- Bill of Rights Defense Committee
- Center for Constitutional Rights
- Center for Victims of Torture
- Human Rights Watch
- National Religious Campaign Against Torture
- Psychologists for Social Responsibility

"OHRP has a legal responsibility to investigate these disturbing new allegations about the CIA and possible illegal human experimentation on detainees, despite the refusal by Langelly and the White House to do so," stated Nathaniel Raymond, lead author of the Physicians for Human Rights report. "OHRP has a reputation for enforcing strict adherence to human research protections, which it must bring to bear against any CIA malfeasance that it uncovers."

Reverend Richard L. Killmer, Executive Director of the National Religious Campaign Against

Torture, stated, “The world recognized after World War II that illegal experiments on human beings go even beyond torture in defiling and breaking human beings. The National Religious Campaign Against Torture is joining the complaint asking the federal Office for Human Research Protections to investigate human experimentation on detainees by the CIA and is also continuing its call for a Commission of Inquiry to investigate ALL torture practices by the U.S. government since 9/11 and to recommend the needed safeguards to assure that U.S. sponsored torture will never happen again.”

Tom Parker, Amnesty International USA’s Policy Director for Terrorism, Counterterrorism and Human Rights, said: “Physicians for Human Rights’ report makes it clear that, if nothing else, mental health professionals on the US government payroll provided ‘material support’ to torture. We are calling on the relevant authorities to conduct a full investigation into these activities as they are required to do by law.”

OHRP is mandated by federal regulations known as “the Common Rule” to investigate complaints alleging violations of ethics, regulations, and statutes governing human subject research that is funded or conducted by the US government. The CIA is one of seventeen federal agencies covered by the Common Rule. OHRP can sanction institutions or government agencies receiving federal research monies that violate these standards. Sanctions can include suspension of research funds and activities, as well as referral of cases to other agencies, including the US Department of Justice.

Said Psychologists for Social Responsibility (PsySR) President-Elect, Stephen Soldz: “Psychological research is built upon the fundamental principles of informed consent and concern for the welfare of those we study and should never be used for harm. The new Physicians for Human Rights report on research and experimentation by the CIA suggests that psychologists and other health professionals in the “enhanced interrogation” torture program violated this fundamental ethical obligation. We call upon the Office of Human Research Protections, the Justice Department, and professional associations to investigate and sanction those found to have participated in this illegal and unethical research.”

The organizations filing the complaint with OHRP announced that they would mobilize their individual members to sign onto the complaint. This represents a unique moment where individual citizens and others concerned about detainee abuse and research ethics can directly request a formal investigation of alleged detainee abuse.

“Human experimentation is repugnant, and offensive to the post-WWII legacy that our nation’s veterans fought and died to establish,” said Shahid Buttar, Executive Director of the Bill of Rights Defense Committee. “Until senior officials responsible for human experimentation and torture programs face justice, our nation will continue to violate (and erode) the international laws we helped establish 60 years ago. Meanwhile, a legitimacy crisis continues to undermine our courts and prisons — which imprison millions of Americans, but none of the politically connected officials who continue to stand above the law.”

Center for Constitutional Rights Attorney Gitanjali S. Gutierrez emphasized, “These crimes must be investigated and health professionals held accountable. This complaint must also be the beginning of a more thorough investigation into the treatment of men in the custody of other US agencies, particularly Department of Defense, and held at the secret ‘Camp No’ at Guantánamo where the accounts of soldiers stationed at the base at the time have suggested our clients were tortured to death.”

Dr. Steve Miles, board member of the Center for Victims of Torture, professor at the Center for Bioethics, Department of Medicine at the University of Minnesota Medical School and author of Oath Betrayed: America’s Torture Doctors, agreed, stating, “As an organization committed to healing torture survivors and ending the practice of torture, the Center for Victims of Torture (CVT) is appalled by the implications of this report, and renews its call for an independent non-partisan commission to examine and report publicly on torture and cruel treatment of prisoners since September 11, 2001. Such a commission should be adequately funded and given subpoena power and a mandate to fully examine the facts and circumstances of such abuses and to recommend measures to prevent future abuses. ”