

January 28, 2015

President Barack Obama  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave, NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We write to express our serious concern that your administration has apparently ignored the Senate Intelligence Committee's full report on CIA torture since receiving it more than six weeks ago, and to urge you to reject Chairman Richard Burr's request that you return all copies of the report. Government officials must thoroughly understand how and why torture was authorized and perpetrated in order to effectively guard against its repetition. Accordingly, we urge you to direct the relevant agencies and departments in your administration to review the full report and to adopt appropriate internal reforms to help permanently eradicate torture and cruel treatment from official U.S. policy.

On December 9, then-Committee Chairman Dianne Feinstein [filed](#) with the Senate the final version of the Committee's 6,963-page report on the CIA's former detention and interrogation program. She [sent](#) the full report to you and to the heads of relevant executive branch agencies the next day. It is clear from its declassified executive summary that the full report details significant institutional and operational failures, across multiple executive branch agencies, which resulted in gruesome human rights violations. Senator Feinstein explicitly reiterated her intent to make the full report available throughout the executive branch, as appropriate, "to help make sure that this experience is never repeated."

Yet, according to the government's most recent court [filing](#) in a Freedom of Information Act lawsuit seeking public access to the full report, when the Justice Department, State Department, Defense Department and CIA received their respective copies, each immediately locked it away and virtually none has made meaningful use of it since. "Neither DOJ nor DOS, moreover, has even opened the package with the [compact disc] containing the full Report. And CIA and DoD have carefully limited access to and made only very limited use of the report." The [State Department](#) went so far as to mark the envelope containing the report "Congressional Record – Do Not Open, Do Not Access." The FBI has not even retrieved its copy, which was [sent](#) to the Justice Department, much less reviewed it.

Whether these actions are motivated by indifference or an attempt to circumvent the public's access to the full report under the Freedom of Information Act, they are unacceptable.

Responding to the release of the report's declassified executive summary, you [said](#) that "one of the strengths that makes America exceptional is our willingness to openly confront our past, face our imperfections, make changes and do better." In [previous remarks](#) you similarly explained that the report would help our government understand what happened in the past, learn from it, and guide us as we move forward. Indeed, that is the purpose of congressional oversight. But the process cannot be fulfilled if executive branch officials avoid doing their part.

To that end it is essential that you publicly reject, without further delay, the new Committee Chairman's unreasonable and unfounded request that you return all copies of the full report to the Committee. The report was approved on a bipartisan vote in December 2012. It was delivered to your administration

during the last Congress. It is both astonishing and inappropriate for the chair of the Committee in a new Congress to request that your administration return all copies of a report the Committee completed, approved, and delivered in prior Congresses. Accommodating Chairman Burr would deprive executive branch decisionmakers of their best chance to learn from a dark chapter of U.S. history and would raise serious questions about your commitment to a future free from government-sanctioned torture. It would also raise serious questions about the executive branch's commitment to abiding by the transparency obligations imposed by Congress's Freedom of Information Act.

The full report presents a unique opportunity. We urge you to embrace it, and to ensure that your administration does as well.

Sincerely,

Center for Constitutional Rights  
Center for Victims of Torture  
Human Rights First  
International Justice Network  
National Religious Campaign Against Torture  
Open Society Policy Center  
OpenTheGovernment.org  
Physicians for Human Rights  
The Constitution Project