

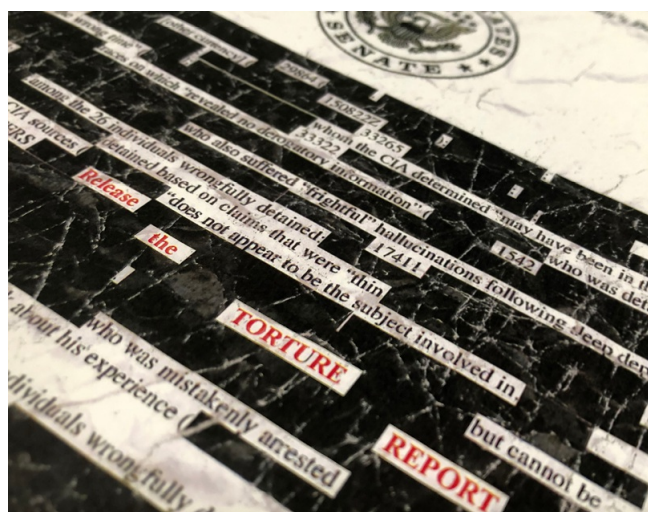
# Center for the Victims of Torture

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

<https://www.cvt.org/ending-torture>

### Policy Issue Resources

In the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, the U.S. government made numerous illegal and unwise decisions that led to the widespread and systematic use of torture and cruelty in U.S. detention facilities in Iraq, Guantanamo, Afghanistan and secret prisons around the world. Progress was made, but vigilance is required and important work remains to be done.



#### #TruthMatters

*No one knows this better  
than CVT's clients.*



The  
CENTER for  
VICTIMS of  
TORTURE

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Here are steps CVT has taken to push back against the legacy of torture by the U.S.

In the aftermath of the September 11, 2001 attacks, the CIA built a torture program, holding more than one hundred Muslim men captive in secret black site prisons around the world and subjecting them to abuses that many Americans rightly associate with foreign dictators, tyrants and terrorists. The torture program had profound consequences for its victims, for U.S. national security, and for the United States reputation in the world.

In

November, 2019, Amazon studios released *The Report* a film that tells the story of the work of Senator Dianne Feinstein and a team of Senate intelligence committee staff, led by Daniel J. Jones, which conducted an in-depth investigation into the CIA torture program. Jones and his team principally Evan Gottesman, Alissa Starzak, and Chad Tanner wrote a 6,700 page oversight report, 525 pages of which were released publicly, in redacted form, in late 2014. The rest remains classified.

The grim realities of the CIA torture program must build support for actions to ensure it never happens again, including at minimum declassifying and releasing the full report and excluding from government those who were complicit in torture. See our work opposing the promotion of Gina Haspel to CIA director [here](#).

**READ  
15 FACTS  
about  
CIA TORTURE**

#### MORE INFORMATION & PUBLICATIONS

Read **15 Facts about the CIA Torture Program** [here](#).

**CVT ARTICLE:** Stanton Wood, strategic initiatives officer, [writes here](#) about how Hollywood is finally getting the story right on CIA torture.

**CVT GUEST BLOG ARTICLE:** Phyllis Kaufman, human rights advocate, lawyer, and research fellow in CVT's D.C. office, [writes](#) that the legacy of torture still haunts Guantanamo.

**VIDEO:** Check out [this video](#) about what we know about the Torture Report and why it still matters today, five years after the executive summary was released.

**OP ED ARTICLE:** Scott Roehm, director of the Washington, DC, office, wrote [this piece](#) for Open Society Foundations Voices, *An Overdue Reckoning with U.S. Torture*.

**CVT ARTICLE:** Torture survivors look to CVT for healing; they should be able to look to the U.S. for how to right the most egregious of wrongs, writes Curt Goering, executive director, on the 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary of release of the executive summary CIA Torture Report, noting that it is long past time to release the full report. This article is also found [on Medium](#).



**NEWS MEDIA:** Twin Cities NBC affiliate KARE11 News ran [this segment](#) featuring Pete Dross, director of external relations, about CVTs work and the importance of *The Report* film.

