

Center for the Victims of Torture

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

<https://www.cvt.org/15FactsCIATorture>

Campaign and Advocacy

In the aftermath of the September 11, 2001 attacks, the CIA built a torture program. Between 2002 and 2008, it held at least 119 Muslim men captive in secret black site prisons around the world and subjected them to abuses that many Americans rightly associate with foreign dictators, tyrants and terrorists. The program was built largely by two contract psychologists, James Mitchell and Bruce Jessen. Neither had any experience as an interrogator, any knowledge of al Qaeda, or any science to justify their methods. The torture tactics they developed included chaining men to the ceiling, naked except for a diaper, in the dark with music blaring, sometimes for days on end; stuffing them for hours into (at times insect-filled) boxes the size of small dog crates or in the shape of coffins; and drowning them, just not to the point of death. Mitchell, Jessen and the CIA called this torture enhanced interrogation and said it would produce unique, otherwise unobtainable intelligence that would save lives. It did not.

For five years, the Senate intelligence committee investigated the torture program by reviewing over six million pages of the CIA's own records, including operational cables, reports, internal memos, emails, letters, briefing materials, intelligence products, classified testimony, summaries of more than 100 CIA inspector general interviews with CIA personnel, and other records. The investigation resulted in a 6,700-page oversight report, the longest in Senate history. It has become known as the Torture Report. In late December, 2014, the intelligence committee released a 525-page, [redacted executive summary of the Torture Report](#). The rest remains classified.

Below are 15 facts about the CIA torture program, the intelligence committee's investigation, and related developments since, including some eye-opening excerpts from the Torture Report's executive summary.

Read
the 2014
Torture Report
Executive
Summary

Note: Mitchell and Jessen are referred to in the Torture Report by the pseudonyms SWIGERT and DUNBAR.

Fact 1: The Torture Report is the story of the CIA torture program told through the CIA's own records, which the public was never meant to see. [Read more here.](#)

Fact 2: Every vote in Congress related to the investigation into the CIA torture program was bipartisan. [Read more here.](#)

Fact 3: Enhanced interrogation was torture and the CIA knew it. [Read more here.](#)

Fact 4: The CIA torture program caused profound, and in numerous cases permanent, psychological and physical harm to its victims. [Read more here.](#)

Fact 5: Torture did not work. [Read more here.](#)

Fact 6: The CIA torture program was never legal. [Read more here.](#)

Fact 7: The CIA torture program was unprofessional and inept. [Read more here.](#)

Fact 8: The CIA torture program caused strategic damage to the United States and jeopardized U.S. national security. [Read more here.](#)

Fact 9: The CIA torture program was wasteful. [Read more here.](#)

Fact 10: The CIA went to extraordinary lengths to cover up the torture program's futility and brutality, including repeated misrepresentations to senior executive branch officials, Congress and the public. [Read more here.](#)

Fact 11: The CIA torture program has prevented justice for the families of those killed during the September 11, 2001 attacks. [Read more here.](#)

Fact 12: Architects and operators of the CIA torture program have risen to prestigious positions in government, the private sector, the federal judiciary and academia. [Read more here.](#)

Fact 13: Almost nobody in the executive branch has read a single word of the Torture Report, and the report's fate remains uncertain. [Read more here.](#)

Fact 14: Retired military leaders, former interrogators, medical professionals, faith leaders, families of those who died on 9/11, and many others from across the political spectrum are opposed to torture. [Read more here.](#)

Fact 15:The next president can do a lot to further truth, justice and accountability for CIA torture.[Read more here.](#)

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