



The
CENTER for
VICTIMS of
TORTURE

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The Center for Victims of Torture Strongly Opposes Haspel Nomination

ST. PAUL, Minn. and WASHINGTON—The Center for Victims of Torture™ (CVT) today urges U.S. Senators to oppose the nomination of Gina Haspel for CIA Director, only the second time in CVT's more than 30-year history that the organization has opposed a presidential nominee.

“Gina Haspel was directly involved in the grisly day-to-day operations of the CIA torture program, then worked to destroy powerful evidence of the horrors it produced,” said Curt Goering, CVT executive director. “The Senate must reject her nomination.”

In 2002, Ms. Haspel was in charge of a secret CIA prison in Thailand where detainees were brutally tortured. It is not clear precisely when Ms. Haspel was the on-site Chief of Base there, versus overseeing the “black site” prison’s operations from elsewhere, because these details remain classified. There is no question, however, that Ms. Haspel was the official who, several years later and against the wishes of superiors in the Bush administration, signed the CIA cable ordering destruction of the interrogation videotapes. In his [2014 book](#), former CIA General Counsel John Rizzo described Ms. Haspel as having “previously run the interrogation program,” and as one of “the staunchest advocates inside the building for destroying the tapes.”

“The full details of Ms. Haspel’s role in the CIA torture program should have long ago been declassified and released, and Senators should insist on that now before the confirmation process moves any further,” said Scott Roehm, director of CVT’s Washington, D.C., office. “But whether Ms. Haspel was physically present at the secret prison when atrocities were perpetrated on one detainee or more, by all accounts she was intimately involved both in running the torture program and in later trying to cover it up. Elevating her to one of the highest and most powerful positions in the Trump administration would be a shameful and reckless act.”

It is well-established that the CIA torture program fortified our enemies’ resolve, served as a recruiting tool for terrorists, and estranged the U.S. from key international partners. It also drove the country away from its position as a human rights defender.

“Senior U.S. government officials have [previously argued](#) that the test for a nation committed to the prohibition on torture, and to the rule of law, isn’t whether it ever makes mistakes, but whether and how it corrects them,” said Goering. “Ms. Haspel’s nomination is that test in its most basic form. The Senate must not fail it.”

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The Center for Victims of Torture is a nonprofit organization headquartered in St. Paul, MN, with offices in Atlanta, GA, and Washington, D.C.; and healing initiatives in Africa and the Middle East. Visit www.cvt.org