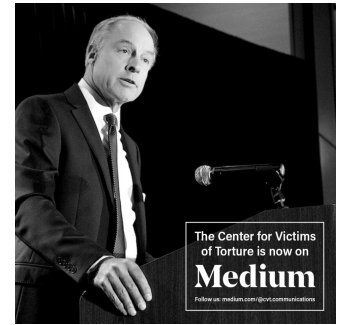
**CVT ARTICLE:** As Americans, we demand to know the whole, terrible truth about what crimes were committed in our name, and how. Curt Goering, CVT executive director, writes that the full truth about the CIA torture program must be told. The article is also on [Medium](#).

**NEWS MEDIA:** John Rash wrote [this column](#) in the Star Tribune, connecting the dots between the CIA torture program and today's crisis of accountability.



**NEWS MEDIA:** David Crane, a member of CVTs National Advisory Council, wrote [this op ed](#) for The Hill, titled **Enhanced interrogation better known as torture took America to the dark side.**

**NEWS MEDIA:** Scott Roehm, director of the Washington, D.C. office, along with [Sondra Crosby](#), Brig. Gen. (Ret.) [David R. Irving](#) and [Christian Meissner](#) published [this op ed](#) on Just Security: **Go See The Report, Then Lets Put Torture to Bed For Good.**



**NEWS MEDIA:** In an article about *The Report* film, Euan Kerr at Minnesota Public Radio [comments](#) that film director/writer Scott Z. Burns and Torture Report author Daniel Jones were recently in Minneapolis for a preview screening not just because of the hometown connection, but also because the Center for the Victims of Torture is based in the Twin Cities.

Torturers try to hide behind euphemisms like enhanced interrogation techniques. Read the truth about torture that leaves no scars here: [The Hidden Harm](#).

Whats wrong with using euphemisms? Check out [CVTs video here](#).

Whats it like to tell people you work at the Center for Victims of Torture? Check out [our video here](#).

Because the truth matters so much, more than 60 CVT clients who survived war and violent conflict in Iraq and Syria told their stories to CVT. Read their stories in our [Reclaiming Hope report here](#).

The McCain-Feinstein Anti-Torture Amendment of 2015 strengthened U.S. prohibitions on torture. Read our [Fact Sheet](#) here.

Read the 500+ page [Torture Report](#) from Dec. 2014 Executive Summary version

**News Media:** Biden Promised to Close Gitmo. Instead, Hes Upgrading It  
Jan. 5, 2022

As the Biden administration moves to build courtrooms at Guantanamo prison, Shannon Vavra quoted Scott Roehm, Washington director, in [this piece](#) in the *Daily Beast*. There is a consensus that the commissions have failed but they haven't failed because of a lack of courtrooms, Roehm said. They've failed because they were never about justice.

**News Media:** Joe Biden Wants More Control Over Guantanamo Bay Prisoners, Objects Congress' Restrictions  
Dec. 27, 2021

Scott Roehm, Washington director, is quoted in this [Newsweek article](#) by Alexandra Hutzler, commenting that while President Biden is right to oppose restrictions on transfers out of Guantanamo, those provisions aren't what's preventing him from closing the prison."

### Senate Judiciary Committee Oversight Hearing Documents

Dec. 7, 2021

The Senate Judiciary Committee held an oversight hearing about Guantanamo Bay prison, which was attended by Yumna Rizvi, policy analyst, and Scott Roehm, Washington director. As part of the human rights and national security coalition, they participated in writing this [statement for the record](#). In addition, they joined this group of medical experts in submitting this [statement for the record](#) ahead of the hearing. A coalition tweet posted by CVT was quoted in [this article](#) in *Common Dreams*.

### Letter to Secretaries of State and Defense

Dec. 6, 2021

The CVT Policy team participated in [this letter](#) to the Secretary of State and Secretary of Defense from a number of survivors of torture treatment programs, calling for Guantanamo detainee Majid Kahn to receive the medical and mental health and psychosocial support he deserves as he is set free from the prison.

### Op Ed Article: Four Questions That Deserve Answers at the Guantanamo Oversight Hearing

Dec. 3, 2021

Ahead of a Senate Judiciary Committee oversight hearing on Guantanamo Bay prison, Scott Roehm, CVT Washington director, wrote [this op ed](#) for *The Hill*. He writes, Closing Guantanamo boils down to two steps: transferring men who haven't been charged with a crime and resolving military commission cases.

