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**Contact:** Matt Dorf, Rabinowitz/Dorf Communications, (202) 265-3000, (202) 669-6553(c)

**Former FBI Director, General, Diplomat, Clergy Call for Presidential Commission on Detention, Treatment and Transfer of Detainees**

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** – Leading experts, including a former FBI director, an Army general who investigated detainee abuse at Abu Ghraib, and a former Under Secretary of State, today called upon President Obama to appoint a non-partisan commission to fully investigate and examine the detention, treatment, and transfer of detainees following the September 11<sup>th</sup> terrorist attacks.

The commission's proposed mandate would allow it to identify detainee policy failures and their causes in order to formulate recommendations to address problems identified in the report.

The group issued the following statement detailing their call to action:

“We urge President Obama to appoint a non-partisan commission of distinguished Americans to examine, and provide a comprehensive report on, policies and actions related to the detention, treatment, and transfer of detainees after 9/11 and the consequences of those actions, and to make recommendations for future policy in this area.”

The statement was signed by: Juan E. Méndez, President of the International Center for Transitional Justice; Thomas Pickering, former Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs; Judge William Sessions, former Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation; Major General Antonio M. Taguba, USA (Ret.); and Rev. Dr. John H. Thomas, General Minister and President of the United Church of Christ. In addition, 18 leading human rights organizations have endorsed the statement.

"The president has a responsibility to protect and defend Americans and unfortunately, many questions remain unanswered as to whether the detention, transfer, and treatment of detainees following the September 11th attacks were in the country's best interest," said Sessions, the former FBI director. "We need to understand what happened and how to prevent any illegal actions from taking place in the future."

Pickering, the former Under Secretary of State said, “the new administration cannot be effective in looking forward without a full accounting and understanding of how American policy got to where we are today.” He added, “a non-partisan commission, removed from the burdensome barriers of politics, is a well proven method of accomplishing these goals.”

The organizations endorsing this effort are: Amnesty International USA; the Brennan Center for Justice; the Center for Human Rights and Global Justice, New York University, School of Law; the Center for the Study of Human Rights in the Americas, University of California, Davis; the Center for Victims of Torture; the Constitution Project; the Human Rights Center, University of California, Berkeley; Human Rights First; Human Rights Watch; the International Center for Transitional Justice; the International Justice Network; the Jacob Blaustein Institute for the Advancement of Human Rights; the Jewish Council for Public Affairs; the National Institute of Military Justice; the National Religious Campaign Against Torture; the Open Society Institute; Physicians for Human Rights; and the Rutherford Institute.