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Rights Groups Accuse U.S. of Harming 460 Detainees

The Pentagon says 250 service members have been held responsible

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WASHINGTON - Three human rights groups said Wednesday that they had found credible evidence that U.S. troops and government civilians in Iraq, Afghanistan and Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, had abused, tortured or killed at least 460 detainees.

The researchers said they had found 330 cases of abuse and that only about half of them had been fully investigated, and one-third never were investigated or remained unresolved. The findings are in a report by New York University's Center for Human Rights and Global Justice, Human Rights First and Human Rights Watch.

At least 600 U.S. service members or civilians have been implicated in the cases of abuse. About 400 of them have been investigated, and one-third of those who have been investigated have faced punishment of any kind, researchers said.

The report by the human rights groups is the first full independent accounting of credible allegations of torture and abuse at U.S. detention facilities in Iraq, Afghanistan and the U.S. naval base at Guantanamo Bay, the researchers said.

It shows that detainee abuse has been more widespread than government officials have admitted and the U.S. military and other government agencies have made only limited attempts to investigate and punish those responsible, the groups charged.

The Pentagon wouldn't address specific findings in the report. A spokesman said the Defense Department had investigated 600 allegations of abuse and had held more than 250 service members responsible.