

## Intelligence

## Bush ... CIA

## New push for torture probe

WASHINGTON, Dec 2. (Agencies): US President Barack Obama must investigate his predecessor George W. Bush and allies over the CIA's torture of terror suspects, or stand complicit in a government "cover-up," Human Rights Watch said Tuesday.

In a scathing report, the international rights group decried the lack of prosecutions of those involved in the Central Intelligence Agency's secret program to torture detainees in the wake of the Sept 11, 2001 attacks.

"While the program officially ended in 2009, the cover-up of these crimes appears to be ongoing," said the report, which argues there is enough evidence for the attorney general to order criminal probes.

HRW cited Bush along with top officials including then CIA director George Tenet, former vice-president Dick Cheney, former national security advisor Condoleezza Rice and former attorney general John Ashcroft.

Kenneth Roth, HRW's executive director, blasted Obama for his administration's failure to act, as the report was presented in Washington.

## Remove

"Without criminal investigations, which would remove torture as a policy option, Obama's legacy will forever be poisoned," he said.

In the years following 9/11, the CIA "rendered" suspects to several countries where torture was tolerated and kept them locked up in secret prisons.

"Suspects basically disappeared and were subject to horrible brutality," Roth said. "Yet the Obama administration still has refused to act, to prosecute the senior officials who ordered or authorized the torture."

The 153-page report outlines evidence to support the main criminal charges that could be brought against those behind what so-called "enhanced interrogation" techniques, and challenges claims that prosecutions are impossible.

"US officials who created, authorized and implemented the CIA program should be among those investigated for conspiracy to torture as well as other crimes," the report summary states.

In addition to members of the Bush administration, the report says James Mitchell and Bruce Jessen — who devised the torture program under a CIA contract — should also be investigated.

## Sued

The American Civil Liberties Union in October sued the two psychologists on behalf of a group of former prisoners from the early days of America's "war on terror."

The CIA's use of torture was detailed in an explosive Senate report released a year ago that describes the agency's interrogation of al-Qaeda suspects, including beatings, "rectal rehydration" and sleep deprivation.

"Many detainees were held by the CIA in pitch-dark windowless cells, chained to walls, naked or diapered, for weeks or months at a time," recalled the HRW report.

"The CIA forced them into painful stress positions that made it impossible for them to lie down or sleep for days, to the point where many hallucinated or begged to be killed to end their misery," it said.

The level of mistreatment was more brutal than had been previously acknowledged — and did not produce useful intelligence.

"It's been a year since the Senate torture report, and still the Obama administration has not opened new criminal investigations into CIA torture," Roth said.

Human Rights Watch said that although much of the abuse took place a decade or more ago, it would still be open to prosecution.

"The statute of limitations for the crime of conspiracy may be extended if those responsible conceal a central component of the plot, which was the case with the CIA program," the group said in a statement.

Under the UN Convention against Torture, ratified by the United States in 1988, governments are meant to investigate allegations of torture.

"The failure to investigate and prosecute CIA torture increases the danger that some future president will authorize similar illegal interrogation methods in response to an inevitable serious security threat," the group said.

Roth said the United States cannot tell other countries to follow "the rule of law if they won't apply that same rule at home."

Republican presidential hopeful Donald Trump recently called for the return of waterboarding, a simulated drowning interrogation technique widely denounced as torture, saying it was "peanuts" compared to what the Islamic State group is doing.



Obama



The image obtained Dec 1 courtesy of Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg shows Mark with his wife Priscilla with their new daughter Max. Facebook co-founder Mark Zuckerberg on Tuesday announced he had become a father — and pledged to give away his fortune to make the world a 'better place' for baby daughter Max and others. (AFP)

## Facebook CEO, now a father, will give away most of his money

Talk about birth announcements: Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg and his wife say they'll devote nearly all their wealth — roughly \$45 billion — to solving the world's problems in celebration of their new baby daughter, Max. Zuckerberg's wife, Priscilla Chan, gave birth to a 7-pound, 8-

ounce daughter last week. But the couple didn't put out the news until Tuesday, when Zuckerberg posted it on Facebook, of course.

In the same post, Zuckerberg said he and Chan will, over time, commit 99 percent of their Facebook stockholdings to such causes as fighting dis-

ease, improving education and "building strong communities." The couple had previously pledged to give away at least half their assets during their lifetime, but hadn't provided specifics.

They are forming a new organization, called the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative, that will pursue those goals

through a combination of charitable donations, private investment and promotion of government-policy reform.

