

Amnesty International USA
Center for Constitutional Rights
Center for Human Rights and Global Justice at NYU School of Law
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
Thursday, May 14, 2009

Rights Groups Respond to CIA's Denial of Former Vice President Cheney's Request for Documents' Release

Contact:

AIUSA, Tom Parker, 202-544-0200 x290, tparker@aiusa.org
CCR, Alison Roh Park, 212-614-6480, apark@ccrjustice.org
CHRGJ at NYU, Veerle Opgenhaffen, 212-992-8186, opgenhaffen@exchange.law.nyu.edu

(Washington and New York)--In response to today's news from the Central Intelligence Agency that it was denying former Vice President Cheney's request for the public release of two memos--on the basis that the documents are currently the subject of pending litigation, including a suit filed jointly under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) by Amnesty International USA, the Center for Constitutional Rights, and the Center for Human Rights and Global Justice--the organizations released the following statements:

Tom Parker, counterterrorism expert with Amnesty International USA:

"The fact that Amnesty International USA, the Center for Constitutional Rights, and the Center for Human Rights and Global Justice have submitted Freedom of Information Act requests to secure the release of these documents should obviously not be used as a pretext to withhold them. It is unusual for Amnesty International to find itself on the same side of an argument as the former Vice President Dick Cheney, but we welcome his late conversion to the value of transparency in government. The CIA should comply with the suit, stop stalling and make these documents public at the earliest possible opportunity."

Gitanjali Gutierrez, attorney for the Center for Constitutional Rights:

"A year ago under the Bush administration, the CIA argued that disclosure of this document and others would jeopardize national security. Cheney's self-serving request now to share the information with the public makes clear that the CIA has been using pretexts to withhold information vital to the public debate about the CIA's torture program. The agency should commit to telling the public what we demand to know."

Margaret Satterthwaite, faculty director of the Center for Human Rights and Global Justice at NYU School of Law:

"Like Dick Cheney, we call on the CIA to immediately release these documents. Unlike him, however, we seek their disclosure to further transparency and oversight of an unlawful program. The CIA's arguments of a year ago--that the documents could not be released because they pertained to an ongoing program--are no longer valid since the president ordered the program closed in January. The American public deserves to have the full details about this program and the CIA should not block the public's attempt to learn the facts."

###