



March 24, 2014

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

Dear President Obama:

We welcome your pledge that you are “absolutely committed to declassifying” the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence (SSCI) report on the CIA’s detention and interrogation program. Given the CIA’s inherent conflict of interest concerning the report, we believe it is imperative that your White House staff lead that declassification process.

The SSCI report is by all accounts a “scathing” critique of CIA conduct. According to Senator Feinstein, it describes a “brutal” interrogation program “far more harsh” than the CIA has revealed. It apparently documents that the CIA repeatedly lied to Congress, the Justice Department and the White House. It seems obviously inappropriate to permit the agency assessed in the report to decide what parts of it your Administration believes the American people should see.

We appreciate CIA Director Brennan’s pledge “not . . . to stand in the way” of release of the report. However, he simply cannot eliminate his agency’s conflict of interest. The recent allegations that the CIA searched computers made available to the SSCI, removed documents from them, triggered potential criminal proceedings against congressional staff and took other troubling steps make this inherent conflict of interest very vivid.

You have said that it is important to declassify the SSCI report so that “the American people can understand what happened” and to “help guide us as we move forward.” We agree. The United States cannot move forward confident that it will never again use torture without first reckoning

with the past. Releasing the congressional oversight committee's report is a foundational step in that process. We urge you personally to ensure that the report sees the light of day.

Sincerely,

American Civil Liberties Union
Amnesty International USA
The Center for Victims of Torture
The Constitution Project
Human Rights First
National Religious Campaign Against Torture
Open Society Policy Center
Physicians for Human Rights