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Report: Physical proof of detainee abuse by U.S.



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(Ally Donnelly, NECN) - A new report out by a human rights group, says medical exams corroborate claims of physical and mental abuse of detainees at U.S. military jails.

NECN's Ally Donnelly explains.

Script:

Doctors with Physicians for Human Rights say former detainees are suffering from physical effects as well as post-traumatic stress syndrome after being tortured at military facilities overseas. Though they say Americans have heard about abuse in the past, this is the first to back charges up with physical, medical evidence.

Dr. Sondra Crosby struggles for composure as she tells of examining former detainees of American military jails.

"To go to another country and see people who were actually tortured by my own government, by Americans, was emotional for me."

Crosby is a torture expert with Boston Medical Center. She is also with Physicians for Human Rights. The Cambridge, Massachusetts-based advocacy group released a report Wednesday detailing the physical and emotional scars of men allegedly tortured at U.S. detention facilities in Iraq, Afghanistan and Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

"There was isolation, temperature extremes, sensory bombardment, brutal beatings...most traumatizing was the degree of sexual humiliation -- being naked in front of women, being ridiculed, being photographed."

According to the report, detainees also say they were sodomized, burned, stabbed, threatened by military dogs and deprived of sleep,

among other things.

Susannah Sirkin, Physicians for Human Rights: This is the first detailed and thorough medical and psychological evaluation of a serious number of ex-detainees.

Earlier this year, physicians and psychologists evaluated 11 former inmates to see if their allegations of torture could be corroborated with physical evidence. All of the inmates had been released without being charged with any crime. Crosby, says though she did not have access to the men's previous medical histories --- the evidence was clear and convincing.

"There were rectal scars on people that just don't happen accidentally and if anything, I believe some of the sexual abuse was underreported because it's just so shameful to talk about."

For years, the Bush Administration has denied that the U.S. tortures any of its detainees. Physicians for Human Rights hopes this report prompts real change.

Susannah Sirkin: There must be full investigations and the U.S. government owes these people an apology, reparation and a full accounting, including holding...criminal liability for people who are responsible at all levels.