



The
CENTER for
VICTIMS of
TORTURE

March 20, 2018

Dear Senator:

We write to urge you to oppose Gina Haspel's nomination to be director of the Central Intelligence Agency. Ms. Haspel played a significant, operational role in a program that tortured people. Elevating her to one of the highest and most powerful positions in government—especially when we have a President who has openly advocated for torture—would be a dangerous and damaging act.

Former CIA general counsel John Rizzo [describes](#) Ms. Haspel as having “previously run” the CIA’s “interrogation” program. This is a program in which men were stripped naked, diapered, and shackled to the ceiling; brutally beaten; waterboarded to the point of near-death; and stuffed for hours in boxes the size of small dog crates (among a host of other sadistic abuses). Mr. Rizzo has also [said](#) that Ms. Haspel was one of “the staunchest advocates inside the building” for destroying videotaped evidence of these torture sessions. Indeed, the centrality of her role in the tapes’ eventual destruction has not been disputed.

There is an ongoing public discussion about the more granular details of Ms. Haspel’s involvement in CIA torture because much of that information remains classified. Several senators have demanded the information’s public release, and we applaud them for it; too much about the United States’ use of torture has been secret for too long. But even to ask the kinds of questions on which such declassification will shed light—e.g., for which detainees’ vicious torture was Ms. Haspel in a position of responsibility on-site, versus off-site?—is to make clear that she does not deserve a *promotion* to a Cabinet-level position.

CVT has been providing care to torture survivors for more than 30 years. Every day, our clinicians sit across from people who have survived unspeakable brutality. We know all too well that torturers intimately dismantle their victims’ identity and humanity, intentionally breaking both their bodies and minds. That is precisely what the program Gina Haspel helped run (and then tried to cover up) did. Confirming her would not just sanction those atrocities, it would reward them.

Ms. Haspel’s supporters have said that she knows the CIA’s inner workings, is well regarded by her colleagues there, and is a skilled intelligence officer. That may all be true. But when making your confirmation decision, we hope you will agree that there can be no counterbalance to deep complicity in torture.

We urge you to reject Gina Haspel’s nomination for CIA director.

Sincerely,

Curt Goering
Executive Director

Scott Roehm
Director of the Washington Office