

**AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL  
PRESS RELEASE**

AI Index: PRE 01/051/2008  
15 February 2008

## **USA: Water torture always illegal**

Whether or not President Bush vetoes legislation outlawing waterboarding will not alter the fact that water torture was illegal when it was used by the CIA in 2002 and 2003 and is illegal today, said Amnesty International following the US president's confirmation that he intends to veto a Senate bill passed this week.

"We call on President Bush not to veto this bill and to ensure full accountability for all acts of torture and other ill-treatment by US personnel in the 'war on terror'," said Susan Lee, director of the Americas Programme at Amnesty International.

In a BBC interview Thursday night, President Bush said that whatever US intelligence agencies did would be legal and justified the means of obtaining information if attacks were prevented. He suggested that Congress was "imposing a set of standards" on interrogators that "our people think will be ineffective".

"President Bush cannot have it both ways: he cannot claim to respect the rule of law but reserve the right for interrogators to adopt methods that clearly violate international law in a programme of secret detention which flies in the face of his government's legal obligations," said Susan Lee.

In recent days, US officials have stated that "waterboarding" – simulated drowning – could be re-authorized and used in the CIA's program if the "circumstances" required it and if approved by the US President and Attorney General.

"No-one, not even a President, can authorize torture. Anyone who orders, condones or carries out torture exposes themselves to criminal liability under international law."

[USA: Injustice and impunity in the 'war on terror'](#)