**CONTACT NORTH CAROLINA STATE OFFICIALS**

**Urge them to support inquiry of North Carolina Commission of Inquiry on Torture**

NC Stop Torture NOW has a citizen's action step that anyone can do.

We are asking that organizations and individuals communicate to Gov. Roy Cooper and Attorney General Josh Stein their concern about the need for transparency and accountability for U.S. torture and North Carolina’s role in it.

Please encourage the Governor and AG to support the non-governmental NC Commission of Inquiry on Torture (NCCIT), which held public hearings on Nov. 30 and Dec. 1, 2017. The testimony can be viewed at www.nccit.org.

Attached is a sample letter with talking points for those writing to the elected leaders. Writers are encouraged to put letters in their own words.

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In 2017, delegations met with top staff to both Gov. Cooper and AG Stein. To date, neither official has done or promised to do anything to investigate Aero Contractors or facilitate the NCCIT’s inquiry.  Both declined to send representatives to the NCCIT’s hearings.

Dear Governor Cooper and Attorney General Stein,

We are writing to urge you to support the work of the non-governmental North Carolina Commission of Inquiry on Torture (www.nccit.org). Please direct your staff to cooperate with the Commission and provide information that it needs to conduct its inquiry into North Carolina’s role in the post-9/11 CIA torture program. The lack of transparency and accountability for torture is dangerous for North Carolina.

Given North Carolina’s large and active military presence and our desire to engage with global partners, all these reasons are urgent for our state:

* **North Carolina’s Aero Contractors has played a key role in torture, and could again.** Our public airports in Johnston and Lenoir counties operated as critical infrastructure in the Bush-era torture program.[[1]](#endnote-1) At least 49 prisoners were transported to torture prisons for the CIA by its affiliate, Aero Contractors.[[2]](#endnote-2) Other private companies may also have been involved.[[3]](#endnote-3) County, state, and federal officials have been repeatedly informed since 2005, but we do not know if Aero, which is headquartered at the Johnston County Airport, continues to conduct missions for the abuse of detainees. Because our state leaders refuse to take action to investigate or even speak out against torture, *North Carolina remains open for business when it comes to torture.*
* **The NCCIT’s work is critical.** There has been no accountability for the destructive decision to secretly detain, transport, and torture dozens of people, regardless of guilt or innocence. From records just made public[[4]](#endnote-4) in a landmark 2017 trial, we learned how little the U.S. government cared whether the torture techniques were at all effective, nor what damage they did to the victims. Defendants in the trial were James Mitchell and Bruce Jessen, the two psychologists who sold the CIA its 2001-2006 torture program for $81 million. The trial offered three plaintiffs a measure of justice,[[5]](#endnote-5) but our government has done nothing to hold officials responsible for the CIA’s failures or for the terrible damage caused by U.S. torture, both at home and abroad.
* **Torture has boosted terrorism and damaged U.S. global standing.** Experts likeAlberto Mora, General Counsel of the Navy under President Bush, have concluded[[6]](#endnote-6) that U.S. torture has been “the greatest recruiting tool” for terrorists, made it harder to find allies, and undermined counter-terrorism cooperation.
* **Top U.S. officials support or condone torture.** These range from the President, who has repeatedly promoted[[7]](#endnote-7) a policy of torture, to the second in command at the CIA, Gina Haspel, who ran the CIA’s secret torture prison in Thailand in 2002.[[8]](#endnote-8) President Trump’s nominee Steven Bradbury, one of the architects of the U.S. torture program, won confirmation to a top Administration job.[[9]](#endnote-9) And the President’s choice for FBI Director, Christopher Wray, played a troubling role in the handling of Abu Ghraib detainee abuse.[[10]](#endnote-10)
* **There is evidence the U.S. may be re-engaging with torture.** Recent reports indicate a possible U.S. role in a brutal torture program uncovered in Yemen.[[11]](#endnote-11) In secret prisons, hundreds of men have been detained in secret prisons where torture with fire, sexual assault, and other barbarous acts are routine. The U.S. government acknowledges that our personnel have participated in interrogations there, receiving transcripts and questioning detainees after Emirati torture sessions.

Other countries have faced up to their role in helping the U.S. carry out the post-9/11 torture program. Sweden,[[12]](#endnote-12) Canada,[[13]](#endnote-13) and the UK[[14]](#endnote-14) are among the countries that have compensated survivors of CIA torture. But the lack of transparency and accountability for the program’s chief architects has had its sad, predictable results. Detainees innocent of any connection to terrorism lead ruined lives and have never received acknowledgement or apology from the U.S.[[15]](#endnote-15) And the door is wide open for further torture.

Not only do we want you to support the NCCIT. We hope you will speak out clearly and strongly to distance yourself from North Carolina’s record of involvement in torture.

Thank you very much.

Best wishes,

1. “C.I.A. Expanding Terror Battle Under Guise of Charter Flights” by Scott Shane, Stephen Grey, and Margot Williams, *New York Times*, May 31, 2005. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Testimony of Dr. Sam Raphael, The Rendition Project, to the North Carolina Commission of Inquiry on Torture, www.nccit.org/witnesstestimony/ [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. “Blackwater Guards Tied to Secret C.I.A. Raids” by James Risen and Mark Mazzetti, *New York Times*, December 10, 2009. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. “Psychologists Open a Window on Brutal C.I.A. Interrogations” by Sheri Fink and James Risen, *New York Times*, June 21, 2017. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. “Settlement Reached in C.I.A. Torture Case” by Sheri Fink, *New York Times*, August 17, 2017. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. “The Strategic Costs of Torture” by Douglas A. Johnson, Alberto Mora, and Averell Schmidt, *Foreign Affairs*, September/October 2016. [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. “Donald Trump: ‘Torture Works’” by Sopan Deb, *CBS News*, February 17, 2016. [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. “New C.I.A. Deputy Director, Gina Haspel, Had Leading Role in Torture” by Matthew Rosenberg, *New York Times*, February 2, 2017. [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. “Senate Confirms ‘Torture Memo’ Author to Lead Transportation Department Legal Office” by Melanie Zanona, *The Hill*, November 14, 2017. [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. ‘Trump’s Pick for FBI Director Was Alerted Early to Detainee Abuse” by Carol Rosenberg, *Miami Herald*, June 7, 2017. [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
11. “In Yemen’s Secret Prisons, UAE Tortures and US Interrogates” by Maggie Michael, *Associated Press*, June 22, 2017. [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
12. “CIA Terror Deportee Given Residency in Sweden,” The Local, July 4, 2012, www.thelocal.se/20120704/41832 [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
13. “Arar Given $11.5 Million in Compensation” by Jeff Sallot, The Globe and Mail, January 27, 2007 [↑](#endnote-ref-13)
14. “Gitmo Inmates Settlement: Why Britain Decided to Pay” by Nick Assinder, Time, November 18, 2010 [↑](#endnote-ref-14)
15. “How U.S. Torture Left a Legacy of Damaged Minds” by Matt Apuzzo, Sheri Fink and James Risen, *New York Times*, October 9, 2016. [↑](#endnote-ref-15)