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Probe of U.S. prisoner abuse urged

Robert Barr (AP)
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LONDON -- Amnesty International on Wednesday renewed its call for the United States to set up an independent investigation of the abuse of prisoners in Afghanistan, at Guantanamo Bay and at Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq.

The organization denied it was seeking to influence the U.S. presidential election with its 200-page report, but expressed disappointment the issue had not been prominent in the campaign.

"We feel that this is the last chance to get it on the agenda of the candidates," Amnesty International spokeswoman Theresa Richardson said in London.

Richardson added that six months had passed since the photographs of Iraqi prisoners being humiliated at Abu Ghraib were first shown on U.S. television.

The report called for a commission with subpoena powers and full access to secret information and agencies. To ensure impartiality, the commission should include international experts, it said.

Short of such a full inquiry, Amnesty International urged the U.S. government to unequivocally condemn torture and ban it by legislation, ensure access to prisoners, abolish secret detentions, ratify relevant international treaties and pay reparations to victims.