"Like all parents, we want you to grow up in a world better than ours today," the 31-year-old social media mogul and his wife wrote in a letter to their daughter, which they also post-

ed on Facebook. The announcement stunned the charity world. "It's incredibly impressive and an enormous commitment that really eclipses anything that we've seen in terms of size," said Phil Buchanan, president of the nonprofit Center for Effective Philanthropy. (AP)

## Extremism

## NY regulators propose new steps against terrorism financing

## UN to choke off IS finances

UNITED NATIONS, US, Dec 2. (Agencies): The United States and Russia are drafting UN resolutions aimed at ramping up global efforts to choke off the Islamic State group's sources of financing, the envoys said Tuesday.

The proposed new Security Council measure would build on a resolution adopted in February that sought to cut off millions of dollars in earnings from IS smuggling of oil and antiquities.

US Ambassador Samantha Power told reporters that the draft resolution "will consolidate and streamline the council's recent efforts on ISIL financing" and introduce "new steps to make the sanctions more effective."

The measure could be adopted around Dec 17 during this month's US presidency of the Security Council.

Russian Ambassador Vitaly Churkin separately told reporters that he was also discussing a draft measure to "tighten up" the anti-IS financing measures.

Power said the United States would be looking at the Russian proposals to "see how these efforts come together," but it was unclear if there would be agreement on a single draft.

There is a "shared objective," Power said.

President Vladimir Putin on Monday accused Turkey of shooting down a Russian warplane to protect IS oil routes across the border from

Syria to Turkey. Putin said oil produced in IS-controlled areas were being transported by tankers to Turkey "on an industrial scale."

A report by the UN's al-Qaeda monitoring team released in November last year estimated that the jihadists earn \$850,000 to \$1.65 million per day from oil sales. US officials, however, now say that oil is no longer the main source of revenue for IS.

The resolution adopted in February calls for sanctions against individuals and entities that trade in oil with IS and urges all 193 UN countries to take "appropriate steps" to prevent the trade in cultural property from Iraq and Syria.

## Circulate

Russia hopes to circulate a draft resolution to the Security Council very soon that will tighten the UN crackdown on the financing of extremist groups including the Islamic State group, the country's UN ambassador said Tuesday.

Vitaly Churkin told The Associated Press that the resolution will be a follow-up to the Russian-sponsored resolution adopted unanimously on Feb 12 which is aimed at halting illicit oil sales, trading in antiquities, and ransom payments for hostages that are key methods used by extremist groups to finance their operations.

"We're working on it," Churkin said. The resolution will be circulated "very soon. It's not a complicated thing."

Moscow gave copies of the draft to

the United States, China and a few other council members late last week but the entire 15-member council has not yet received it.

Power told a news conference later Tuesday that the Russian effort is focused on something the United States is also focused on — the need to halt the Islamic State group's ability to access funds "whether through oil sales or through moving money through the international financial system."

## Also:

**ALBANY, New York:** New York regulators on Tuesday proposed requiring banks to annually certify having sufficient programs to deter terrorism financing and money laundering.

The Department of Financial Services said the proposed regulations would apply to all New York-regulated banks, branches of foreign banks licensed to operate in the state and licensed check cashers and money transmitters.

The rules would require banks to certify that they monitor transactions and filter them through watch lists. The proposal is subject to 45 days of public comment.

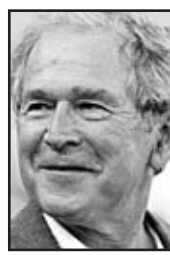
"Global terrorist networks simply cannot thrive without moving significant amounts of money throughout the world," Gov Andrew Cuomo said. "At a time of heightened global security concerns, it is especially vital that banks and regulators do everything they can to stop that flow of illicit funds."



US Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton waves as she takes a seat before speaking at the Dexter Avenue King Memorial Baptist Church on Dec 1 in Montgomery, Ala. (AP)



Bin Laden



Bush

## America

**Court reconsiders 'decision':** A federal appeals court is reconsidering the legality of the only remaining conviction of a Guantanamo Bay detainee who once served as Osama bin Laden's personal assistant and media relations secretary.

Ten judges of US Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit heard arguments Tuesday after a divided three-judge appeals panel earlier ruled that the case against Ali Hamza al-Bahlul is legally flawed because conspiracy is not a recognized war crime under international law. That June ruling could have limited the government's ability to prosecute terror suspects outside of the civilian justice system. The Obama administration successfully appealed the ruling to the 10-judge court.

The government argues that Congress acted lawfully in making conspiracy a crime that can be tried by the special military tribunals the George W. Bush administration created following the Sept 11 attacks.

To help make their case, lawyers for the Justice Department have reached back for legal precedents set during some of the most turbulent periods in American history, including the tribunals held under martial law for those who conspired with John Wilkes Booth to assassinate President Abraham Lincoln.

