

## Gina Haspel, Nominee for CIA Director

The administration has nominated Gina Haspel to be the director of the CIA. Haspel played a central role in the CIA's torture program. She ran a CIA "black site"—a secret prison where detainees were unlawfully abused—in Thailand and participated in the destruction of nearly 100 video tapes documenting the torture of detainees. This document provides information on Haspel's involvement in the CIA's program and includes links to additional details and sources.

### Gina Haspel played a direct role in the CIA's torture program

- Haspel was the Chief of Base of the CIA black site located in [Thailand](#) (referred to as Detention Site GREEN in the [Senate Torture Report](#)), a secret prison where detainees were subjected to torture and other unlawful abuse. Under Haspel's [supervision](#), [Abd Al-Rahim al-Nashiri](#) was brutally tortured, including at least three waterboarding sessions. It is not clear based on public reporting what role, if any, Haspel played in the torture of [Abu Zubaydah](#), though it is clear at minimum that she knew of it. Zubaydah was [waterboarded](#) 83 times, and in "at least one session...[became completely unresponsive](#), with bubbles rising through his open, full mouth and required medical intervention."
- According to the [Senate Torture Report](#), as Chief of Base, Haspel was the only person at the black site who was permitted to "interrupt or stop an interrogation in process." There is no indication based on public reporting that Haspel took any steps to stop any torture or abuse, despite clear signs of physical and psychological trauma on the part of detainees.
- Bruce Jessen and James Mitchell, the architects of the torture program, who were supervised by Haspel at Detention Site GREEN, [were sued](#) by two former detainees whom the CIA tortured and the family of a third detainee who was also tortured and died in U.S. custody. In their defense, [Jessen and Mitchell argued](#) that they should not be held liable because they conducted their work for the CIA, and sought to depose Haspel to prove their claim. In their filing, Jessen and Mitchell [claimed](#) "Ms. Haspel was centrally involved in the events alleged" in the lawsuit.

### Haspel supported and helped facilitate the destruction of evidence and tapes documenting the torture at the black site she oversaw

- In late 2002, the CIA shut down the black site in Thailand that Haspel ran. According to [James Mitchell](#), Haspel [told her security officer](#) "to burn everything that he could in preparation for sanitizing the black sites." When she asked superiors in Washington, DC if nearly 100 video tapes of the interrogations could also be destroyed, they advised her not to.
- In 2004, Haspel served as chief of staff to Jose Rodriguez when he was Director of the CIA's National Clandestine Service and in charge of the torture program. During this time, Haspel wrote the cable that authorized the destruction of the same video tapes that her superiors and White House officials had previously said not to destroy. Rodriguez wrote [in his memoir](#) that in 2005, "my chief of staff drafted a cable approving the action we had been trying to accomplish for so long. The cable left nothing to chance. It even told them how to get rid of the

tapes. They were to use an industrial-strength shredder to do the deed.”

**Military leaders, interrogators, and other senior national security professionals have strongly opposed the torture tactics that Haspel supported and oversaw**

- In January 2017, 176 of the country’s most distinguished retired generals and admirals [wrote](#) to President Trump, advising him against the torture or cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment of detainees in U.S. custody. They wrote, “The use of waterboarding or any so-called ‘enhanced interrogation techniques’ is unlawful under domestic and international law,” and added, “It increases the risks to our troops, hinders cooperation with allies, alienates populations whose support the United States needs in the struggle against terrorism, and provides a propaganda tool for extremists who wish to do us harm.”
- Experienced interrogators and intelligence professionals also [oppose](#) the use of torture and abusive interrogation techniques. Officials from the CIA, NCIS, FBI, DEA, DIA, and U.S. military wrote, “Torture is not only illegal and immoral; it is counterproductive. It tends to produce unreliable information because it degrades a detainee’s ability to recall and transmit information, undermines trust in the interrogator, and often prompts a detainee to relay false information that he believes the interrogator wants to hear.”

**Haspel was previously blocked from a senior government position due to her involvement in the torture program**

- Haspel [became acting head](#) of the CIA’s National Clandestine Service on February 28, 2013. Several prominent government officials, including Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-CA), [raised concerns](#) with then-CIA Director John Brennan about Haspel’s involvement with the torture program.

- When it came time for Director Brennan to appoint a permanent head of the National Clandestine Service, Haspel was not selected. Reports [indicate](#) that Senator Dianne Feinstein blocked the promotion due to Haspel’s role in the CIA’s torture program and destruction of evidence.

**Haspel may have approved the use of techniques beyond what was authorized, and disobeyed direct orders from the White House**

- Those who support Haspel insist that she was simply “following orders” when she oversaw the torture of al-Nashiri, and that she should not be held accountable for her actions. [Principle IV](#) of the Nuremberg Principles states that “the fact that a person acted pursuant to order of his Government or of a superior does not relieve him from responsibility under international law, provided a moral choice was in fact possible to him.” The [so-called “enhanced interrogation techniques”](#), including waterboarding, [were clearly unlawful under domestic and international law](#) at the time they were [“authorized” by U.S. officials](#) and in fact the United States had previously prosecuted others for waterboarding and similar forms of torture.
- The treatment of al-Nashiri that Haspel oversaw may have gone beyond what her superiors authorized. According to the [Senate Torture Report](#) and the [CIA Inspector General](#), Haspel likely had knowledge of, and may have had some involvement in, so-called “enhanced interrogation techniques” that exceeded the authority of what the DOJ and CIA Headquarters authorized. The result, in many cases, was brutal and unlawful interrogation approaches that caused lasting physical and psychological harm to detainees.
- Al-Nashiri and other detainees were also subjected [to several other unauthorized techniques](#), including mock executions, threats with power drills and pistols, and threats against

family members. Haspel at minimum would have almost certainly had knowledge of these actions, and it should be clarified what role, if any, she may have played in helping carry them out.

- Haspel disobeyed a direct order with respect to the destruction of the video tapes documenting the torture of both Abu Zubaydah and al-Nashiri. Former CIA lawyers, multiple White House Counsels, and numerous federal judges advised that the videotapes [could not be destroyed](#) without authorization from the White House. No such authorization was given before Haspel drafted the cable approving their destruction.