

CIA Crucified captive in Abu Ghraib Prison

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Global Research, June 28, 2009

28 June 2009

Theme: [Crimes against Humanity](#),
[Intelligence](#)

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The Central Intelligence Agency crucified a prisoner in Abu Ghraib prison near Baghdad, according to a report published in The New Yorker magazine.

"A forensic examiner found that he (the prisoner) had essentially been crucified; he died from asphyxiation after having been hung by his arms, in a hood, and suffering broken ribs," the magazine's Jane Mayer writes in the magazine's June 22nd issue. "Military pathologists classified the case a homicide." The date of the murder was not given.

"No criminal charges have ever been brought against any C.I.A. officer involved in the torture program, despite the fact that at least three prisoners interrogated by agency personnel died as a result of mistreatment," Mayer notes.

An earlier report, by John Hendren in The Los Angeles Times indicted other torture killings. And Human Rights First says nearly 100 detainees have died in U.S. custody in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Hendren reported that one Manadel Jamadi died "of blunt-force injuries" complicated by "compromised respiration" at Abu Ghraib prison "while he was with Navy SEALs and other special operations troops." Another victim, Abdul Jaleel, died while gagged and shackled to a cell door with his hands over his head." Yet another prisoner, Maj. Gen. Abid Mowhosh, former commander of Iraq's air defenses, "died of asphyxiation due to smothering and chest compression" in Qaim, Iraq.

"There is no question that U.S. interrogations have resulted in deaths," says Anthony Romero, executive director of the ACLU. "High-ranking officials who knew about the torture and sat on their hands and those who created and endorsed these policies must be held accountable. America must stop putting its head in the sand and deal with the torture scandal." At least scores of detainees in U.S. custody have died and homicide is suspected. As far back as May, 2004, the Pentagon conceded at least 37 deaths of prisoners in its custody in Iraq and Afghanistan had prompted investigations.

Nathaniel Raymond, of Physicians for Human Rights, told The New Yorker, "We still don't know how many detainees were in the black sites, or who they were. We don't fully know the White House's role, or the C.I.A.'s role. We need a full accounting, especially as it relates to health professionals."

Recently released Justice memos, he noted, contain numerous references to CIA medical personnel participating in coercive interrogation sessions. "They were the designers, the legitimizers, and the implementers," Raymond said. "This is arguably the single greatest medical-ethics scandal in American history. We need answers."

The ACLU obtained its information from the Pentagon through a Freedom of Information suit. Documents received included 44 autopsies and death reports as well as a summary of autopsy reports of people seized in Iraq and Afghanistan. An ACLU statement noted, "This covers just a fraction of the total number of Iraqis and Afghans who have died while in U.S. custody." (*Italics added*).

Torture by the CIA has been facilitated by the Agency's ability to hide prisoners in "black sites" kept secret from the Red Cross, to hold prisoners off the books, and to detain them for years without bringing charges or providing them with lawyers.

Kenneth Roth, executive director of Human Rights Watch, denounced the Obama administration for considering "prevention detention," *The New Yorker's* Mayer wrote. Roth said this tactic "mimics the Bush Administration's abusive approach."

From all indications, CIA Director Panetta has no intention of bringing to justice CIA officials involved in the systematic torture of prisoners. Panetta told Mayer, "I'm going to give people the benefit of the doubt...If they do the job that they're paid to do, I can't ask for a hell of a lot more."

Such sentiments differ markedly from those Panetta wrote in an article published last year in the January Washington Monthly: "We either believe in the dignity of the individual, the rule of law, and the prohibition of cruel and unusual punishment, or we don't. There is no middle ground."

One way to discern who really runs a country is to look to see which individuals, if any, are above the law. In the Obama administration, like its predecessors, they include the employees of the CIA. Crucifixions they execute in the Middle East differ from those reported in the New Testament in at least one important respect: Jesus Christ had a trial.

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