### Op Ed Article: The Biden Administrations Moment of Truth on Torture Evidence

Dec. 1, 2021

Scott Roehm joined several authors in writing [this op ed](#) for *Just Security*, as well as [this amicus brief](#) filed last week in support of actions by Abd Al-Rahim Hussein Al-Nashiri, a detainee at Guantanamo prison, to prevent torture-derived evidence from being used in his case. The authors write, There can be no doubt that torture-derived evidence is inadmissible in any American legal proceeding at any time, for any purpose, except against alleged torturers.



### Op Ed Article: A Torture Survivor Speaks at the Guantanamo Military Commissions

Nov. 5, 2021

Scott Roehm, Washington director, traveled to Guantanamo Bay prison last week to attend the military commission sentencing hearing of Majid Khan, the first detainee to speak publicly about the torture he survived at the hands of the CIA in their torture program after 9/11. Scott [published this article](#), A Torture Survivor Speaks at the Guantanamo Military Commissions, in *Just Security*, describing Mr. Khans testimony as going far beyond details already disclosed in the 2014 Senate Intelligence Committee findings: Scott writes Torture inflicted by medical personnel stood out. Mr. Khan has been held in Guantanamo since 2006, and Scott comments on the lack of any prosecutions of the torturers, calling the hearing a stark and poignant reminder of the degree of impunity perpetrators have enjoyed, and lack of accountability for U.S. torture more broadly.



**News Media:** Guantanamo Bay: Sixty-Year Old Iraqi Detainee Suffering from Paralysis

Sep. 10, 2021

Scott Roehm, Washington director, is quoted in [this article](#) in the *Middle East Eye* by Umar Farooq, about the medical emergency experienced by Abd al-Hadi al-Iraqi, a detainee in Guantanamo prison. "If he can't walk, he should be in a hospital, not a cell," Scott said, and noted "If the reports of what's happened here are accurate, it doesn't remotely satisfy the standard of care that all men are supposed to receive at Guantanamo."

**News Media:** US Military Trial of 9/11 Suspects Drags on 20 Years After Attack

Sep. 11, 2021

Scott Roehm is also quoted in [this article](#) in *Al Jazeera* by William Roberts. Scott comments: Guantanamo should never have been stood up in the first place. Its animating philosophy was creating a place outside the reach of the law so that these men can be held for the rest of their lives.

**Op Ed Article:** Nuremberg Prosecutor says Guantanamo Military Commissions Dont Measure Up

Aug. 24, 2021

Scott Roehm, Washington director, co-wrote [this Just Security article](#) with Alka Pradhan, Human Rights counsel at the Guantanamo Bay Military Commissions. They write that . . . unlike the efforts at Nuremberg, which marked the [birth](#) of international criminal law, the United States decided that power the power to hide criminal abuse of detainees and fair trial violations would subjugate reason and the rule of law at Guantanamo. It is for that reason that the 9/11 case *has not yet gone to trial*, and on that basis that detainee counsel are asking that the case be dismissed.

**Op Ed Article:** "Course Correction Still Needed on Anti-Torture Obligations

Aug. 9, 2021

Scott Roehm, Washington director, and David Luban, Georgetown Law professor, co-authored [this article](#) in *Just Security* titled: They address concerns that the government has made only a partial retreat from the use of torture-derived evidence, writing, No more caveats, qualifications, or half-measures. The prohibition on torture is absolute. The governments commitment to upholding it must be, too.

**News Media:** He is One of Only 39 Detainees Left at Guantanamo. Once Tortured, Prisoner's Case is a Test of Larger Political Realities at Play

Aug. 5, 2021

Scott Roehm is quoted in [this article](#) in CNN by Daniel A. Medina, covering the case and serious health situation of Mohammed al-Qahtani, who has been in Guantanamo for nearly 20 years. Scott is quoted saying: "The fact that somebody as sick as Mr. al-Qahtani poses some kind of security threat to the United States is unthinkable." CVT is noted as putting pressure on the Biden administration to close the prison. This article was widely picked up by additional outlets.



