



FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE

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To the United Nations Committee on Torture:

My name is Alejandro Bello. I am a police sergeant with the City of Miami Beach and have been a police officer for 17 years. Currently, I serve as President of the Miami Beach Fraternal Order of Police William Nichols Lodge #8. Lodge #8 represents all of the honest, hard working and dedicated Miami Beach police officers including Officer Jorge Mercado.

There is no doubt that the death of Mr. Israel "Reefa" Hernandez, who ran from police after committing a crime and ultimately resulting in a standard issued police taser device being lawfully deployed by Officer Mercado, is indeed a tragic and heart breaking event for all involved. There is also no doubt that Mr. Hernandez's untimely death was an unintended consequence and all our thoughts and prayers are with the Hernandez family and Officer Mercado. I should remind everyone that this case is still being thoroughly investigated and it is my understanding the true catalyst causing Mr. Hernandez's untimely death is still a mystery.

As you may know, taser devices are standard issue to hundreds of thousands of police officers all across the United States as standard police equipment and are considered "non-lethal" devices. As a matter of fact, Taser's website contains an excerpt from the National Institute of Justice Study saying "...there is no conclusive medical evidence that indicates a high risk of serious injury or death from the direct effects of CED's (conducted energy devices)."

The one thing we do know for certain is that Officer Mercado did not use any excessive force whatsoever, nor did he break any laws and/or rules and regulations of the police department while apprehending Mr. Hernandez. There is no evidence I am aware of that suggests this is a case of police misconduct, let alone torture. The Hernandez family should not be demonizing Officer Mercado, he was simply doing his job with the equipment he was issued. The true focus should be on whether the taser device was a contributing factor of any kind to Mr. Hernandez's death. This is NOT a case of police torture but a case for medicine and science to review and debate the taser technology.

OHCHR REGISTRY

Respectfully submitted,

Sgt. Alejandro Bello, President

22 OCT 2014

Recipients : P. Team
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