

American Psychological Association Closes Loophole in Ethics Code, but More Code Reforms Needed | CommonDreams.org

WASHINGTON - March 3 - Physicians for Human Rights (PHR) applauds last week's action by the American Psychological Association (APA) amending section 1.02 of its 2002 code of professional ethics. Since 2006, PHR and the Coalition for Ethical Psychology have been campaigning for the APA to remove language from its ethics code allowing a psychologist to violate other provisions of the code if done to comply with "law, regulations, or other governing legal authority." The new language restores the 1992 version of the code, which prohibits use of the standard "to justify or defend violating human rights."

"This move by the APA is an important step towards meaningful ethics reform, and PHR's constituents and allies made it happen," states Frank Donaghue, Chief Executive Officer of PHR. "However, the APA has more to do before its standards of professional ethics are fully restored."

Section 1.02 was inserted into the APA ethics code in August 2002, and was used by both the APA and the Bush Administration to allow the participation of psychologists in the "enhanced interrogation" program, in which detainees were systematically abused and tortured under the supervision of health professionals. PHR is calling for the APA to also reform section 8.05 of the 2002 ethics code, which allows research on human subjects without their consent if such research comports with law or regulations.

###

PHR was founded in 1986 on the idea that health professionals, with their specialized skills, ethical duties, and credible voices, are uniquely positioned to investigate the health consequences of human rights violations and work to stop them. PHR mobilizes health professionals to advance health, dignity, and justice and promotes the right to health for all.