**News Media:** The United States Sent Home Another Prisoner from the Prison Guantanamo Bay in Cuba

July 23, 2021

Scott Roehm, Washington director, was quoted in [this article](#) in Voice of America-Russia, about the release of Abdul Latif Nasser from Guantanamo prison. Scott notes that the move was long overdue and that the prison must be closed.

**CVT Release:** CVT Commends Transfer of Abdul Latif Nasser out of Guantanamo Prison

July 19, 2021

CVT issued [this press release](#) as Abdul Latif Nasser was transferred out of Guantanamo prison. Mr. Nassers transfer is a much welcome step towards closing the Guantanamo prison, and hopefully will allow him to begin to heal and reclaim his life after 19 years of injustice. The Biden administration needs to follow his transfer with swift and decisive action, said Scott Roehm, CVT Washington director. Commentary by Scott was quoted in [this article](#) titled Abdul Latif Nasser Released From Guantanamo After 19 Years Of Detention Without Charge, by Jessica Schulberg and Rowaida Abdelaziz in Huffington Post.

**News Media:** Congress Debates Allowing Prisoners to Leave Guantanamo for Medical Care

July 15, 2020

Scott Roehm, director of the Washington, DC office, was quoted in [this article](#) in the *National Journal*, saying, If there were ever a time thats critical to have medical-transfer authority, its in the face of a pandemic that could easily spread throughout the entire naval base, detainee population included.

**News Media:** Torture Can Be Considered in Sentencing Guantanamo Prisoners, Judge Rules

June 4, 2020

Carol Rosenberg [reports in the New York Times](#) on a military judges acknowledgement of C.I.A. torture. She quotes Scott Roehm, CVT director of the Washington office: A military commission has taken a meaningful step toward a C.I.A. torture victim receiving some type of modest reparation or remedy, a step that no other U.S. government institution has taken.

**The New York Times**

Sacha Pfeiffer at [NPR also reported](#) on the ruling, quoting Scott Roehm: "It's a big deal in Mr. Khan's case," he said. "It's an equally big deal in its potential much broader application to other torture survivors at Guantanamo."



## **Article:** Guantamos COVID-19 Precautions Must Safeguard Detainees Rights

Mar. 31, 2020

As COVID-19 expands its reach, Scott Roehm, CVT director of the Washington DC office, writes . . . the virus local presence, coupled with certain measures that the Defense Department is undertaking to prevent a larger outbreak, endanger both the detainees and the already limited rights they have been afforded. Read his article in [Just Security](#).

## **Letter:** Action Required for Guantanamo Detainee

Mar. 31, 2020

CVT and Physicians for Human Rights wrote [this letter](#) to Defense Secretary Esper urging immediate action in connection with the deteriorating health of one detainee at Guantanamo Bay prison.



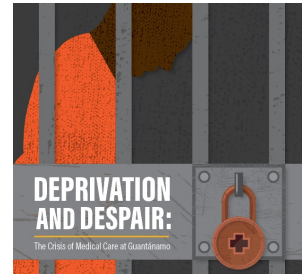
On Sept. 10, 2019, human rights, civil liberties and faith groups joined CVT in [a letter](#) to Defense Secretary Esper, expressing grave concern regarding detainee Sharqawi Al Hajj, who attempted suicide at Guantanamo Bay prison.

## **REPORT: Deprivation and Despair: The Crisis of Medical Care at Guantnamo**

On June 26, 2019, CVT and Physicians for Human Rights (PHR) launched this [joint report](#) detailing widespread medical deficiencies at the Guantnamo Bay detention center. Read the [press release](#) and [landing page](#) for the report and associated supporting documents.

In addition, on June 26, 2019, Scott Roehm, director of the Washington office, published an article at Just Security, [Deprivation and Despair: The Crisis of Medical Care at Guantnamo](#), describing the above report. He notes, In a welcome sign, both Democrats and Republicans in Congress have begun to acknowledge, to varying degrees, the medical care crisis at Guantnamo and are working toward pursuing some legislative improvements consistent with what we recommend.

On May 6, 2019, Scott Roehm published [this article](#) titled For the Military Commissions, a Fork in the Road on Torture, in *Just Security*, regarding the case of Guantanamo detainee Majid Khan. The previous week, CVT filed an [amicus brief](#) in support of Khan's sentencing before the military commissions.



