



For Immediate Release
Veterans For Peace: www.veteransforpeace.org

June 27, 2009

CONTACT: Mike Ferner 419-729-7273
Paul Sullivan 202-558-4553
Camilo Mejia 786-302-8842

Veterans Call For Release of Detainee Abuse Photos

Three Groups Urge Veterans to Sign Letter to President Obama

Saint Louis, MO - Three military veteran organizations call on the Obama Administration to release photographs depicting abuse of detainees in U.S. custody. Veterans For Peace, Iraq Veterans Against the War and Veterans for Common Sense wrote a joint letter to President Obama describing how releasing the pictures is crucial to U.S. national security, upholding international law and safe guarding democracy at home. The organizations published the joint letter and asked veterans to co-sign before it is sent to the President.

The veterans' letter rejects the premise that the release will do more harm than good. The letter quotes Harith al Obaidi, the head of the largest Sunni Muslim bloc in Iraq's Parliament and the deputy chairman of the Committee on Human Rights, saying "The people who want to express their opinions through violence are already trying their best to do so. Showing them a few pictures wouldn't make them any more able to do it." He added that keeping the pictures secret will only bolster suspicions that the American government is trying to suppress evidence of more widespread abuse.

President of Veterans For Peace and former Navy Corpsman, Mike Ferner said, "The biggest threat to our service members and our Republic is that we forget what has happened and do it again," He continued, "Withholding these photographs makes it more likely that the people of our country can push these horrendous acts to the edge of our collective memory. This will not serve our nation well."

Veterans for Common Sense Executive and Gulf War veteran Director Paul Sullivan stated, "These documents must be made public and they must be turned over to a special war crimes prosecutor. Never again should our nation's leaders order torture with impunity."

Iraq War veteran and Board Chair of Iraq Veterans Against the War Camilo Mejia stated, "Being open about our mistakes by releasing these pictures is not only a way to ensure this dark episode in our history will not be repeated, but also a crucial step in our healing process as a nation."

As part of their efforts to have the photos released Veterans For Peace has launched www.picturenomoretorture.org. The organization is asking the public to take photos of themselves with messages supporting the end of torture and the release of the photographs. The pictures will later be taken to the White House.

The full text of the letter can be found at Veterans For Peace website, www.veteransforpeace.org.

###

Founded in 1985, Veterans For Peace is a national organization of men and women veterans of all eras and duty stations spanning the Spanish Civil War (1936-39), World War II, the Korean, Vietnam, Gulf and current Iraq wars as well as other conflicts cold or hot. It has chapters in nearly every state in the union and is headquartered in St. Louis, MO. Our collective experience tells us wars are easy to start and hard to stop and that those hurt are often the innocent. Thus, other means of problem solving are necessary. Veterans For Peace is an official Non- Governmental Organization (NGO) represented at the U.N.

Veterans For Peace: www.veteransforpeace.org