

US: Policy Recommendations on Counterterrorism

On May 23, 2013, US President Barack Obama will give a speech at the National Defense University on counterterrorism policy. Human Rights Watch has long reported on US counterterrorism policy, and has recently made a number of recommendations that address issues on the president's agenda:

Guantanamo and the Military Commissions

Writing in *Foreign Policy*, Laura Pitter, counterterrorism advisor for Human Rights Watch, outlined the steps the Obama administration should take to [close the military detention facility at Guantanamo](#).

Human Rights Watch joined other human rights and civil liberties organizations in calling on US Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel to [end the practice of force-feeding](#) hunger-striking prisoners at Guantanamo.

Kenneth Roth [testified](#) before the Senate Armed Services Committee on May 20 that Guantanamo is an “[unmitigated disaster](#)” and a “scar on America's reputation” that needs to come to an end.

These recent statements follow on years of repeated calls by Human Rights Watch for Obama to fulfill his promise to [close Guantanamo](#).

On Targeted Killings and Drone Strikes

Human Rights Watch said that a reported plan to [transfer the US targeted killing program](#) from the Central Intelligence Agency to the Defense Department could make targeted killing operations more accountable and transparent to the public. Human Rights Watch warned that the military also needs to ensure that attacks are conducted in accordance with the requirements of international human rights and humanitarian law.

In *Foreign Policy*, Letta Tayler, senior terrorism and counterterrorism researcher for Human Rights, reporting from Yemen, wrote about [a botched US targeted killing attack](#) on an alleged terror suspect that went wrong killing 12 Yemeni civilians, three of them children.

Human Rights Watch joined nine other human rights and civil liberties organizations in [calling on President Obama](#) to publicly disclose the administration's targeted killing standards and criteria and ensure any US lethal force operations comply with international law.

These recent recommendations build on past [articles](#) and [Q&As](#) that call on the US to ensure targeted killings comport with its obligations under international law.

On Torture and Accountability

Human Rights Watch called for the [release and declassification](#) of the 6,000-page report adopted by the Senate Intelligence Committee on the CIA's secret detention and interrogation program.

Andrea Prasow, senior counterterrorism counsel at Human Rights Watch, wrote in Foreign Policy of the need for John Brennan to [fully disclose](#) his role in the CIA's detention and interrogation program.

Human Rights Watch joined other human rights and civil liberties organizations in calling on the Obama administration to [independently review and respond](#) to the report by the Senate Intelligence Committee on the CIA's detention and interrogation program.

These calls for greater transparency and accountability for torture and other ill-treatment built upon Human Rights Watch's multiple in-depth reports documenting [torture and unlawful rendition](#) during the [Bush administration](#).