

“Most U.S. soldiers won’t report civilian killings, torture”

By [Global Research](#)

Global Research, May 15, 2007

Aljazeera Magazine 5 May 2007

Region: [Middle East & North Africa, USA](#)

Theme: [Crimes against Humanity](#)

In-depth Report: [IRAQ REPORT](#)

Less than half of Marines and more than half of Army soldiers said they would not report a member of their unit for killing or wounding an innocent civilian, Pentagon said Friday in what it called its first ethics study of troops at the war front.

Moreover, the study showed that more than 40 percent support the idea of torture.

10 percent said they had abused civilians, either through physical violence or damage to their personal property when it was not necessary to do so.

Mistreatment includes hitting or kicking a civilian, the shocking report said.

Only 47 percent of the soldiers and 38 percent of Marines said noncombatants should be treated with dignity and respect.

The survey, conducted by an army mental health experts team, sampled more than 1,700 soldiers and marines between August and October 2006.

Soldiers suffering from anxiety, depression or stress were more likely to engage in unethical behavior, as well as those who had had a colleague wounded or killed in their unit.

“Soldiers with high levels of anger, who had experienced high levels of combat or who screened positive for mental health symptoms were nearly twice as likely to mistreat noncombatants,” acting Army Surgeon General Gale Pollock told reporters.

The military has seen a number of high-profile incidents of abuse in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, including the killings of 24 civilians by Marines in Haditha, the rape and killing of a 14-year-old girl and the slaying of her family in Iraq and the sexual humiliation of detainees at Abu Ghraib prison.

“Shorter tours of duty”

The study team also discovered that long and repeated deployments were causing an increase in troop mental health problems.

But Maj. Gen. Gale Pollock, the Army’s acting surgeon general, said the team’s “most critical” problems were on ethics.

“They looked under every rock, and what they found was not always easy to look at,” Ward Casscells, assistant secretary of defense for health said.

A key recommendation to solve this problem was to shorten the tours of duty so that troops could recover mentally.

But currently thousands of extra troops are being sent to Iraq under a plan ordered by President Bush.

Deployments are being extended, and the soldiers that do go home are being allowed less time to recover before being sent back.

The extended tours were widely seen as the latest sign of strain placed on the U.S. military by the two wars.

AJP and Agencies

The original source of this article is Aljazeera Magazine
Copyright © [Global Research](#), Aljazeera Magazine, 2007

[Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page](#)

[Become a Member of Global Research](#)

Articles by: [Global Research](#)

Disclaimer: The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: publications@globalresearch.ca
www.globalresearch.ca contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: publications@globalresearch.ca