



- [Report](#) [Preface](#) [Background](#) [Materials](#) [Take Action](#) [Donate](#) [Blog](#) 

## [Broken Laws, Broken Lives Discussed on Thom Hartmann Show](#)

[Thom Hartmann](#), a national progressive talk show host, today featured on his show a discussion of PHR's report *[Broken Laws, Broken Lives: Medical Evidence of Torture by US Personnel and Its Impact](#)*. A [transcript](#) of the feature is expected to be available.

Mr. Hartmann spent several minutes quoting from various areas of the report, and commenting on what he was reading. He made clear his disgust with what the men who agreed to be in the report, who were never charged with any wrongdoing, had been put through. He also addressed the Obama administration's reluctance to "look back" and bring the people responsible for the torture treatment to justice.

For more information on PHR's work against torture, see [Campaign Against Torture](#).

## [PHR: After Senate Report, Psychologists Who Tortured Must Be Held to Account](#)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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In the wake of the Senate Armed Services Committee's (SASC) report on detainee abuse, Physicians for Human Rights (PHR) is calling for the psychologists who justified, designed, and implemented torture for the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and Department of Defense (DoD), to lose their professional licenses and to face criminal prosecution.

"Long before Justice Department lawyers were tasked to justify torture, US psychologists were busy actually perpetrating it," said Steven Reisner, PhD, Advisor on Psychological Ethics at PHR. "These individuals must not only face prosecution for breaking the law, they must lose their licenses for shaming their profession's ethics."

The SASC report is the latest and most comprehensive account of the Bush Administration's regime of torture and the central role health professionals played. Senator Carl Levin (D-MI), Chair of

SASC, is calling for the Department of Justice to review the report and pursue any evidence of criminal wrongdoing, a move that PHR supports.

“The Senate Armed Services Committee confirms what we have long known—health professionals were the agents that spread the virus of torture,” said Nathaniel Raymond, Director of PHR’s Campaign Against Torture which brings together thousands of health professionals who oppose torture in all circumstances. “Now is the time for those who violated our laws and our values to be held to account.”

PHR is renewing its call to Congress and the White House to immediately create a non-partisan commission to investigate the Bush Administration’s use of torture, with a specific focus on the role that psychologists and medical professionals played in its design, justification, supervision, and use.

“A non-partisan commission is required if the American people are to know the truth about our nation’s descent into torture,” said John Bradshaw, JD, PHR’s Washington Director. “Congress must move quickly and show the world that we are serious about restoring our reputation as a nation that defends human rights and the rule of law.”

PHR urges human rights supporters to sign its online petition calling for the establishment of a commission to investigate US torture and hold health professionals accountable.

Since 2005, PHR has documented the systematic use of psychological and physical torture by US personnel against detainees held at Guantánamo Bay, Abu Ghraib, Bagram airbase, and elsewhere in its groundbreaking reports, [\*Break Them Down\*](#), [\*Leave No Marks\*](#), and [\*Broken Laws, Broken Lives\*](#). The Senate report confirms the use of abusive and illegal interrogation techniques documented in these PHR reports. These techniques include:

- beating
- sexual and cultural humiliation
- forced nakedness
- exposure to extreme temperatures
- exploitation of phobias
- sleep deprivation
- sensory deprivation and sensory overload
- prolonged isolation
- threats of imminent harm

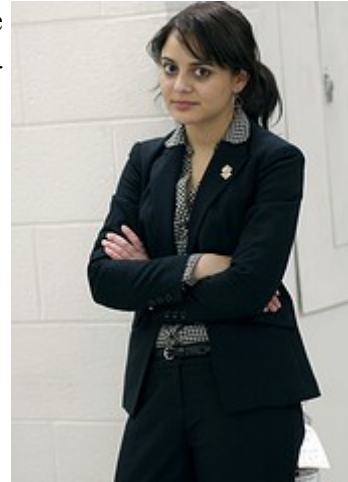
Physicians for Human Rights has repeatedly called for an end to the use of Survival, Evasion, Resistance and Escape (SERE) interrogation tactics by US personnel, an end to the use of Behavioral Science Consultation Teams (BSCT) teams, and called for a non-partisan commission to investigate the US government’s use of torture. Additionally, PHR has worked to mobilize the health professional community, particularly the professional associations, to adopt strong ethical prohibitions against direct participation in interrogations.

**[Editors, please note: [PHR has four leading experts on torture](#)—physicians and psychologists who have investigated torture by US forces, studied the physical and psychological consequences, and advocated to hold health professionals accountable. To arrange an interview, please contact Jonathan Hutson, [jhutson\[at\]phrusa\[dot\]org](mailto:jhutson[at]phrusa[dot]org) or 857-919-5130.]**

## In the Room

Farnoosh Hashemian, lead author of *Broken Laws, Broken Lives*, was recently interviewed for the Yale School of Public Health website.

