



Written by [Thomas R. Eddlem](#) on August 10, 2009

Report: Holder Will Order Torture Probe

The Chicago Tribune is reporting that sources inside the U.S. Justice Department claim Attorney General Eric Holder will likely soon order a Justice Department probe of felony torture by the CIA during the Bush administration.

While that is good news for Americans who like living under the rule of law, Holder's probe will reportedly be limited to lower-level CIA officials. The probe will be focusing on "whether people went beyond the techniques that were authorized," [according to the Tribune](#). News of a coming probe is a serious turnaround. Less than two weeks ago the *Washington Post* reported that such a probe was highly unlikely after interviewing six former U.S. attorneys general.



While the United States is now possibly about to take its first, tentative step toward justice for tortured detainees, it has taken [only a month for Iran to admit](#) it had engaged in torture during its recent spate of election violence. The Iranian Prosecutor-General Qorbanali Dori-Najafabadi, acknowledged in front of the world [August 8](#) that "painful accidents which cannot be defended, and those who were involved should be punished." Qorbanali Dori-Najafabadi and others in the Iranian government have particularly acknowledged "the Kahrizak incident" where several detainees died of torture.

By way of contrast, several dozen detainees in U.S. custody have died during the "war on terror" under what are — at best — suspicious causes, and the United States government has continually denied torture allegations. While a few death certificates [liberated from oblivion by the ACLU](#) candidly speak about death from blunt force trauma and heat stroke, most of the deaths are full of cases like [this](#): "25 year old male collapsed while performing morning prayers. Cause of Death: Myocarditis (inflammation of the heart). Manner of Death: Natural. No evidence of significant trauma." Now, it's hardly normal for a 25-year-old to drop dead of heart disease. At Guantanamo and other U.S. prisons, heart attacks among the young men in custody were at such an epidemic scale that you would think heart disease was contagious. In fact, there was so much heart disease — officially — among the young men who became detainees that if they weren't tortured, they wouldn't have had to be detained at all: most of them were virtually on their death beds when they were picked up, if you believe the autopsies.

But then there's the photographic evidence of torture that President Obama — following in George W. Bush's footsteps in a most precise manner — is [suppressing](#). The *London Telegraph* [reported](#) back in May that photographs showed every manner of torture — including rape — and then quoted U.S. Major-General Anthony Taguba, who confirmed the torture. Taguba was in a position to know; he was the man in charge of the Pentagon's Abu Ghraib investigation.

Obama has not just suppressed photos of the rape of detainees, he [decided Friday](#) to have his attorneys



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take the issue all the way to the Supreme Court.

Naturally, the ACLU is miffed at the decision. "The appeals court soundly rejected all of the government's arguments for withholding the photos, and it's unfortunate that the government has chosen to contest that decision," [said](#) Amrit Singh, staff attorney with the ACLU. Okay, so one might expect the ACLU to support releasing the photos. But really, what's the "national security" reason for suppressing them? The Obama administration is claiming (apparently with a straight face) that the photos would ruin our popularity in the Muslim world.

In his ongoing battle to suppress the obvious, and to prevent Muslims from seeing what most of them already believe with the white-hot intensity of the sun, Obama will have to fight members of his own party. Among them is Massachusetts Democrat William Delahunt, who exploded Obama's act as a Bush doppelganger. "The United States should not restrict access to intelligence solely to prevent information that might prove politically embarrassing from becoming public, when it poses no legitimate national security threat. This is especially the case when the information in question bears on an allegation as deeply troubling as torture," Delahunt [wrote](#) in a letter addressed to Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and Attorney General Eric Holder. "I suggest that the US itself should make that information public, or at least remove our objection to its release. Justice and democratic accountability overwhelmingly support the release of this information."

Even America's most stalwart allies are beginning to acknowledge the obvious. In a column on torture, British Foreign Secretary David Miliband and Home Secretary Alan Johnson [acknowledged in the London Sunday Telegraph](#) that its allies (likely meaning the United States) were guilty of prisoner abuse: "When detainees are held by our police or Armed Forces we can be sure how they are treated. By definition, we cannot have that same level of assurance when they are held by foreign governments, whose obligations may differ from our own." Miliband and Johnson are the cabinet-level officers that oversee British intelligence agencies MI-5 and MI-6, the latter of James Bond lore.

Miliband and Johnson didn't say which of their allies had tortured detainees, and they didn't have to. Britain is [currently investigating](#) torture allegations by former Guantanamo Bay inmate Benyam Mohamed, a British citizen who underwent a wide variety of tortures while under U.S. custody. "Ethiopian-born Mr Mohamed was arrested in Pakistan in 2002 on suspicion of involvement in a dirty bomb plot. He claims he had his genitals cut with a scalpel while in detention in a CIA "black ops" prison in Morocco. All terror charges were dropped against him last year," the *London Telegraph* [explained](#). "Details of his torture were edited out of a dossier on the case presented at the High Court after Mr Miliband and the US government argued that the release of the documents would damage national security and the future exchange of intelligence."

News of Miliband and Johnson's revelations has caused a furor in the British parliament, with many legislators calling for an investigation on the other side of the Atlantic. Would that Americans had expressed such outrage.



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