

U.S. Torture: Complicity and Accountability

After 9/11, the United States began a program of kidnapping, torture, and secret imprisonment of terrorism suspects with the help of more than 50 countries around the world. These governments allowed the CIA to abduct people from their soil, use their airports and airspace to extrajudicially transfer prisoners under brutal conditions (“extraordinary rendition”), or establish secret prisons where prisoners were tortured. In some cases, the governments participated directly, including in torture. The countries listed here are notable either for their role in the program or for their subsequent accountability efforts.

✈ EXTRAORDINARY RENDITIONS
||| CIA SECRET PRISON



ZERO TORTURE ACCOUNTABILITY



EGYPT—site of CIA proxy prison (prison operated by local government; prisoners were often tortured by local officials but remained under U.S. control)

- Admitted imprisoning and interrogating 60–70 people rendered by CIA; no government investigation



JORDAN—site of CIA proxy prison

- No government investigation or admission



MOROCCO—site of CIA proxy prison

- No government investigation or admission



SYRIA—site of CIA proxy prison

- No government investigation or admission



THAILAND—site of secret CIA prison

- No government investigation or admission

INSIGNIFICANT TORTURE ACCOUNTABILITY



DJIBOUTI—site of CIA proxy prison; complicit in extraordinary renditions of foreign nationals to torture

- Stunted government inquiry into single case closed; no government investigation of other cases



IRELAND—territory used as transit point for extraordinary rendition flights

- Human Rights Commission examined the matter; no further government investigation



LITHUANIA—site of two secret CIA prisons

- Parliamentary inquiry found two secret prisons existed in Lithuania and recommended criminal investigation
- Criminal investigation closed after security services refused to provide key evidence; no charges brought; prosecutor refused to release findings on state secrets grounds or reopen investigation after additional evidence presented by NGOs



MACEDONIA—complicit in kidnapping, extraordinary rendition and torture of man held in secret CIA prison

- Refused to open criminal investigation
- Denied cooperating and lied to European Court of Human Rights about complicity
- Found responsible by European Court for Human Rights for torture of terrorism suspect and ordered to pay compensation



PORTUGAL—territory used as transit point for extraordinary rendition flights

- Stunted criminal investigation closed with finding of no wrongdoing
- Parliament refused to open full investigation



ROMANIA—site of secret CIA prison

- Senate inquiry closed; findings classified

MINIMAL TORTURE ACCOUNTABILITY



FINLAND—territory used as transit point for extraordinary rendition flights

- Foreign minister refused full investigation; parliamentary ombudsman investigation ongoing



GERMANY—complicit in extraordinary renditions to torture of citizen and resident; territory used as transit point for extraordinary rendition flights

- Executive branch thwarted criminal prosecutions of CIA agents and three-year parliamentary investigation
- Constitutional Court ruled executive branch violated constitution by failing to cooperate with parliamentary inquiry, yet Parliament failed to reopen inquiry



POLAND—site of secret CIA prison

- Criminal investigation ongoing; former chief of intelligence reportedly charged with unlawful imprisonment and mistreatment, though charges may be withdrawn; prosecutor officially recognized two victims



SPAIN—territory used as a transit point for extraordinary rendition flights

- Government ministers refused to seek extradition of CIA personnel; executive has opposed judicial investigations—one stayed, one ongoing—into torture and abuse



UNITED STATES—abused and tortured men onboard ships and in secret prisons, proxy prisons, Guantanamo Bay, and a domestic naval prison; extraordinarily rendered dozens of men to countries where they were tortured

- Closed limited criminal investigation; no charges brought
- Limited legislative investigations; main legislative report remains entirely classified
- At executive's urging, courts dismissed all civil lawsuits on procedural national security grounds
- Refused to cooperate with any foreign inquiry; pressured other governments to close investigations

SOME TORTURE ACCOUNTABILITY



ITALY—complicit in kidnapping of resident subsequently extraordinarily rendered to torture in Egypt

- Convicted CIA agents, a U.S. military official and Italian officials of kidnapping (U.S. personnel tried *in absentia*); Italian president subsequently pardoned U.S. military official; court ordered compensation paid to victim and his wife



UNITED KINGDOM—complicit in extraordinary renditions of British citizens, residents, and foreign nationals to torture; territory used as transit point for extraordinary rendition flights

- Three criminal investigations: two ongoing, one closed; no charges brought to date
- Halted government inquiry due to pending criminal investigations; inquiry findings remain classified
- Settled most civil lawsuits with no admission of wrongdoing; paid compensation to several victims

SIGNIFICANT TORTURE ACCOUNTABILITY



CANADA—complicit in rendition of citizen to torture in Syria

- Judicial investigation completed; government admitted wrongdoing; paid compensation to victim



SWEDEN—complicit in rendition of two residents to torture in Egypt

- Parliamentary ombudsman investigation completed; cooperated with United Nations inquiry; paid compensation to victims; granted residency to victim and to his family members



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To learn more, visit:

<https://www.aclu.org/accountability-torture>