

National Religious Campaign Against Torture

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

<http://www.nrcat.org/about/nrcat-press-releases/1045-us-faith-leaders-condemn-cia-torture-program-ask-congress-to-act>

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U.S. Faith Leaders Condemn CIA Torture Program, Ask Congress to Act

WASHINGTON Almost six years since the Senate began investigating the CIAs treatment of detainees, two years after the Senate Intelligence Committee voted to adopt its torture report, and eight months after that committee held a bipartisan vote in favor of releasing its findings, [the more than 500-page executive summary of the Senate Intelligence Committees torture report](#) was made public today. After the details of this report came to light, several prominent faith leaders from across the country, representing a spectrum of religious traditions, released the following statements condemning U.S. use of torture and urging it be forever ended:

Bishop Oscar Cant, chair of the Committee on International Justice and Peace of the United States Conference of Catholic

Bishops, said: The Catholic Church firmly believes that torture is an intrinsic evil that cannot be justified under any circumstance. The acts of torture described in the Senate Intelligence Committees report violated the God-given human dignity inherent in all people and were unequivocally wrong. Congress and the President should act to strengthen the legal prohibitions against torture and to ensure that this never happens again.

Matt Hawthorne, policy director for the National Religious Campaign Against Torture, said: The acts of torture described in the report are not just horrific, they also represent a brutal violation of our countrys most basic values. Only now that the truth has been exposed can our nation begin healing from deep self-inflicted spiritual wounds. The CIAs torture program was not only wrong, but also by shattering our nations moral authority, it put lives at risk. Revealing the truth about the program is the first step toward ensuring that it is never repeated.

Jim Winkler, president and general secretary of the National Council of Churches, USA, said: The National Council of Churches has repeatedly stated that torture under any circumstance not only erodes the peace of the world but even the possibility of peace, as it destroys the trust required for diplomacy and other nonviolent means of seeking peace. This report clearly indicates the CIA broke that trust, and we call upon our Congress and the Administration to take action to ensure this never happens again.

Rabbi Jill Jacobs, executive director of Truah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights, said: The report shows that the CIA committed immoral acts that violate basic concepts of *kvod habriot*, human dignity, that apply to all human beings friend and enemy. As a nation, we have much to repent for and true *teshuvah*, repentance, requires both acknowledgement and accountability for what we have done. The report is a step toward acknowledgement. A step toward accountability would be for Congress to act to make clear that the CIA will never be allowed to torture again.

The reactions of many additional faith leaders to the information revealed by the torture report can be found at:

www.nrcat.org/TortureReport-Quotes.

Between January 2013 and March 2014, under the leadership of the National Religious Campaign Against Torture, 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. A compilation of all op-eds that had been published by December 2013 ([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.

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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