

Physicians for Human Rights

Torture, Former Combatants, Political Prisoners, Terror Suspects, & Terrorists

<https://phr.org/our-work/resources/truth-matters-accountability-for-cia-psychological-torture/>

Campaign and Advocacy

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On December 9, 2014, the U.S. Senate Select Committee on Intelligence released the executive summary, findings, and conclusions of its 6,700-page report on the CIA's post-9/11 torture program. The Senate torture report documents the abuses that followed the development of a comprehensive program of detainee torture by CIA personnel with the help of psychologists James Mitchell and Bruce Jessen. As the Senate torture report reveals, the operational goal of Mitchell and Jessen was to destroy human beings using methods and practices long recognized and clearly manifest as torture.

One year later, transparency and accountability let alone redress to victims remain stalled. Torture is absolutely prohibited under U.S. and international law, and the United States failure to reject impunity has come at a very high cost. CIA torture has damaged the lives of its victims, the integrity of health professionals who were complicit in these crimes, the integrity of democratic institutions, and hard-worn norms prohibiting torture and other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment.

The United States has an obligation under international law to conduct speedy, transparent investigations into allegations of torture in CIA detention centers, and, where evidence is found amounting to individual criminal responsibility, to prosecute alleged perpetrators in a court meeting international fair trial standards. It is crucial to ensure that those heading the chain of command responsible for authorizing torture are held to account.

The U.S. government must end the cover-up of torture and ill-treatment, and honor its obligation to investigate and prosecute those responsible. [Read our briefing paper and recommendations calling for accountability here.](#)

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