

Name:

Instructor:

Course:

Date:

What Different Type of Torture Techniques US Used in Iraq?

Introduction

Since its occupation of Iraq, United States has suffered international backlash due to the torture techniques that were used to elicit information from Iraqis. While the entry and overthrow of Saddam Hussein regime was a walk in the park, U.S forces faced an uphill task of containing the rebellion by militants. After the toppling of Saddam regime, U.S forces had to battle with militants and they used all techniques, including torture to obtain information they required. Available evidence shows that US forces were taught torture techniques. According to information given by different prisoners who were held by U.S in Iraq, they were routinely humiliated by US troops. Prisoners reported that they wore hoods made from sacks that were used for sandbags. Reports also show that guard units were given orders to keep the suspected combatants awake. According to Guardian (2004) “The Guardian has learned of ordinary soldiers who were instructed to use sleep deprivation on prisoners, and taught to perform mock executions.” The Guardian also reported that a normal procedure that was used by United States forces to soften prisoners was to stuffs them in a trunk and then drove them around. This was thought as one of the most effective technique considering the hitting 120 degrees and stuffing a prisoner in trunk. Evidence from Guardian shows that these were orders that were to be obeyed and those who resisted the use of these techniques risked the end of their military career. Although these techniques were used to obtain information necessary for the US forces to battle

with militant, they have affected the international reputation of United States as protector of human rights.

Alleged jail abuse

There is enough evidence to show that there was jail abuse. Men were tortured in the Al-Muthanna air base prison (Shanker 3). According to the former detainee, they were tortured for four long months day in day out. According to Al Jazeera, “men were allegedly tortured in the Al-Muthanna air base prison in the Iraq capital, Baghdad.” Evidence presented showed dozens of cigarette burns that were inflicted on him, which shows that they were burned with cigarette butts in full knowledge of the prison authorities. This man was among hundreds of men who were rounded up by security forces when United States launched crackdown on Sunni fighters operating from Northern Iraq.

However, there is evidence that supports that torture took place in all US military bases and the case of Al-Muthanna jail was just an example of how prisoners suffered. It is only one prison where there has been enough evidence narrated by prisoners. Torture was institutionalized in all U.S military bases (Harding 7; Leight 5).

Secret Documents Detail Torture Chamber Horror

Since the occupation of Iraq and allegation of prisoner torture, there are thousands of documents that have shown the extent of torture (Hodge & Cooper 26). According to Amnesty International, US breached UN Convention on handling of prisoners. Amnesty International has released files that provide information about a bunker that was stocked with cattle prods and whips. To show the use of these torture equipments, Amnesty International gives “Accounts from detention centers operated by Iraqi police and the army tell of suspects being whipped with cables, chains, wires, and pistols” (The Australian 2010).

The method used to torture Iraqis as revealed in these documents shows inhuman treatment of Iraq prisoners. According to Australian (2010) there was evidence that showed people being electrocuted. They were given electric shocks in genitals while others had their nails ripped off and others sodomized with bottles. These kinds of torture can only be expected to be used by insane people who have no value for human life. Further evidence shows that there were incidences where chemicals were poured on detainees' arms and then their fingers were chopped off. This is the worst kind of treatment that can be inflicted on humans

The abuses were quite violent and ghastly. Considering these kinds of abuses, it means that they were not only meant to get information from the prisoners but there was deliberate intent to torture Iraqis (Zernike 71). It can be argued that Americans drew pleasure from torturing their Iraq victims. Torture could also have been used as a way to show American superiority over their victims (Gardham & Cruickshank 13). Reports show that some of these tortures even reported to death. Common sense has it that some of the methods used like electrocution, chopping of fingers, ripping of the finger nails left their victims traumatized and even led to death to some. According to Amnesty International, the torture of Iraq prisoners continued unabated especially after American forces handed over jails to Iraq forces. Amnesty International showed that Riyadh Mohammad, a 54 years old married with children, died while in custody and post-mortem reports showed that he died from internal bleeding as a result of torture (Borger 13).

Torture Report Uproar

Internationally, United States has been criticized by different countries and human rights protection authorities for these reports (Hersh 6). Despite a number of reports that showed the

continued torture of Iraqis, the US military ignored these reports and dismissed them. According to Herald Sun (2010), "...heavily edited logs appear to show the US military ignored evidence of torture and abuse." This shows that despite these reports showing the extent of torture of Iraqis by US Forces, there was denial and US military could have taken it as a military procedure that was aimed at eliciting the required information from Iraq prisoners (BBC). In response to these reports, US military was criticized by even those countries that have been considered mass violators of human rights (Zagorin 9). Notably, China's state media argued that these revelations had in deed tarnished the credibility of US, a country that has always been associated with protection of human rights. China Daily further argued that these reports were having far reaching repercussions on credibility of United States if it cannot face human rights violation issues in the proper manner. Similar concerns were raised by British officials including the Deputy Prime Minister of United States who called these allegations serious and calling for immediate response from United States. Uproar was further raised for continued silence by US government over these allegations. According to Herald Sun (2010), Human Rights Watch argued that, "The US Government should also investigate if its forces breached international law by transferring thousands of detainees.... Despite the clear risk of torture." Yocoub (3) argues that despite cases of abuse, US handed over jail control to Iraqi forces. Therefore, it can be said that US response to these torture claims were inadequate as they failed to clarify their position (New York Time; Josh 9). They affected US reputation and its position in the international community as a defender of human rights.

Conclusion

Torture claims have haunted the United States since they were leaked into the media. When urged to probe these claims, US government seemed to defend them. According to

Aljazeera “George Bush defended water boarding as an interrogation technique that helped ‘save lives’ in the US.” This shows that the concern of the then President Bush was not on the suffering of Iraqi prisoners but on how these techniques saved lives of Americans. Further reports showed that Bush approved simulated drowning technique that was used by CIA to get information from Al-Qaeda suspects (Priest). This was one of the most controversial decisions he made during this eight years in office. Evidence shows that instead of positive responding to these claims, US agencies tried to destroy evidence that could incriminate them. US CIA is being investigated by US Attorney General for destroying video tapes that could have revealed the techniques that were employed to interrogate prisoners, which means that there was use of torture in interrogation. Although there are legal investigations that are going on about the alleged torture, it is not clear where these investigations will lead to. However, it is evident that these claims have affected the international reputation of United States as defender and supporter of human rights.

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