



The
CENTER for
VICTIMS of
TORTURE

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Torture Survivor Rehabilitation Center Responds to Groundbreaking Senate Report on CIA Torture

St. Paul, MN & Washington, DC – The Center for Victims of Torture (CVT) issued the following statement in response to today’s public release of the executive summary of the U.S. Senate Select Committee on Intelligence’s historic and bipartisan report on the Central Intelligence Agency’s (CIA) former detention and interrogation program.

“After reviewing more than 6 million pages of classified records, the Senate Intelligence Committee, under the leadership of Senator Dianne Feinstein, has produced the most thorough and comprehensive review of the CIA torture program,” said Melina Milazzo, CVT senior policy counsel.

“Initiated, adopted, and approved for public release with bipartisan support, the Senate’s CIA Torture Report is a turning point in revealing the facts about an unlawful program that was far more brutal, sweeping, and unnecessary than previously known.

“President Obama and Congress must now work to ensure that we never resort to torture and cruelty again.

“The proof of torture and cruelty found in the CIA Torture Report speaks for itself. According to Senator Feinstein, ‘the conditions of confinement and the use of authorized and unauthorized interrogation and conditioning techniques were cruel, inhuman, and degrading. I believe the evidence of this is overwhelming and incontrovertible.’

“Among the abusive tactics described in the report are waterboarding, forced stress positions, sensory overload or deprivation, and sleep deprivation for up to 180 hours – all resulting in [serious and long-lasting physical and psychological pain and suffering](#),” said Milazzo.

“Although there is never a legal justification for torture, the CIA Torture Report supports what we consistently hear from survivors of torture: that torture produces false and misleading information because people will say anything to make the torture stop.

“Equally troubling is that the CIA’s torture program was based on widespread deception and misinformation. High-ranking government officials, Congress, and the American people were grossly misled and denied the truth.

“While President Obama halted the use of torture and cruelty in interrogations on his second day in office, a future President could overturn the Executive Order with the stroke of a pen. We support Senator Feinstein’s call for legislation to ‘enshrine’ the ban into law.

“The CIA Torture report should serve as a stark reminder of the enormous – and lingering – [costs](#) to America’s national security, foreign policy, and its ability to play an effective role globally on human rights when we entered the ‘dark side.’

“Senator Feinstein, her colleagues who have stood with her, and the highly dedicated Committee staff deserve our nation’s gratitude for their important work. But significant work remains to ensure we do not engage in torture and cruelty again.

“President Obama and Congress should ensure the prohibition against torture and cruelty – in law and practice – is firmly in place; the President should declassify the now-defunct CIA rendition, detention, and interrogation program in order for the full truth to come out; credible allegations of torture and abuse must be fully investigated, and prosecuted where necessary; and victims of torture should be provided an effective right to a remedy, including the right to rehabilitation,” said Milazzo.

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