



National Religious Campaign Against Torture

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November 1, 2007

The Honorable Patrick Leahy, Chairman
U.S. Senate Committee on the Judiciary
433 Russell Senate Office Building
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Leahy:

The National Religious Campaign Against Torture (NRCAT), a campaign of over 130 religious organizations working together to abolish U.S.-sponsored torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment of anyone, without exception, is deeply concerned about the responses Judge Michael Mukasey gave both at his nomination hearing and in his most recent written response on the subject of torture. We believe his answers leave open the door to the use of techniques by the U.S. government that would be cruel, inhuman and degrading and that could amount to torture. This is true not only for waterboarding, which is clearly illegal and a form of torture, but also for a number of other techniques we understand the CIA has used and may continue to use.

Our country already knows what happens when we have an Attorney General who countenances torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. We lose our moral compass; decent Americans are called upon on our behalf to commit acts that damage their souls; our soldiers who may be captured are placed in greater jeopardy; we are shamed in the eyes of the world.

It is time to turn a new page; the confirmation of a new Attorney General is such an opportunity. It would be tragic to allow an individual who has not clearly rejected the illegal and immoral practices of torture and cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment to become the leading law enforcement officer of our nation.

NRCAT members, who include representatives from the Catholic, evangelical Christian, mainline Protestant, Orthodox Christian, Unitarian Universalist, Jewish, Quaker, Muslim, and Sikh communities, believe that torture violates the basic dignity of the human person that all religions, in their highest ideals, hold dear. It degrades everyone involved – policy-makers, perpetrators and victims – and it contradicts our nation's most cherished values. We believe that any policies that permit torture and inhuman treatment are shocking and morally intolerable.

We urge you to approve a nominee as Attorney General who is unequivocal in his or her stance against the use of torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment.

Sincerely,

Linda Gustitus
President

Rev. Richard Killmer
Executive Director