



The CENTER for
VICTIMS of TORTURE

IT STARTS
WITH HOPE

30 YEARS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 25, 2015

CONTACT:

Jenni Bowring-McDonough

612-436-4886

jmcdonough@cvt.org

President Signs NDAA, Strengthens U.S. Ban on Torture

ST. PAUL, Minn. & WASHINGTON — The Center for Victims of Torture™ (CVT) today hails the anti-torture provisions - section 1045 - within the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2016 (NDAA), which the President has signed into law.

“Today, President Obama and an overwhelming bi-partisan majority of Congress joined forces to resoundingly denounce the use of torture in any U.S. operation by any U.S. government agency at any time,” said Melina Milazzo, CVT senior policy counsel. “By speaking with one voice across political lines, the United States sends a powerful message of ‘never again’ to the use of torture or cruelty as official U.S. policy.”

Senators John McCain (R-AZ) and Dianne Feinstein (D-CA) first introduced the anti-torture amendment, which passed with strong bi-partisan support in Congress. The amendment codifies key aspects of President Obama’s 2009 Executive Order 13491 (Ensuring Lawful Interrogations) by placing all U.S. government interrogations under the United States Army Field Manual on Interrogations, and requires that the International Committee of the Red Cross have prompt access to all prisoners in United States’ custody.

“These provisions will ensure that no U.S. government agency will ever employ torture tactics such as waterboarding, forced nudity, mock executions and other cruelty, nor ever operate secret black sites again,” Milazzo added. “By codifying critical components of Obama’s executive order, Congress has clearly stated that torture and cruelty have no place in U.S. anti-terror operations, no matter who’s in charge.”

Although CVT lauds the provisions against torture within it, this year’s NDAA imposes additional restrictions to transferring detainees from Guantanamo, and closing the prison facility there.

“In the face of renewed congressional restrictions, the President must redouble his efforts where he can – namely in ending indefinite detention without charge or trial for the vast majority of men held at Guantanamo,” Milazzo added. “Only 10 detainees face charges before the military commission, the remaining 97 men have neither been charged nor tried and continue to languish in excruciating limbo.

The President must continue to do everything within his authority to reduce the population in the prison and end indefinite detention. This includes directing his administration to take critical action to increase the pace of transferring cleared detainees from the prison as well as significantly increasing administrative reviews of other detainees to determine if they can be transferred.”

###

The Center for Victims of Torture is a nonprofit organization headquartered in St. Paul, MN, with an office in Washington, D.C., and healing initiatives in Africa and the Middle East. Visit www.cvt.org.