According to the US military, bin Laden personally tasked al-Bahlul, a Yemeni, with creating propaganda glorifying the al-Qaeda bomb attack against the USS Cole Navy destroyer in 2000, which killed 17 American sailors. Al-Bahlul also helped prepare martyr wills for some of the Sept 11 hijackers, though his defense lawyers contend he had no advance knowledge of their specific plans to hijack jetliners and crash them into the World Trade Center and Pentagon. (AP)

**Gitmo inmate low-level fighter:** A

Yemeni prisoner at the US base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, appears to have been the victim of mistaken identity.

US officials have determined that Mustafa al-Aziz al-Shamiri was a low-level Islamic fighter and not an al-Qaida courier

and trainer as previously believed.

Al-Shamiri appeared Tuesday before a panel assessing whether he can be released. A report put out by the Pentagon says he fought in Afghanistan and associated with members of al-Qaida. But in the report

officials concede they wrongly thought he had a more significant role because he was confused with someone else with a similar name.

Al-Shamiri has been held as an enemy combatant without charge at Guantanamo

## House passes US bill with policy guidelines

WASHINGTON, Dec 2, (AP): The House has passed a bill authorizing a 7 percent spending increase for US intelligence agencies and pressing President Barack Obama to produce a strategy to defeat the Islamic State.

The bill, passed Tuesday by a vote of 364 to 58, must be reconciled with a similar measure pending in the Senate.

Among other provisions, the bill: ■ Restricts the president's privacy and civil liberties board from obtaining information about covert CIA operations.

■ Requires regular reports to Congress describing the number of foreign fighters going to and from Syria and Iraq.

■ Requires the president to give Congress a written explanation of his strategy to defeat the Islamic State.

for more than 13 years following his capture in Afghanistan. He is one of 107 prisoners at the base. (AP)

**Tsarnaev lawyers 'argue':** Boston Marathon bomber Dzhokhar Tsarnaev — sentenced to death for his admitted role in the deadly 2013 attack — deserves a new trial to reconsider both his guilt and his punishment, his lawyers argued Tuesday.

Earlier this year, Tsarnaev was convicted and given the death penalty for his role in twin bombings that killed three people and injured more than 260.

Tsarnaev's lawyers told a judge Tuesday that a recent Supreme Court ruling calls into question 15 of the 30 counts against him. The defense argued that the number and nature of those charges likely influenced jurors when they decided Tsarnaev deserved the death penalty.

"The loss of those convictions would mean that a penalty trial should be held as to all counts," attorney William Fick argued. The US Supreme Court decision was issued in June, two days after Tsarnaev was sentenced to death. It struck down a provision in a law that called for stiffer penalties when a gun or explosive is used in a crime of violence.

Prosecutor William Weinreb, however, said "there is absolutely no reason to believe" that the jury would have changed its sentencing decision if the 15 counts related to Tsarnaev and his brother possessing a gun during a crime of violence had been excluded.

Tsarnaev's lawyers admitted in opening statements that he carried out the bombings with his older brother, Tamerlan. But they said Tamerlan was the mastermind of the attack and argued that Dzhokhar — then 19 — didn't deserve the death penalty. Tamerlan died after a gun battle with police three days after the bombing.

Tsarnaev himself apologized to the victims during his sentencing hearing. (AP)

**WH rejects Pentagon plan:** The Obama administration has rejected as too expensive a Department of Defense cost estimate for closing the prison at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and building a replacement, and it has asked for revisions, the Wall Street Journal reported on Tuesday, citing officials familiar with the plan.

The Pentagon estimate for closing the prison and building another one in the United States was as high as \$600 million, including \$350 million in construction costs, the newspaper cited the officials as saying. (RTRS)

**US seeks 'info':** The State Department says it is seeking information about the fate of a dual Iranian-American citizen who was reportedly sentenced to death in Iran and executed last month.

Spokesman Mark Toner said Tuesday the department learned of the arrest and sentencing of Hamid Samiee in late October and had asked Iranian authorities through the Swiss embassy in Tehran to stay the execution. Toner said the department was still looking for information about the case and could not confirm that the execution had been carried out as reported by Iran Human Rights, an Oslo, Norway-based organization.

The group said Samiee had been arrested in Iran in 2008 and was executed by hanging on Nov 4 for allegedly killing an Iranian man in the state of California. Details of that incident were not immediately clear. (AP)



US House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Ed Royce, R-CA, (2nd right), and ambassadors from the Middle East region (from left): Turkey's Ambassador to the US, Ambassador Serdar Kilic, Jordan's Ambassador to the US, Alia Hatoug Bouran, Iraq's Ambassador to the US Lukman Faily, and Saudi Arabia's Ambassador to the US Prince Abdullah bin Faisal bin Turki bin Abdullah Al-Saud head to their seats after posing for a photo on Dec 1 on Capitol Hill in Washington, DC. (AFP)