



## International Commission of Inquiry on Crimes Against Humanity Committed by the Bush Administration

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*When the possibility of far-reaching war crimes and crimes against humanity exists, people of conscience have a solemn responsibility to inquire into the nature and scope of these acts and to determine if they do in fact rise to the level of war crimes and crimes against humanity.* -- from the Bush Commission Charter

Over the course of five days in October and January, public hearings attended by more than 1,000 people were conducted in New York at the Manhattan Center, the historic Riverside Church, and the Columbia University Law School. At these hearings, we heard devastating testimony from defectors from government service, human rights monitors, scientists, experts, and victims.

Because of intense public interest, the Commission feels an urgency to issue preliminary findings on whether this administration has committed crimes that do in fact rise to the level of war crimes and crimes against humanity. These verdicts being released today are well-substantiated by testimony and evidence. We have approached our task with a sense of the enormity and horrors of the crimes being considered, and with a deep sense of responsibility to the people of the world.

Opening the January hearings, Harry Belafonte said: "It is important when all the instruments of government collapse, we go in the final hour to the most important line of battle: the people themselves." And at these hearings the people spoke.

Craig Murray, former British ambassador to Uzbekistan, testified on the use of horrible forms of torture by the US's "Coalition of Willing" and declared, in a solemn moment, "I'd rather die than have someone tortured to save my life." Brigadier General Janis Karpinski, the former commander of Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq, described a high-ranking general demanding that Iraqi prisoners be "treated like dogs." The testimony of former UN weapons inspector Scott Ritter described in detail how the administration had full knowledge that Iraq possessed no weapons of mass destruction and posed no threat to the US, laying bare the lies used to justify the war of aggression on Iraq.

These hearings were infused with a relentless search for the truth, in stark contrast to the censorship, denial, and suppression of truth by this administration. This was powerfully brought out by Jeremy Scahill's testimony on the targeting of journalists in Iraq, Dr. Thomas Fasy on the censorship of life-saving medical information, and Daphne Wysham on the blatant muzzling of global warming science.

We acknowledge that much remains to be done, and we call on others to use the work of this Commission as a model, inspiration, and impetus to further investigate what was examined by the Commission as well as other crimes of George W. Bush and his administration.

Michael Ratner, president of the Center for Constitutional Rights, recalling the words of Bertrand Russell, articulated for us a moral mandate: "We are putting the Bush administration on trial. We investigate in order to expose. We document in order to indict. We arouse consciousness in order to create mass resistance."

C. Clark Kissinger  
Commission Convener