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US TORTURE OF DETAINEES CAUSED SEVERE PAIN, LONG-TERM SUFFERING

Cambridge, Mass. (PRWEB) June 18, 2008 - A team of doctors and psychologists convened by Physicians for Human Rights (PHR) to conduct intensive clinical evaluations of 11 former detainees held in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Guantánamo Bay has found that these men suffered torture and ill-treatment by US personnel, which resulted in severe pain and long-term disability. The men were ultimately released from US custody without charge or explanation.

"The horrific consequences of US detention and interrogation policy are indelibly written on the bodies and minds of the former detainees in scars, debilitating injuries, humiliating memories and haunting nightmares," states Dr. Allen Keller, Director of the Bellevue/NYU Program for Survivors of Torture and a contributor to PHR's report *Broken Laws, Broken Lives: Medical Evidence of Torture by US Personnel and Its Impact*. "Physical and psychological evidence clearly supports the detainees' first-hand accounts of cruelty, inhuman treatment, degradation, and torture."

"The poignant case studies focus on the profound and lasting consequences of cruelty at the hands of US personnel," said Farnoosh Hashemian, MPH, PHR Research Associate and lead author of the report. "The detainees suffer permanent hearing loss, persistent and debilitating pain in limbs and joints, major depressive disorder, severe post-traumatic stress disorder, and anxiety disorders, such as panic attacks."

One Iraqi detainee, Laith, recounted that during his initial detention in an unknown prison, he was brutally beaten and kicked until he lost consciousness. In Abu Ghraib, he was kept naked for almost a month in a variety of stress positions in isolation in a small, dark cell wearing soiled underwear and was subjected to lengthy interrogations.

On one occasion he was brought to see his brother who was bleeding, naked, and humiliated. The most painful experience for Laith was the threat of rape of his mother and sisters: "They were saying, 'you will hear your mothers and sisters when we are raping them [here].'"

These men also continue to endure profound disruptions in their social and family lives. Many live with an abiding sense of shame caused by the loss of their ability to protect and provide for their families. And several men told medical evaluators of their desire to relocate, stemming from their loss of a sense of safety, since they had been arrested without charge or to avoid the frequent reminders of their harrowing detention experiences.

The report calls for full investigation and remedies, including accountability for war crimes, and reparation, such as compensation, medical care and psycho-social services.

To download PHR's *Broken Laws, Broken Lives* report (PDF), visit <http://brokenlives.info>

Physicians for Human Rights (PHR) mobilizes the health professions to advance the health and dignity of all people by protecting human rights. As a founding member of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines, PHR shared the 1997 Nobel Peace Prize.

Human Rights First is a non-profit, nonpartisan international human rights organization based in New York and Washington D.C.