



## The Center for Victims of Torture **Sample Letters to Congress**

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### **SAMPLE LETTER TO U.S. SENATORS & REPRESENTATIVES**

If you are contacting your member of Congress in Washington D.C., it is best to fax, call or use e-mail since mail is taking several weeks to be delivered due to security concerns. You can find the contact information for your elected officials by using your home zip code in CVT's Elected Official Finder at <http://www.cvt.org/main.php/Advocacy/HelpEndTortureNow/WhatYouCanDo>.

Dear Senator/Representative [Name]:

I am writing to express my dismay at the reports by journalists and government officials of inhuman treatment, torture and even deaths of detainees held in U.S. custody in Iraq, Afghanistan and Guantanamo Bay. It is clear we have deviated from the basic American value of humane treatment. That is why I am asking you to support clear, detailed guidelines for all U.S. personnel on acceptable interrogation procedures, and to stop the practice of sending prisoners to countries that use torture. I support an Executive Order by President Bush to stop the practice of sending detainees to countries that use torture and to make the 1992 Army Field Manual on interrogations the minimum standard for all U.S. personnel of all detainees held anywhere in the world. The Army Field Manual was written by military interrogators and contains the wisdom and experience of generations of military personnel.

I also urge you to create an independent commission to investigate all reports of torture, cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment by U.S. personnel. Such a commission should have the power to hold hearings and issue subpoenas. Finally, as called for by the UN Convention Against Torture, I ask that the U.S. fulfill its obligation of providing legal remedies and as full a rehabilitation as possible for the victims of torture.

If America is to remain a forceful advocate by pointing out major human rights abuses of other governments, especially torture, we must show the world we are ready to live up to our own high standards by thoroughly investigating all reports of abuse and holding those responsible accountable. Torture is illegal and un-American. To spread freedom and democracy abroad, the U.S. must show the world it can do so while holding firm to our belief in the basic human right not to be tortured.

Sincerely,

[Name]  
[Home Address]