

**PRESS RELEASE**

**PRESS RELEASE**

**PRESS RELEASE**

**For Immediate Release**

Event: Friday Rally sharpens focus on US use of torture in Afghanistan and beyond.

Date: Friday, June 25th, 2004

Time: 5:00 p.m.

Place: Pioneer Courthouse Square

Contacts: (503) 344-5078

pprcnews@yahoo.com

www.pprc-news.org

**Portland's Friday Rally and March for Peace Sharpens Focus on US Use of Torture in Afghanistan and Beyond, Calls for Prosecution of Rumsfeld and Bush.**

Friday's 5:00 p.m. PPRC rally at Pioneer Courthouse Square will return to US use of torture in Bush's so-called "war on terror". "This week brought to light still more evidence that the US has routinely used torture in the interrogation of prisoners in Afghanistan," said William Seaman, a volunteer with the PPRC.<sup>1</sup> "With the recently leaked memos indicating that the use of torture was sanctioned by the Bush administration, it is now well past time for the Congress to take steps to prosecute Rumsfeld and Bush for these crimes.<sup>2</sup>

The report on torture in Afghanistan, published today in the London-based Guardian newspaper, states that "[d]etainees held in Afghanistan by American troops have been routinely tortured and humiliated as part of the interrogation process, in the same way as those in Iraq, ... [that f]ive detainees have died in custody, three of them in suspicious circumstances, and survivors have told stories of beatings, strippings, hoodings and sleep deprivation."<sup>1</sup>

In addition, *Amnesty International* reports today that there has been a collateral deterioration of human rights throughout the Arab peninsula. They attribute that deterioration to the US-led "war on terror".<sup>3</sup> "Once again we are forced to acknowledge that the policies of the Bush administration has contributed to create more terror, not less, and we can only conclude that these policies have made both the US and the rest of the world a far less secure place," said Seaman. "Terrorism has increased significantly, as was finally acknowledged in this recently corrected report issued by the State Department, and we know that report still understates the increase because it does not include the terror carried out by our country and our allies in Iraq, Afghanistan and in the West Bank and Gaza."<sup>4</sup>

Seaman cited the attack carried out by the US in Fallujah last Saturday, which killed 22 civilians.<sup>5</sup> "These types of actions, like Israel's 'targeted killings', which typically kill and injure many innocent civilians, are examples of state terrorism, and decent and

honest people must count these acts in any measure of the increase in terrorism worldwide.” Seaman said that reports of Bush’s declining support in recent polls suggest that Americans are slowly beginning to overcome the lies and distortions that were used to justify the US attack on Iraq.<sup>6</sup>

“The people of this country were lied to about weapons of mass destruction, they were lied to about links between Saddam Hussein and the 9/11 attacks, and the corporate news media enthusiastically joined with the Bush administration in selling this misguided and criminal war,” said Seaman. “It’s too late to save the thousands who’ve already been killed or injured, but it’s not too late to put an end to the killing by demanding that the troops be brought home, that US corporations get their bloody hands off Iraq’s national wealth, and that this administration not only be voted out in November, but prosecuted and held responsible for all of these crimes.”

1. “Afghan detainees routinely tortured and humiliated by US troops”, by Duncan Campbell and Suzanne Goldenberg, June 23, 2004, The Guardian (UK).
2. “Rumsfeld 'told officers to take gloves off with Lindh””, by Andrew Buncombe in Washington and Anne Penketh, 10 June 2004 - Independent (UK).
3. “Anti-terror war 'pretext for abuses””, by Brian Whitaker , June 23, 2004, The Guardian (UK).
4. “U.S. Corrects Report to Show Rise in Terrorism”, June 22, 2004, by the Associated Press, New York Times.
5. “Missile strike by US kills 22 civilians in Iraq”, by Patrick Cockburn in Baghdad and Raymond Whitaker in London, 20 June 2004, Independent (UK)
6. “Bush feels the heat: US voters turn on him over Iraq”, by Rupert Cornwell in Washington, 23 June 2004, Independent (UK).