



**General Joseph P. Hoar, USMC (Ret.)**  
**General Charles C. Krulak, USMC (Ret.)**

October 27, 2014

The President of the United States  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave., NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

We write to you as co-chairs of a group of over fifty retired generals and admirals who believe that our national security policies should adhere to our domestic and international legal obligations. In January 2009, you signed an executive order banning torture. It was one of your greatest accomplishments as president and an essential recommitment to American ideals. Our group stood behind you that day because we, like you, know that torture is illegal, immoral, and counterproductive.

Next month at the United Nations committee on the Convention Against Torture (CAT), your administration will have the opportunity to express the U.S. government's unconditional opposition to torture. Doing so will make clear to the world a legacy that has sometimes been uncertain—the United States opposes torture, always and everywhere.

After 9/11, our government undermined the rule of law by claiming that the foundational global treaty banning torture—signed under President Reagan and overwhelmingly ratified by the United States Senate—does not apply to U.S. conduct beyond our borders, thus breaking rank with decades of bipartisan consensus on torture. As a senator, you rightly endorsed Senator McCain's effort to affirm the treaty's worldwide reach, which you said reflects "a fundamental value of the American people: that torture is morally reprehensible and has no place in this world."

In the interest of U.S. national security—and your own legacy on torture—you must stand by this position. There is no room for legal or moral ambiguity on torture. This issue should not be dismissed as a technicality, because the devil of official cruelty is often in the details of legal interpretation.

The trip to the "dark side" after 9/11 tarnished America's reputation. Next month in Geneva you have a chance to reassert U.S. global leadership on torture. We urge you to do exactly that.

Sincerely,

General Joseph P. Hoar, USMC (Ret.)  
General Charles C. Krulak, USMC (Ret.)