

zero dB
[against
music
torture]

09 July 2009

Re: Banning Music Torture as part of the US Army Field Manual review

Dear President Obama,

We write to you as musicians and members of the music industry united by a common concern. Through legal charity Reprieve - which represents over thirty men held in Guantanamo Bay - it has come to our attention that music has been used to torture people in US military and secret prisons.

We have learned that prisoners have been subjected to hours, days and often weeks on end of ear-splitting music in order to 'break them.' This abuse has severe psychological effects. Reprieve's client, British resident Binyam Mohamed, suffered 18 months of medieval torture in a Moroccan secret prison, including having a razorblade taken to his penis, yet he describes music torture as even harder to bear, because it made him fear he was losing his mind.

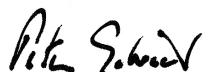
We are deeply concerned that music could be used for purposes of torture. We know that your administration is currently reviewing its 'detainee policy' with respect to how prisoners are apprehended, detained and treated in the context of the so-called 'war on terror.'

The United Nations Committee Against Torture and the European Court of Human Rights have already banned the use of music in this way and defined it torture, or at best cruel and inhuman punishment.

We are, of course, against all forms of torture, but as musicians we are particularly concerned about the misuse of music and that this practice may slip under the radar unless you explicitly condemn it. The practice is an abuse of our rights as well as, of course, those of the prisoners who are subjected to it.

We ask you to send a clear message and explicitly outlaw the use of music to 'break' and interrogate prisoners.

Yours sincerely,



Peter Gabriel

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