

National Religious Campaign Against Torture

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

<http://www.nrcat.org/about/nrcat-press-releases/882-faith-leaders-praise-bipartisan-11-3-senate-vote-to-shed-light-on-us-sponsored-torture>

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Faith Leaders Praise Bipartisan 11-3 Senate Vote to Shed Light on U.S.-Sponsored Torture Clergy Urge President to Lead Declassification Process

WASHINGTON After more than five years of urging the U.S. government to publicly air the truth about its use of immoral interrogation tactics (including torture), The religious community applauds the Senate Intelligence Committee for voting to seek declassification of the executive summary of its report on the CIAs rendition, detention and interrogation program, said **Rev. Ron Stief, executive director of the National Religious Campaign Against Torture**, an organization representing more than 300 diverse religious organizations across the country. The report is believed to describe the CIAs use of abhorrent acts of torture, to provide evidence that torture was unnecessary from a national security perspective, and to describe how and why the use of torture was authorized.

The Senate Intelligence Committee took moral responsibility by voting to make public the truth about the CIAs use of torture, said Rev. Stief. As people of faith, the members of the National Religious Campaign Against Torture believe that torture is always wrong. Admitting the truth about the United States past is the first step toward redemption.

Under NRCATs leadership, clergy across the country published opinion pieces in newspapers in all 50 states calling for the release of the Senate Intelligence Committee report on the CIAs use of torture. In December, a compilation of all published op-eds thus far ([listed online at NRCATs website](#)) was distributed to the members of the Senate Intelligence Committee, to demonstrate the diverse religious communitys united support for release of the report.

Speaking about the importance of the vote to release the report on torture, **Jim Winkler, president of the National Council of Churches**, a member of NRCAT, said, If elected leaders of the United States of America have the slightest interest in living up to the ideals of democracy and peace, they will not hesitate to make public the report on torture. The use of torture is abhorrent. Our leaders should express their deepest sorrow and regret for using torture, and they should publicly promise it will never again be employed by our nation.

Stephen Colecchi, director of the Office of International Justice and Peace at the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, said, For Catholics, torture is an intrinsic evil. Only by admitting our past mistakes can the United States take a clear stance against torture and regain some of our moral credibility as a defender of human rights for all.

Rabbi Jill Jacobs, executive director of Truah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights, also a NRCAT member, added, The Jewish tradition insists that every human being is created in the image of God. American use of torture after 9/11 violated the sacred image of God. The Committees vote to release the executive summary of its report on torture represents an important first step. However, we still need better cultural and legal safeguards to ensure that such desecration never happens again. As people of faith, we insist that the United States must be a moral guide to the world and never torture again.

Rev. Stief added, The faith community urges the President to use his moral authority to lead the declassification process and point the way toward solutions ensuring that the United States never again uses torture. People of faith who care deeply about torture need to see more than the executive summary and conclusions of this report, and we hope that the Committee will soon release the full 6,300 pages of its report.

The National Religious Campaign Against Torture (NRCAT) is a membership organization committed to ending U.S.-sponsored torture, and cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment. Since its formation in January 2006, more than 300 religious organizations have joined NRCAT, including representatives from the Catholic, evangelical Christian, mainline Protestant, Unitarian Universalist, Quaker, Orthodox Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, Bahai, Buddhist, and Sikh communities. Members include national denominations and faith groups, regional organizations and local congregations.

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