Antitorture group demands probe of doctors' roles in experiments on detainees: It should disturb every person of faith

The National Religious Campaign Against Torture wants the government to investigate claims that doctors and medical professionals performed unethical experiments on detainees in CIA custody during the Bush administration.

Members of NRCAT, representing more than 280 religious groups seeking to end U.S.-sponsored torture, on June 8 in Washington voiced their concerns over a report from the Physicians for Human Rights called "Experiments in Torture: Evidence of Human Subject Research and Experimentation in the 'Enhanced' Interrogation Program."

According to the report, following the 9/11 terrorist attacks, doctors were asked to analyze and improve enhanced interrogation techniques such as waterboarding, forced nudity, sleep deprivation and prolonged isolation. The report said doctors were told to monitor waterboarding techniques for "how long each application lasted, how much water was applied, how exactly the water was applied . . . how the subject looked between each treatment."

NRCAT executive director Richard L. Killmer, accompanied by mainline Protestant, Jewish and Muslim leaders, suggested that "separate and distinct from the torture, such medical experiments could themselves constitute war crimes and possibly crimes against humanity."

David Saperstein, director of the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism, said in part, "With the Nuremberg ode we identified a set of boundaries so as to prevent people from taking the same disastrous path that was followed in World War II."

"It disturbs me greatly and it should disturb every person of faith," said Richard Cizik, the former Washington director for the National Association of Evangelicals who now heads the New Evangelical Partnership for the Common Good. Cizik is one of several religious leaders featured in NRCAT's new video called "Accounting for Torture: Being Faithful to Our Values." *–Religion News Service*