



U.S. Must Stop the Practice of “Extraordinary Rendition”

What is “extraordinary rendition”? “Extraordinary rendition” means the forcible transfer of a person from one country to another without any judicial or administrative oversight. While this is not a new practice, since September 11th, 2001, extraordinary rendition has been used primarily for covertly transporting persons to countries for detention and interrogation where there is a danger of facing torture or other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment. Amnesty International believes that the use of extraordinary rendition has increased significantly over the past few years.

How do we know the U.S. government practices “extraordinary rendition”? Importantly, extraordinary rendition is not a practice that the U.S. government denies engaging in. Administration officials such as the Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice have defended the practice. Additionally, a number of well-documented cases of rendition have come to light. In some of these cases, the victims have eventually been released without ever being charged with a crime. These cases include instances of mistaken identity and guilt by association (i.e., the victim of rendition had a similar name to that of a suspected terrorist, or the victim had casual contact with a suspected terrorist). An Amnesty International report issued in early April 2006, documented the flight patterns of aircraft thought to be linked to the U.S. government’s renditions program. Based on the information collected, the organization believes that hundreds of individuals may have been victims of extraordinary rendition since September 11th, 2001.

Doesn’t the U.S. government receive assurances from the governments to which detainees are transferred that they will not be tortured? President Bush and others have claimed that they receive assurances from governments to which detainees are rendered that they will be treated humanely. Yet Attorney General Gonzales and other officials have acknowledged that they cannot monitor the treatment of these detainees.

Governments that, according to the State Department’s own reports, routinely inflict torture or inhuman treatment on detainees are unlikely to refrain from doing so in a particular case solely because they gave such assurances to the U.S. government. Moreover, it is difficult to conceive of any reason for secretly rendering a prisoner to a government known to systematically practice torture, other than the facilitation of torture or inhuman treatment ostensibly for intelligence-gathering purposes.

Isn’t “extraordinary rendition” unlawful? Yes. This practice is already prohibited by numerous provisions of international law, including the Convention against Torture and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, both of which have been ratified by the U.S. It is also morally indefensible and breeds antipathy towards the U.S. throughout the world. Rendition is designed to evade public and judicial scrutiny, to hide the identity of the perpetrators and the fate of victims.

YOUR HELP IS NEEDED! Learn more and take action at <http://denuncetorture.amnestyusa.org>.