

# Psychologists Involved in Detainee Torture and Mistreatment APA Policy, Procedures Contribute to Scandal

*US Government investigations confirm that from 2002 psychologists have overseen abusive detainee interrogations and detention methods at Guantanamo, Abu Ghraib, and CIA “black sites.” This is how the American Psychological Association has responded to the scandal:*

- 2002-2004 APA officials confer with intelligence and military personnel about an expanded role for psychologists in national security investigations. Abu Ghraib scandal breaks.
- 2005: APA Board appoints Task Force on Psychological Ethics and National Security. Six of nine members work for US military or intelligence services. Ethics Director helps appoint TF member despite interrogation abuse complaint against him. PENS Task Force concludes that psychologist involvement in detainee interrogations is ethical. APA Board of Directors approves PENS Report, bypassing Council of Representatives vetting and approval.
- 2005-2009 APA Ethics Director is chief spokesperson for PENS policy, claiming that psychologists insure interrogations are “safe, ethical and effective.”
- 2005-2009 APA minimizes reports of psychologists’ role in torture and growing opposition to the PENS policy by health professions and human rights organizations. Ethics Committee dismisses or stalls review of detainee abuse complaints against psychologists.
- 2005-2009 Council of Representatives directs Ethics Committee to amend Ethics Code 1.02 that asserts psychologists “may follow orders” of governing legal authority in an orders/ethics conflict. Four years later Ethics Committee recommends no change in Code 1.02.
- 2008-2009 APA members vote to ban psychologists from working with detainees at detention sites that violate International law unless working for the detainees independently. Implementation of the members’ referendum stalls in committee.

## **CALL FOR ACTION!**

**write [president@apa.org](mailto:president@apa.org)**

Tell the APA to *immediately*

- 1) rescind PENS interrogation policy
- 2) delete 1.02 and other “may follow orders” ethics clauses
- 3) agree to an independent investigation of the PENS process and conflicts of interest of the Ethics Director and other APA officials
- 4) implement the referendum
- 5) notify President Obama, CIA and DoD directors of policy change

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for more info: [www.psysr.org](http://www.psysr.org), [psychoanalystsopposewar.org/blog/](http://psychoanalystsopposewar.org/blog/), [www.ethicalAPA.com](http://www.ethicalAPA.com)