

The Post and Courier

Letters to the Editor

Thursday, June 18, 2009

Release photos

Your June 9 editorial titled "Don't fuel detainee-photo fire" claims that the government should suppress photographs of detainee abuse because their release would endanger Americans serving abroad. In fact, it was the systemic abuse and the culture of impunity to protect it that has endangered many American lives. Further, applying your argument would offer the utmost secrecy to the worst kinds of abuse.

Citing the public's interest in the release of the photos and having considered all the arguments currently being made for their suppression, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit ordered the photos' release in September 2008. When the government petitioned the entire appeals court to reconsider, the petition was dismissed. The Obama administration should now comply with the court's ruling.

These photos will serve to confirm that abuse was not an aberration but rather the pervasive result of high-level policy decisions. Releasing the photos, with their corresponding investigative files, will allow the public to understand the context in which they were taken and to judge the adequacy of the investigations into the misconduct.