Farnoosh Hashemian was in the room as one former detainee after another described the abuse inflicted upon them by U.S. personnel during their detention in Iraq, Afghanistan, or Guantánamo Bay, Cuba. The men, who were all eventually released without ever being charged, recounted stories of intimidation and humiliation, and in some cases the most degrading forms of sexual abuse.



Hashemian, a 2005 graduate of the Yale School of Public Health and a human rights investigator for the Cambridge, Mass.–based Physicians for Humans Rights (PHR), used the rigorous, in–depth clinical evaluations as the core of a 130–page report that the organization released this summer. The report provides evidence of officially sanctioned or unsanctioned abuse and accuses the United States of committing war crimes for deliberately torturing detainees in its custody....

“It was very intense work. You listen while a middle–aged man sobs uncontrollably describing the brutality that became normalized in Abu Ghraib. Others tell you that to this day they suffer from the pain and the shame of sexual humiliations. Their families have been broken and their lives have been shattered,” said Hashemian. “You stare at this abyss of unimaginable human cruelty, you witness their agony, immerse yourself in their suffering, and their harrowing stories haunt you at night. We were asking people to go back to dark times. It is really, really hard to hear these stories, but it is grueling to have lived them.” ...

Since the report’s release, Hashemian and colleagues have met with staff members of various U.S. senators and are working with policy makers to formulate recommendations for the next administration. In addition to new legislation that would prevent such abuses in the future, PHR also calls for anyone involved in detainee abuse to be held accountable and for reparations to be paid to the victims.

**Read the rest of the article:**

## Alumna Grapples with the Depths of Human Cruelty

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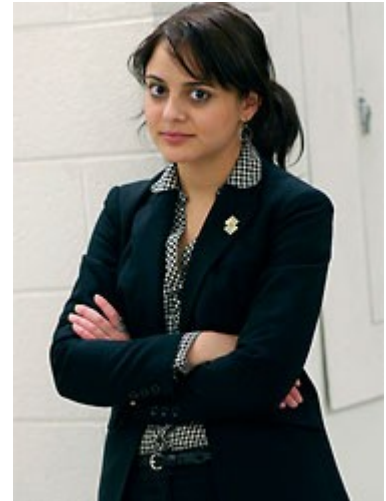
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The PHR report has since received widespread attention in the media, in Congress, and among policy–makers in U.S. Department of Defense and has humanized the national debate on detainee interrogation and treatment policies, and for that Hashemian, the report’s lead author, is pleased. The experience of compiling the report, meanwhile, has left the 30–year–old alumna struggling to understand the darker side of human nature and has reinforced her commitment to prevent it from happening again.

“It was very intense work. You listen while a middle–aged man sobs uncontrollably describing the brutality that became normalized in Abu Ghraib. Others tell you that to this day they suffer from the pain and the shame of sexual humiliations. Their families have been broken and their lives have been shattered,” said Hashemian. “You stare at this abyss of unimaginable human cruelty, you witness their agony, immerse yourself in their suffering, and their harrowing stories haunt you at night. We were asking people to go back to dark times. It is really, really hard to hear these stories, but it is grueling to have lived them.”

The report, [\*Broken Laws, Broken Lives: Medical Evidence of Torture by US Personnel and Its Impact\*](#), provides a detailed and graphic account of how 11 former detainees of the United States (seven of whom were held in Iraq’s Abu Ghraib prison; the other four were arrested in Afghanistan and eventually ended up at Guantánamo Bay) were treated before they were summarily released without being charged.

Each former detainee underwent a two–day clinical interview that included diagnostic testing and in two cases a review of medical records. While the report cites testimony from 11 men, PHR contends that extensive congressional and human rights investigations demonstrate that the number of people mistreated is almost certainly much higher and that the abuse of detainees had been approved at the highest levels of government.



Farnoosh Hashemian is the lead author of a recently released report that chronicles alleged abuse of prisoners by U.S. personnel. *Courtesy of Ben Greenberg/PHR.*



*Courtesy of PHR*

In addition to the conduct of military personnel, the report also documents the participation of medical professionals in the interrogations and their failure to stop the abuse or to provide medical assistance to the detainees. Medical personnel have a professional obligation to stop mistreatment and/or report such abuse, she said.

Since the report's release, Hashemian and colleagues have met with staff members of various U.S. senators and are working with policy makers to formulate recommendations for the next administration. In addition to new legislation that would prevent such abuses in the future, PHR also calls for anyone involved in detainee abuse to be held accountable and for reparations to be paid to the victims.

Prior to joining PHR, Hashemian was a researcher at Yale, conducting epidemiological studies in the Middle East, Europe, and the Americas and writing policy papers on the global governance of health. For her thesis, Hashemian, who grew up during the Iran–Iraq war, traveled to the Middle East and interviewed Kurdish survivors of the war and the poison gas attacks. Through this experience, Hashemian gained an appreciation for using the tools of public health to document and expose serious human rights violations.

