

Physicians for
Human Rights



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Torture Unchecked

Using Science and Medicine to
Stop Human Rights Violations

Submission to the United Nations Universal Periodic Review of
United States of America

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Physicians for Human Rights

Physicians for Human Rights (PHR) is an independent, non-profit organization that uses medicine and science to stop mass atrocities and severe human rights violations. Founded in 1986, PHR leverages the expertise and independence of health professionals to investigate, document, and advocate against human rights violations.

PHR has been instrumental in establishing international guidelines for the medical investigation and documentation of torture (Istanbul Protocol), and trains medical and legal professionals around the world in their use so that victims may obtain justice. PHR conducts investigations of torture allegations and calls on states to implement effective measures to prevent such violations and to ensure that perpetrators are held accountable.

In the United States, PHR trains and coordinates a network of clinicians to provide forensic evaluations of asylum seekers fleeing torture and persecution. In addition, PHR advocates for improved conditions in U.S. immigration detention centers and documents human rights abuses that immigrants suffer in their home countries and in U.S. care.

Since 2003, PHR has investigated and analyzed U.S. torture in the national security context, calling on the United States to restore its commitment to preventing torture. PHR also advocates for the humane treatment of detainees and the protection of U.S. health professionals from complicity in their mistreatment.

PHR holds consultative status with ECOSOC.

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