

Human Rights Watch calls for torture probe

by UPI

WASHINGTON -- Human Rights Watch urged the investigation Thursday of U.S. Justice Department lawyers who may have been involved in approving torture.

The group called for an independent investigation as President Barack Obama released four memos that provided details of the techniques used to question terrorist suspects.

"President Obama said there was nothing to gain 'by laying blame for the past,'" said Stacy Sullivan, counterterrorism advisor at Human Rights Watch. "But prosecuting those responsible for torture is really about ensuring that such crimes don't happen in the future."

One memo, written in 2002, shows that methods authorized for questioning of one suspect, Abu Zubaida, included placing him in a box and telling him that a stinging insect was shut in with him. This was in addition to waterboarding and "walling," or slamming him into a flexible false wall.

"If the Obama administration is to adhere to the law, it is not enough to ensure that torture does not take place in the future," said Sullivan. "It must apply the law prohibiting torture to those who violated it in the past."

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