

**Caddel, Jeremy D**

**From:** Caddel, Jeremy D  
**Sent:** Friday, May 14, 2004 1:46 PM  
**To:** Taylor, William B; SA-AR-DL  
**Subject:** AIHRC access to USG detainees

RELEASED IN FULL

Amb. Taylor,

I confirmed with Amb. Prosper after the AIOG today that the ICRC is the only body we recognize with a mandate to visit detainees in Afghanistan. Barno's comments are in the story below...

***U.S. Rejects Rights Group Access to Afghan Prisoners***

Reuters

05/11/2004

By Sayed Salahuddin

KABUL - The U.S. military, under fire for its treatment of prisoners in Iraq, Tuesday turned down a request by Afghanistan's human rights body for access to Afghans in its custody.

Concerned that local prisoners may be treated like those in Iraq, the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission has sought access to Afghans detained for suspected Islamic militant links and held at various U.S. bases in Afghanistan. **"We have no intention right now of changing our policy with regard to access to persons we control," said Lt. Gen. David Barno, commander of U.S.-led forces in Afghanistan.**

He told a news conference the International Committee of the Red Cross, which has a traditional mandate to visit prisoners of war across the globe, including in Afghanistan, represented the world in this regard.

**"We are confident that the ICRC can represent all organizations who have interest in persons we control. We feel they provide more than sufficient outside objective look."**

The Afghan rights body said it had received complaints from more than two dozen detainees released from U.S. custody about their treatment in detention.

And many Afghans are still waiting to hear from the U.S. military about its investigations into deaths of two prisoners in late 2002 at Bagram airbase to the north of Kabul.

Barno said he was not aware of any allegations of abuse from detainees and that "significant changes" had been made at the facility since those deaths.

"I'm very confident in our procedures there," he said.

Graphic photographs of U.S. soldiers abusing Iraqi prisoners have been shown around the world, infuriating the Arab world and damaging U.S. credibility.

And in a report late last year, Amnesty International criticized the United States for its failure to make public any details of an investigation into the deaths of the two Afghans, saying it showed a "chilling disregard for human life."

The U.S. military said in March last year that the deaths of the two prisoners at its Afghan headquarters at Bagram Air Base in December 2002, had been listed as homicides, and it was investigating whether criminal charges would be brought.

Amnesty said interviews with former prisoners of the United States in Afghanistan showed they were subjected to ill-treatment that may constitute torture, including blindfolding, prolonged forced kneeling, sleep deprivation, and cruel use of shackles.