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## **Amnesty: Torture Allegations Undercut Work**

TIM FOUGHT  
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PORTLAND , Ore. - Allegations of torture by U.S. agents and military personnel in Iraq and Guantanamo Bay have undercut the work of human rights workers worldwide, said the new leader of Amnesty International USA.

The group, which works to free political prisoners through letter-writing and other campaigns that bring to light human rights violations, has found its work to be more difficult because of the torture allegations, Larry Cox said.

"It's directly undercut activists around the world who used to look to the United States as a model," he said.

Cox becomes executive director of the U.S. section of the worldwide human rights group on Monday, succeeding William Schulz. The group is scheduled to hold its annual general meeting this weekend in Portland.

Cox worked for Amnesty in the 1970s and '80s but left to join Sting in his Rainforest Foundation, which worked to protect people in South America from developers cutting forests. He then worked for a decade awarding human rights grants from the Ford Foundation.

"I can't remember a time in my lifetime when the idea of human rights was under more attack than it is now," the 60-year-old Cleveland native said.

On Friday, Amnesty plans to sponsor a downtown rally on the second anniversary of the release of photos showing U.S. military personnel abusing detainees at Iraq's Abu Ghraib prison.

Nearly a dozen soldiers have been convicted in connection with Abu Ghraib, many of them contending they were following orders aimed at preparing prisoners for interrogation. The U.S. military has also opened at least 400 investigations of prisoner abuse allegations.