

NEW YORK - The American Civil Liberties Union today filed a lawsuit seeking the disclosure of still-secret records relating to the torture of prisoners held by the U.S. overseas. The requested documents include legal memos authored by John Yoo and Steven Bradbury, who were lawyers in the Bush administration Justice Department's Office of Legal Counsel (OLC), as well as documents sent by the Bush White House to the CIA. The government has failed to turn over the documents in response to a December 2008 Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request.

"The information already in the public domain makes clear that the torture policies were devised and developed at the highest levels of the Bush administration, but there are still unanswered questions about precisely what the policies permitted, how they were implemented and who specifically signed off on them," said Jameel Jaffer, Director of the ACLU National Security Project. "This lawsuit is an effort to fill some of the gaps in the narrative."

Today's lawsuit marks the launch of the ACLU's new "Accountability for Torture" initiative, which has four goals: comprehensive disclosure of information relating to the Bush administration's torture policies; the creation of an accurate and comprehensive historical record; the appointment of an independent prosecutor to investigate issues of criminal responsibility; and recognition and compensation for torture victims.

The "Accountability for Torture" initiative brings together all the components of the ACLU's work to end torture and hold government officials accountable for breaking the law. Over the last several years, that work has included FOIA litigation resulting in the disclosure of more than 100,000 pages of government documents, including four Bush administration torture memos disclosed in April; lawsuits on behalf of victims of the CIA's extraordinary rendition program; the John Adams Project, through which the ACLU and the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers work with under-resourced military lawyers to provide legal counsel for former CIA prisoners who have been charged in the military commissions system; the monitoring of military commissions proceedings at Guantánamo; and legislative efforts to ensure that the abuses of the last eight years are not repeated.

"We can't sweep the abuses of the last eight years under the rug," said Alex Abdo, a legal fellow with the ACLU National Security Project. "Restoring the rule of law and the moral authority of the United States requires us to confront the abuses of the Bush administration, recognize the victims of that administration's torture policies and hold accountable the officials who put unlawful policies in place."

The records sought in today's lawsuit include:

- documents between the White House and CIA concerning the use of the CIA's

so-called "enhanced interrogation techniques;"

- a legal memorandum or letter dated July 22, 2002 from Yoo to Alberto R. Gonzales regarding the applicability of the Convention Against Torture; and
- a 2007 opinion by Bradbury analyzing the legality of the interrogation techniques authorized for use in the CIA program under Common Article 3, the Detainee Treatment Act and the War Crimes Act.

The ACLU also launched a new Web page today that includes a video featuring a former military attorney and an Iraq war veteran discussing the need for accountability for torture, a Web feature about the architects of the Bush administration's torture policies and an improved search engine that allows the public to search the thousands of documents that the ACLU has obtained through its FOIA litigation. The Web page can be found at: www.aclu.org/accountability

In related FOIA litigation, the government is under deadline to reprocess several key documents relating to the CIA torture program, including Combatant Status Review Tribunal transcripts in which 14 Guantánamo prisoners describe abuse and torture they suffered in CIA custody and a CIA Inspector General report on the CIA's interrogation and detention program. The Obama administration has not made clear how much information will be released.

[Click here](#) for more information about the "Accountability for Torture" initiative.

For information about the ACLU's FOIA lawsuit, including today's complaint, [click here](#) .

Attorneys in the FOIA lawsuit are Jaffer; Arthur Eisenberg, Christopher Dunn and Beth Haroules of the New York Civil Liberties Union; and Lawrence S. Lustberg and Jennifer B. Condon of the New Jersey-based law firm Gibbons P.C.