Hashemian is now planning to take a few months off and travel to Syria to study Arabic. After that she wants to attend law school in order to become a more effective advocate for otherwise powerless individuals who are caught up in large–scale conflicts.

*~ Story by Michael Greenwood*

[Yale University](#) | [Medical School Library](#) | [Yale School of Medicine Info](#) | [EPH Administration](#) (restricted)



**Yale School of Public Health** | 60 College Street | P.O. Box 208034 | New Haven, CT 06520.8034

## [Len Rubenstein To Speak on US Torture at the Los Angeles World Affairs Council](#)

PHR President Len Rubenstein will address the Los Angeles World Affairs Council on **Wednesday, October 29** on “Intelligence Gathering, Torture, and the Future of Interrogation in U.S. Anti-Terrorist Operations.”

Mr. Rubenstein’s leadership on PHR’s investigation of the Bush Administration’s coercive interrogations of detainees culminated in *Broken Laws, Broken Lives*. Since PHR published *Broken Laws Broken Lives*, Mr. Rubenstein has consulted actively with military officials and Congressional offices on revisions to US policy that would ensure an end to US government participation in illegal coercive interrogations.

The Los Angeles World Affairs Council is a non-partisan public affairs forum whose membership is comprised of business and community leaders. Recent speakers at the Council have included CIA Director Michael Hayden and Admiral Mike Mullen, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. For more information about Mr. Rubenstein’s address, visit <http://www.lawac.org/>

## [Nationwide SOP Screening Was a Success!](#)

On October 6, twenty-seven campuses around the country came together for an evening of film and discussion about the US’s use of torture. The exclusive, nationwide screening of *Standard Operating Procedure*, followed by a webcasted interview with Academy Award-winning filmmaker Errol Morris and lead author of PHR’s landmark report *Broken Laws, Broken Lives*, Farnoosh Hashemian, was a huge success and the first event of its kind. The evening brought together well over a thousand health professional students, posed and answered critical questions, and introduced new ideas for getting involved.

Thank you to all of the campuses who participated, including: Albert Einstein University; Boston University; Brown Medical School; Case Western; Chicago Medical School; Columbia Medical School; Weill Cornell; Dartmouth; Emory; George Washington University School of Medicine; Harvard Medical School; Indiana University; Johns Hopkins; Kansas University; Philadelphia College of Medicine; Rush University; St. George’s University; Tufts University; University of Michigan; University of Minnesota; University of Rochester; University of Texas, San Antonio; University of Texas, Dallas; University of Utah; Washington University; and Wright State.

The event got some attention in the Media & Arts circuit too! Read [Errol Morris’ Next Doc To Be Screened For Doctors; It’s About Doctors Too](#) in *Media Bistro* and [Standard Operating Procedure Goes Medical, Digital](#) in *Variety.com*

Here are some photos from the event:

We also have the conversation with Morris and Hashemian available to watch and share with your friends [here](#).

There were many more excellent questions submitted than we could answer in the time we had available, so we will have Farnoosh answer some of them in a subsequent blogpost. Please check back for that!

Finally, if you didn’t get the chance to sign the Call to Action petition, you can do so [here](#).

Thanks to everyone who joined us from coast-to-coast to make this an electric night of unified awareness, critical thinking, and passion for human rights.

[« Previous Entries](#)

## About

- ***Broken Laws, Broken Lives*** shows the human consequences of harsh and unlawful US interrogation practices. This landmark report reveals the excruciating pain and continued suffering of men who, never charged with any crime, endured torture at US detention facilities in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Guantánamo Bay. Based on internationally accepted standards for clinical assessment of torture claims, the report documents practices used to bring about long-lasting pain, terror, humiliation, and shame for months on end.
- **Physicians for Human Rights** mobilizes health professionals to advance health, dignity, and justice and promotes the right to health for all. Harnessing the specialized skills, rigor, and passion of doctors, nurses, public health specialists, and scientists, PHR investigates human rights abuses and works to stop them.

## PHR Links

- [Physicians for Human Rights](#)
- [Campaign Against Torture](#)
- [Join PHR](#)

# [Broken Laws, Broken Lives](#)

Medical Evidence of Torture by the US

## [Read the Report](#)

*After years of disclosures by government investigations, media accounts, and reports from human rights organizations, there is no longer any doubt as to whether the current administration has committed war crimes. The only question is whether those who ordered the use of torture will be held to account.*

—Maj. General Antonio M. Taguba (USA-Ret.), [preface to \*Broken Laws, Broken Lives\*](#)

In PHR's new report, *Broken Laws, Broken Lives*, we have for the first time medical evidence to confirm first-hand accounts of men who endured torture by US personnel in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Guantánamo Bay. These men were never charged with any crime.

**Download either the Executive Summary or the full text of the free report *Broken Laws, Broken Lives: Medical Evidence of Torture by US Personnel and Its Impact*.**



[Broken Laws, Broken Lives - Executive Summary](#) (862.1 KiB)



[Broken Laws, Broken Lives - Full Report](#) (1.9 MiB)