

40. (U//FOUO) DoJ has never prosecuted a violation of the torture statute, 18 U.S.C. §2340, and there is no case law construing its provisions. [REDACTED] issues under U.S. and international law to DoJ's OLC in the summer of 2002 and received a preliminary summary of the elements of the torture statute from OLC in July 2002. An unclassified 1 August 2002 OLC legal memorandum set out OLC's conclusions regarding the proper interpretation of the torture statute and concluded that "Section 2340A proscribes acts inflicting, and that are specifically intended to inflict, severe pain or suffering whether mental or physical."²⁰ Also, OLC stated that the acts must be of an "extreme nature" and that "certain acts may be cruel, inhuman, or degrading, but still not produce pain and suffering of the requisite intensity to fall within Section 2340A's proscription against torture." Further describing the requisite level of intended pain OLC stated:

Physical pain amounting to torture must be equivalent in intensity to the pain accompanying serious physical injury, such as organ failure, impairment of bodily function, or even death. For purely mental pain or suffering to amount to torture under Section 2340, it must result in significant psychological harm of significant duration, e.g., lasting for months or even years.²¹

OLC determined that a violation of Section 2340 requires that the infliction of severe pain be the defendant's "precise objective." OLC also concluded that necessity or self-defense might justify interrogation methods that would otherwise violate Section 2340A.²² The August 2002 OLC opinion did not address whether any other provisions of U.S. law are relevant to the detention, treatment, and interrogation of detainees outside the United States.²³

²⁰ (U//FOUO) Legal Memorandum, Re: Standards of Conduct for Interrogation under 18 U.S.C. 2340-2340A (1 August 2002).

²¹ (U//FOUO) Ibid., p. 1.

²² (U//FOUO) Ibid., p. 39.

²³ (U//FOUO) OLC's analysis of the torture statute was guided in part by judicial decisions under the Torture Victims Protection Act (TVPA) 28 U.S.C. 1350, which provides a tort remedy for victims of torture. OLC noted that the courts in this context have looked at the entire course