



National Religious Campaign Against Torture

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April 30, 2014

Sarah Palin
Wasilla, Alaska

Ms. Palin:

Religious leaders from many faiths have called on you to denounce torture and to apologize to the U.S. Muslim and Christian communities for statements you made at the NRA's Annual Meeting in Indianapolis over the weekend. Referring to those whom you declare have "information on plots to carry out jihad," you said, "If I were in charge, they would know that waterboarding is how we'd baptize terrorists."

For Christians, baptism is a profoundly holy act. It stands in stark contrast to the abhorrent act of waterboarding. Equating baptism to an act of torture like waterboarding is sacrilegious – and particularly surprising coming from you as someone who has publicly professed your Christian faith.

Furthermore, your statements play into a false narrative conveying that somehow, the conflict between the United States and the terrorist cells is a conflict between Christianity and Islam, or Islam and "the West." This narrative does a severe disservice by incorrectly painting all Muslims with a brush of violent extremism. It completely ignores the many Muslims, Christians and people of other faiths who have weathered these conflicts and have been partners with the United States in challenging the power and ideologies of violence and terrorism.

Ms. Palin, your words are an unacceptable conflation of church and state that represents the worst of what is possible when political conflicts are expressed in theological terms. It is both immoral and factually inaccurate to equate any faith tradition, Muslim or otherwise, with terrorism.

While faith leaders, and people of good will across the United States, are working diligently to ensure that torture never again stains the U.S. Constitution as it did in the aftermath of 9/11, you are standing on the wrong side of history by condoning torture.

We ask that you apologize for your comments made at the NRA convention and join us in dialogue on how we can work together to combat the xenophobic zealotry such statements represent.

Signed,

Rev. Ron Stief
Executive Director