On January 25, 2018, CVT filed an [amicus brief](#) with the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia in support of the [joint habeas motion](#) filed January 11<sup>th</sup> by 11 of the remaining Guantanamo Bay detainees. CVT's brief speaks to the serious medical consequences associated with prolonged detention without charge or trial, and the plight of torture survivors trapped in a constant reminder of their trauma where meaningful treatment is not, and cannot be made, available. Read the press release [here](#).

As President Obama's tenure came to an end without closure of the Guantanamo Bay prison, Curt Goering, CVT executive director, wrote [this blog post](#) titled Time to Close this Ugly Chapter in American History, Jan. 11, 2017.

Curt Goering also published [this letter to the editor](#) in the New York Times, titled Americas Lasting Shame: The Torture of Detainees, Oct. 12, 2016.

The serious physical and psychological harm that results from indefinite detention can constitute cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment. Read detail [here](#).

Closing Guantanamo Bay prison isn't enough; indefinite detention must end. Read CVT's press release [here](#).

CVT continues to [call](#) on the President to end indefinite detention without charge or trial of prisoners held at the U.S. detention center in Guantanamo.

[Read](#) CVT's position statement on Hunger Strikes and Forced Feeding at the U.S. detention center in Guantanamo.

Because of Gina Haspel's involvement in the CIA torture program, CVT strongly opposed her 2018 nomination to CIA director. This was only the second time in CVT's more than 30-year history that the organization opposed a presidential nominee. Read CVT's statements and publications [here](#).

President Donald Trump resurfaced the specter of U.S. use of torture during his 2016 presidential campaign when he spoke out in news interviews in favor of torture, stating that he believes it is effective. Read The Unchanging Truth About Torture, a [blog post](#) by Curt Goering, published on President Trump's Inauguration Day, Jan. 20, 2017.

As confirmation hearings for President Trump's cabinet nominees began in January 2017, CVT published [this blog post](#) listing considerations regarding the prohibitions against torture and protections for refugees that are central to American values and CVT's mission.

President Trump's remarks about torture run counter to long-standing and bi-partisan opposition to torture. In commemoration of the [25th Anniversary of the Reagan Administration](#) signing the United Nations Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, CVT issued the policy report, [U.S. Bi-Partisan Leadership Against Torture](#). The report highlights historical bipartisan opposition to torture and calls for the United States to regain its global leadership against torture and cruel treatment. Read our op-ed in the Huffington Post, [The Convention against Torture 25 Years Later](#).

In 2008, CVT helped coordinate [a bipartisan coalition](#) of more than 200 foreign policy experts, retired military leaders, intelligence experts, security chiefs and faith leaders calling for the President to sign an Executive Order to ban torture and cruelty. The bipartisan group of supporters included six former Secretaries of State or Defense, three former National Security Advisors, four former members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and more than forty retired flag officers.

In January 2009 President Obama signed an [executive order](#) banning torture and cruel treatment of detainees, thus ending the post-9/11 torture program.

In December 2014, the U.S. Senate Select Committee on Intelligence released the [executive summary](#) of this landmark and bipartisan report on CIA torture. Within its 500-plus pages, it exposes a shameful chapter in American history by describing a more brutal, widespread, and deceitful CIA torture program than had been previously known. Prominent [military, national security, foreign policy, religious leaders, media, and others](#) expressed support for the public release of the CIA torture report.

In November 2015, led by John McCain (R-AZ) and Dianne Feinstein (D-CA), Congress enshrined key elements of the 2009 Obama executive order into U.S. law. Read more about the McCain-Feinstein Amendment [here](#).

And in September 2016, responding to calls for torture made during the Presidential election campaign, more than 100 leaders from the foreign policy, national security, military and faith sectors joined together in signing CVT's [declaration](#), the Call to Reject Torture. In this document, these prominent, bipartisan leaders called on all Americans and public officials to reject torture unequivocally and without exception, in keeping with American law and values. Read the release [here](#).

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We **heal victims** of torture through unique services and professional care worldwide.

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We **strengthen partners** who heal torture survivors and work to prevent torture.

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We **advocate** for the protection & care of torture survivors and an end to torture.

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