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Pentagon to release almost 200 photos of tortured Afghan, Iraqi prisoners under court order

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Jameel Jaffer, director of the ACLU's Center for Democracy, announced on Wednesday that the US Department of Defense (DoD) would provide public access to previously disclosed images of prisoners being tortured in US detention centers after more than 10 years of staunch resistance to do so.

The ACLU filed a Freedom of Information Act request demanding the government to reveal records, including photos of the alleged abuse of prisoners by US officers in the American detention facilities overseas back in 2004.

Despite President Obama's initial promise to release the requested materials back in 2009, he then urged Congress to pass a special exemption clause to block the release of photos citing security reasons, adding that the publication of the photos *"would not add any additional benefit to our understanding of what was carried out in the past by small number of individuals"* and would *"further inflame anti-American opinion and put our troops in great danger."*

After a long-running court battle, the US District Court Judge Alvin Hellerstein ruled that the government should *"disclose each and all the photographs"* referring to the ACLU's lawsuit in last March.

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However, only 198 images out of some 2,100 pictures will be released on Friday. The major part of the evidence comprising approximately 1,900 photos will remain concealed after US Defense Secretary Ash Carter had invoked his authority under 2009 exemption provision last November.

*"I have determined that public disclosure of any of the photographs would endanger citizens of the United States, members of the United States Armed Forces, or employees of the United States Government deployed outside the United States,"* [he wrote](#) in the certification renewal in support of his decision to appeal the ruling on November 7.

Yet the Pentagon has made some minor concessions in the case with Carter refusing to extend his certification to 198 photographs which are now being processed for release. However, Carter didn't explain the difference between this series of photos and those remain withheld from the public domain, according to Politico.

The still-classified images consist of collection of photographs taken by the DoD in the period from September 11, 2001 to January 22, 2009 and relate to the treatment of *"engaged, captured or detained individuals"*, according to the court documents.

US-tortured victims of Abu Ghraib gain faces in photo project <http://on.rt.com/3ubtkt>



The ACLU said it would insist on releasing the whole package of documents. Last major scandal in connection with the release of photos and footages depicting scenes of prisoners' abuse and humiliation by the American soldiers in the Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq broke out in 2004.

The exposure of horrendous human right violations in the detention center prompted authorities to launch an investigation in the matter as a result of which 11 soldiers accused of sexual abuse in martial trials were incarcerated.

The notorious prison was used for detention purposes by US-led coalition in Iraq until 2006 when the US government handed control over prison to the local authorities. The prison ceased functioning in 2014.