

Rumsfeld Sued for War Crimes in Germany

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Rumsfeld Sued for Alleged War Crimes

Rumsfeld has not felt a need to take the blame for Abu Ghraib

Alleging responsibility for war crimes and torture at Baghdad's Abu Ghraib prison, a human rights group has filed a criminal complaint in Germany against US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and other top US officials.

The New York-based Center for Constitutional Rights (CCR) and Berlin's Republican Lawyers' Association said they and five Iraqi citizens mistreated by US soldiers were seeking a probe by German federal prosecutors of leading US policymakers.

They said they had chosen Germany because of its Code of Crimes Against International Law, introduced in 2002, which grants German courts universal jurisdiction in cases involving war crimes or crimes against humanity.

It also makes military or civilian commanders who fail to prevent their subordinates from committing such acts liable.

"No other place to go"

"We filed these cases here because there is simply no other place to go," CCR vice president Peter Weiss said in a statement, adding that the US Congress had "failed" to seriously investigate the abuses. "It is clear that the US government is not willing to open an investigation into these allegations against these officials."

The Center for Constitutional Rights noted that while several US soldiers were facing court martial for the abuse and sexual humiliation of prisoners at the US-run Abu Ghraib detention center in Iraq, their superiors looked set to escape discipline.

The complaint names Rumsfeld, former CIA director George Tenet, Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence Steven Cambone, Lieutenant General Ricardo Sanchez, Brigadier General Janis L. Karpinski and other military officers who served in Iraq.

Five victims part of the case

"From Donald Rumsfeld on down, the political and military leaders in charge of Iraq policy must be investigated and held accountable," CCR president Michael Ratner said in a statement issued in Frankfurt, Germany.

The CCR said that the five Iraqis it was representing had been victims of mistreatment

including electric shock, severe beatings, sleep and food deprivation and sexual abuse.

It noted that Sanchez and other officers involved in the case were based in Germany. Germany's federal prosecutor now has to decide whether the case warrants further investigation.

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