



The Center for Victims of Torture Statement on Intelligence Authorization Act

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**Statement by Douglas A. Johnson, Executive Director
Center for Victims of Torture
On Senate Intelligence Committee Passage of Intelligence Authorization Act of 2009**

“Senate Intelligence Committee passage of legislation granting the Red Cross access to U.S.-held detainees in secret prisons is a reaffirmation of American values. As an impartial monitor, the Red Cross shines a light into dark corners of the world by monitoring conditions of detention and treatment. Denying the ICRC access to U.S.-held terror suspects—including persons held in secret locations—violates our commitment to the universal principle of basic human dignity.

“Every single day that members of our armed forces are deployed in the field, they rely on the protections the Red Cross affords men and women in uniform. As a nation deeply committed to honoring the sacrifices that our armed service members make, we should be doing everything in our power to strengthen protections afforded for our soldiers. Allowing the Red Cross access to U.S.-held detainees would do exactly this.

“Defeating terrorists requires not only strength of arms but strength of character. Throughout our history, when facing forces intent on destroying us, our national conscience guided us; the broader values that we protected helped to shape our nation. We must continue to honor those ideals by ensuring that anyone detained by the U.S. is accounted for. We must insist on standards that proudly reflect the universal truths for which America stands.”

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The Center for Victims of Torture (CVT) is an independent nonprofit whose mission is to heal the wounds of torture on individuals, their families and their communities and to stop torture worldwide. CVT is headquartered in Minneapolis with offices in St. Paul, MN, Washington D.C., Sierra Leone, Liberia and the Democratic Republic of Congo. More information at <http://www.cvt.org/main.php>.