

“They say Torture is for NATIONAL SECURITY, we say Torture is a CRIME AGAINST HUMANITY!”

“Release the photos, quit hiding the proof! Release the photos, the world wants the truth!”  
—chanted outside the U.S. Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, San Francisco

On the National Day of Resistance to U.S. Torture, the San Francisco Bay Area World Can't Wait chapter, along with members of the San Francisco National Lawyers Guild's Committee Against Torture, Code Pink, the Berkeley Fellowship of Unitarian Universalists, and National Accountability Network gathered at the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. This protest added to the National Day's demands our call to publicly repudiate the lifetime appointment of Torture Judge Jay Bybee to the federal bench.

About thirty people rallied outside the court, raising the demand to disbar and prosecute Bybee for codifying specific torture tactics and for giving high Bush administration officials immunity protections from both civil and criminal suit. San Francisco's was one of six (6) protests on this National Day focused on Bybee – protests were going on also in Pasadena, Anchorage, Honolulu, Fresno, and Portland, Oregon.

A super-sized banner reading “Torture is a War Crime! Release the Torture Photos! Prosecute the War Criminals!” lined one corner of the courthouse in downtown San Francisco. The “Bush and Bybee Museum of Torture” was nearby – an exhibit which included the fourteen torture methods Bybee authorized in an August 2002 memo: sleep deprivation, stress positions, waterboarding, forced nudity, cramped confinement in a dark space, water dousing, wall standing, walling, facial slaps, abdominal slaps, insects placed in a confinement box, facial holds, attention grasps, and dietary manipulation.

Each torture method was named and the abuse described. For instance: “Wall Standing: To induce muscle fatigue, the detainee is forced to lean with only his fingers for support against a wall four to five feet away from where he is standing.” The Museum also displayed photographs of torture from Abu Ghraib. Individuals in orange jumpsuits posed in the midst of the display, silently posing the question: “Who speaks for the detainees that continue to be tortured under Obama?”

Passersby asked, "Our country let this happen?" and "Who is Bybee?" as they were handed flyers and orange ribbons. These questions created a political terrain for further conversation and investigation among the people. Many conversations with pedestrians were also started directly in front of the courthouse steps, where a 9-foot statue-like Obama doll held a sign: "Bush's INDEFINITE DETENTION was bad... Obama's PREVENTIVE DETENTION is worse!"

The demonstration also included a press conference featuring World Can't Wait, Progressive Democrats of America, Code Pink and two attorneys from the National Lawyers Guild, Sharon Adams and Anne Weills. Adams wrote the Guild's recent California Bar Association complaint against Bybee and spoke forcefully about the moral and political reality of torture as well as the legal. Weills, who is working on bring charges against Bybee within the federal court system, also drew a larger-than-legalities picture, calling for a halt to the whole ideological view of empire that has made torture palatable. On behalf of World Can't Wait, Stephanie Tang discussed the day's main demands and the urgency of raising up resistance to the whole torture state. Protesters announced that demonstrations will meet Bybee whenever he comes to this courthouse.

TV and print reporters gathered photographs and interviews. A staff writer from *The San Francisco Daily Journal* ("California's Largest Legal News Provider"), stood listening and then interviewed protesters talking about the Bybee bar complaint and ongoing efforts to fire, disbar and prosecute John Yoo, who plans to resume teaching at Berkeley Law this fall after a visiting professorship at Chapman Law this past spring.

At the end of the press conference, a call went out emphasizing the need for sustained resistance and for everyone to begin making plans for another demonstration. And a representative of the Berkeley Fellowship of Unitarian Universalists invited everyone to an evening performance of the anti-torture play "Pedro and the Captain" by famed Uruguayan writer Mario Benedetti (presented by the BFUU as part of today's National Day of Resistance to U.S. Torture).

One of our chants clearly states why we need to be out in the streets, bringing the truth to the people:

"Bush and Obama

The torture stays the same

Preventive detention/Extraordinary rendition/Military commissions/Guantanamo prison/Bagram Prison

Not in Our Name!"