

# SILENCE + TORTURE = COMPLICITY

*The Military Commissions Act was passed by Congress in September and signed into law by President Bush on October 17, 2006.*

*“Can’t the United States see that when we allow someone to be tortured by our agents, it is not only the victim and the perpetrator who are corrupted, not only the ‘intelligence’ that is contaminated, but also everyone who looked away and said they did not know, everyone who consented tacitly to that outrage so they could sleep a little safer at night, all the citizens who did not march in the streets by the millions to demand the resignation of whoever suggested, even whispered, that torture is inevitable in our day and age, that we must embrace its darkness?”*

*-Ariel Dorfman, “Are We Really So Fearful?”*

**YOUR GOVERNMENT HAS NOW CODIFIED TORTURE.** The new law does not prohibit the government from using “alternative interrogation techniques” that include sleep deprivation, extreme cold, personal degradation, waterboarding (simulated drowning), “temporary” disablement, and psychological disorientation. The new law grants George Bush the sole authority to decide what torture is. Abu Ghraib and the secret renditions were horrible. But to take the next step and write such practices into law is even worse — qualitatively worse.

**Your government has officially shredded constitutional promises of basic and fundamental rights to due process** — taking a huge step towards replacing the rule of law with the arbitrary rule of men. The new law will give the president the right to hold people indefinitely without charging them, and without review from the courts, nullifying habeas corpus rights. Congress has now passed legislation that denies defendants the right to see evidence used against them, and allows the use of “evidence” gained through torture. It forbids anyone to invoke the Geneva Conventions in any civil case or habeas corpus proceedings undertaken against the U.S. government, and, according to some experts, it may also forbid this in criminal cases.

**Your government – which already holds over 14,000 people overseas without charges** — has dramatically expanded the scope of who it can detain to include people anywhere in the world, including within the U.S. People can now be declared an “unlawful enemy combatant” simply for providing what the president decides is “material,” including financial or indirect support for hostilities against the U.S.

**Your government is rewriting the law on crimes against humanity to exclude itself**, incurring the contempt and hatred of people all over the planet.

**Few in Congress made anything but the most token show of opposition**, as leading Democrats let Bush set the agenda, staying silent when it mattered, refusing to filibuster, then voting no only when the die was cast.

**This unprecedented legalization of torture is part of a package coming from the Bush regime.** That package includes an atrocious, nightmarish occupation of Iraq and now the ominous threat of war against Iran. It includes an assault on critical thinking and serious motion toward a theocracy. It includes the criminal response to Hurricane Katrina. It includes a systematic attack on women’s reproductive rights, and the demonization of gay people and denial of their basic human rights. It includes the scapegoating of immigrants and severely repressive new legislation aimed at them.

**And it gets worse with every passing week.** As the call for The World Can’t Wait—Drive Out the Bush Regime states: “The Bush regime is setting out to radically remake society very quickly, in a fascist way, and for generations to come.” With this legalization of torture, who will now deny that? The stakes are clearly enormous.

***If Not Now, When? If Not Us, Who?***

**THIS MUST HALT!** This entire package must be repudiated, and the whole direction of this country must be reversed.