



August 17, 2007

Sharon Stephens Brehm, Ph.D.
President
American Psychological Association
750 First Street, NE
Washington, DC 20002-4242

Dear Dr. Stephens Brehm:

I write to you on behalf of the American Civil Liberties Union and its more than 550,000 members. We understand that the American Psychological Association is once again weighing the ethical implications of psychologists' involvement in coercive interrogations. I am writing to commend your organization for its plan to pass an anti-torture resolution and to encourage you to go further and, following in the footsteps of the American Medical Association, prohibit altogether the participation of psychologists in the abusive interrogations of detainees.

Since 2003, the ACLU has been engaged in a series of Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests related to torture, coercive interrogation, and mistreatment of detainees. We have found troubling evidence of the collusion of medical psychologists in the development and implementation of procedures intended to inflict psychological harm on prisoners at Guantanamo Bay and other facilities.

We hope that the APA will take into account, when considering this matter, that the participation of psychologists in cruel, inhuman, and degrading interrogation of detainees is not only unethical but illegal, and may subject APA members to legal liability or even prosecution. A moratorium on participation in these illegal interrogations would protect individual psychologists as well as the reputation of the profession as a whole.

The history of torture is inexorably linked to the misuse of scientific and medical knowledge. As we move fully into the 21st century, it is no longer enough to denounce or to speak out against torture; rather, we must sever the connection between healers and tormentors once and for all. As guardians of the mind, psychologists are duty bound to promote the humane treatment of all people. We strongly urge the APA to adopt the strongest possible stance and issue a moratorium on the participation of its members in abusive treatment.

Sincerely,

Anthony D. Romero

AMERICAN CIVIL
LIBERTIES UNION
NATIONAL OFFICE
125 BROAD STREET, 18TH FL.
NEW YORK, NY 10004-2400
T/212.549.2500
WWW.ACLU.ORG

OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS
NADINE STROSSEN
PRESIDENT

ANTHONY D. ROMERO
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

RICHARD ZACKS
TREASURER