

January 22, 2014

President Barack Obama
White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Re: Upholding Executive Order 13491 Ensuring Lawful Interrogations

Dear President Obama:

We write to urge you to use the occasion of the 5th anniversary of your Executive Order 13491 (Ensuring Lawful Interrogations) to publicly support the release of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence's study of the former CIA detention and interrogation program.

Five years ago today, you mandated "the safe, lawful, and humane treatment of individuals in United States custody" and sent a message to the world that the United States rejects torture and the false dichotomy between values and security.

Former Bush Administration and CIA officials continue to attack your decision. Claiming that secret information supports them, they argue that torture saved lives and your Executive Order 13491 makes America less safe. As you know, torture is not only illegal, it is immoral and – according to military and intelligence experts – ineffective and counterproductive. Yet the use of torture continues to be the subject of intense debate. To answer critics of your Executive Order and ensure that a future President does not revoke the order and engage in torture, we urge you to publicly support the release of the Intelligence Committee's report.

There are strong indications that the Committee's study vindicates your Executive Order and that the CIA repeatedly misled the Congress, the Justice Department and the White House about the torture program. If true, former officials who continue to claim that torture made the United States safer are now also grossly misleading the public. Releasing the Intelligence Committee report would be a significant step in establishing the truth and creating a bulwark against the possibility that torture will ever be used again.

We urge you to publicly support release of the Senate's important oversight report and help bring the truth about torture before the American people.

Sincerely,

American Civil Liberties Union
Amnesty International USA
The Center for Victims of Torture
The Constitution Project
Human Rights First
Human Rights Watch
National Religious Campaign Against Torture
Open Society Policy Center
Physicians for Human Rights