

The New York Times



October 5, 2009

LETTER

A Law on State Secrets

To the Editor:

Re "[An Incomplete State Secrets Fix](#)" (editorial, Sept. 29):

Please add this to the list of reasons we need legislation to check government use of the state secrets doctrine, which has been asserted by the Bush and Obama administrations to thwart court claims by victims of torture and other illegal government conduct:

The United States is party to the Torture Convention and International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Both treaties require member states to provide enforceable remedies for human rights violations. If the United States is to regain its reputation as a credible champion for human rights — indeed, if the United States wants other countries to take seriously the very concept of an international legal order — it must be seen to walk the walk of respect for its own international legal obligations.

Gabor Rona
International Legal Director
Human Rights First
New York, Sept. 29, 2009

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