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We, the undersigned, are writing to request that you hold firm against any attempts by former Vice President Dick Cheney, the CIA directors, and the media to silence those who demand that the United States hold accountable those who have committed and authorized torture.

We call on you to appoint a special independent prosecutor who is not part of the Department of Justice to investigate and prosecute all those who ordered, approved, justified, abetted or carried out the torture and abuse. The people who are held accountable should not be limited to low-level operatives.

We are particularly disturbed by the efforts of the reporters at the *Washington Post* to distort the facts and ignore the illegality of torture. They cited anonymous sources who allegedly said that torture works; these "reports" contradict the newly released report of the CIA's Inspector General.

Cheney's claim that your decision to open an investigation into the conduct of the CIA is a politicization of this issue is shameful. If anything, political pressure has led to your office taking too narrow an approach to the investigation.

The world community has expressed its revulsion at the use of torture in any form. Torture is illegal under all circumstances. The prohibition against torture is considered in international law on par with laws against genocide, slavery and wars of aggression. Under the Rome Statute for the International Criminal Court, it is a crime against humanity.

The United States is a party to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT) and the Geneva Conventions. Both treaties expressly require the United States to either extradite or initiate prosecution of persons who are reasonably accused – this is a legal obligation. The U.S. Torture Statute that Congress passed to fulfill our obligations under the CAT outlaws torture committed outside the United States. The U.S. War Crimes Act punishes torture as a grave breach of the Geneva Conventions. In 2006, the Supreme Court affirmed in *Hamdan v. Rumsfeld* that *all* prisoners in U.S. custody are

protected by the Geneva Conventions.

There are many who claim we should ignore the facts and the law and refuse to hold accountable all those responsible for the use of torture. Whether actionable intelligence was gained is not the issue. Nor is the morale in the CIA.

We believe the oath of office you took requires that you not pick and choose those laws you will enforce.

National Lawyers Guild

Center for Constitutional Rights

U.S. Human Rights Network 2

American Association of Jurists

International Association of Democratic Lawyers

Psychologists for Social Responsibility

The Coalition for an Ethical Psychology

Torture Abolition and Survivors Support Coalition International

Lawyers Against the War (Canada)

Droite-Solidarité (France)

Japanese Lawyers International Solidarity Association

National Association of Democratic Lawyers in South Africa

European Lawyers for Democracy and Human Rights

Haldane Society of Socialist Lawyers (England)

Progress Lawyers Network (Belgium)

National Union of Peoples' Lawyers (Philippines)

Italian Association of Democratic Lawyers

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Roland Weyl, First Vice President, International Association of Democratic Lawyers

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Vanessa Ramos, President, American Association of Jurists

Max Boqwana, General Secretary, National Association of Democratic Lawyers in South Africa

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Support Coalition International

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Neri Colmenares, Secretary General, National Union of Peoples' Lawyers

Jan Fermon, representative, Progress Lawyers Network

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