



AMERICAN  
PSYCHOLOGICAL  
ASSOCIATION

May 15, 2008

Amrit Singh, Esq.  
American Civil Liberties Union  
125 Broad St., 18<sup>th</sup> Floor  
New York, NY 10004

Dear Ms. Singh:

I am writing in response to the April 2008 news release regarding documents obtained by the ACLU through a Freedom of Information Act request that offer insights into military interrogations.

First, I would like to commend the ACLU and you personally for your commitment to uncovering details surrounding the treatment of detainees at detention facilities run by the U.S. government around the world. The American Psychological Association (APA) shares your commitment to ensure that human rights are protected in *all* settings. The Washington Post called APA's most recent resolution a "rebuke" of the Bush Administration interrogation policies, by virtue of APA's having condemned and prohibited specific techniques associated with "harsh" interrogations.

We find what is revealed about abuse in the newly released documents abhorrent. The position of the American Psychological Association is clear and unequivocal: There is never a justification for torture or abuse. In carefully reviewing the documents, we note that according to the information obtained by the ACLU, psychologists supporting interrogations "emphasized their separation from detainee medical care," and that a psychologist who suspected abuse "recommended the interrogation not proceed and brought in medical personnel to evaluate the detainee." According to these documents, APA's policy of engagement served the intended purpose: to stop interrogations that cross the bounds of ethical propriety.

APA is committed to promoting the humane treatment of detainees. We applaud the efforts of the ACLU to learn the truth about U.S. treatment of detainees. APA will adjudicate any allegation that an APA member has engaged in unethical conduct. If you have information that a psychologist has engaged in torture, I ask that you immediately bring this information to my attention.

Sincerely,

Stephen Behnke, JD, PhD  
Director, Ethics Office