

Whoops? CIA Watchdog 'Mistakenly' Destroys Its Sole Copy of Senate Torture Report

By Sarah Lazare / AlterNet

Following a long battle to release the probe, some worry that the report could vanish altogether.

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The years-long battle to force the Obama administration to release the nearly-7,000-page Senate Intelligence Committee's report detailing the CIA's post-9/11 torture program just took an absurd new turn.

According to [exclusive reporting](#) from Yahoo News correspondent Michael Isikoff, the CIA inspector general's office says it "mistakenly" destroyed its sole copy of the mass document "at the same time lawyers for the Justice Department were assuring a federal judge that copies of the document were being preserved."



While the deleted report was not the only copy in existence, the foul-up is already proving an embarrassment for the office, which is "responsible for independent oversight of the CIA," [according to](#) its materials.

Citing information obtained by "multiple intelligence community sources familiar with the incident," Isikoff explains:

The incident was privately disclosed to the Senate Intelligence Committee and the Justice Department last summer, the sources said. But the destruction of a copy of the sensitive report has never been made public. Nor was it reported to the federal judge who, at the time, was overseeing a lawsuit seeking access to the still classified document under the Freedom of Information Act, according to a review of court files in the case.

...The deletion of the document has been portrayed by agency officials to Senate investigators as an "inadvertent" foul-up by the inspector general. In what one intelligence community source described as a series of errors straight "out of the Keystone Cops," CIA inspector general officials deleted an uploaded computer file with the report and then accidentally destroyed a disk that also contained the document, filled with thousands of secret files about the CIA's use of "enhanced" interrogation methods.

This is not the first time CIA evidence has gone missing. Isikoff notes:

Ironically in light of the inspector general's actions, the intelligence committee's investigation was triggered by the CIA's admission in 2007 that it had destroyed another key piece of evidence — hours of videotapes of the waterboarding of two "high value" detainees, Abu Zubaydah and Abd al-Rahim al-Nashiri.

What's more, in 2014 the CIA [hacked into](#) the computers used by the Senate committee overseeing the report, but was later [absolved](#) for the breach by the inspector general's office.

Repeated queries from Yahoo News prompted Democratic Sen. Dianne Feinstein, who oversaw the investigation, to write a [letter](#) last Friday to CIA director John Brennan requesting that he provide a copy of the report to the CIA inspector general "immediately."

"Your prompt response will allay my concern that this was more than an 'accident,'" she continued, adding: "I believe that it is important to remedy this situation immediately."

[According to](#) the ACLU, the torture report is the "most comprehensive account of the torture program to date." The heavily redacted key findings and executive summary of the investigation were [released](#) to the public at the end of 2014, revealing that the CIA repeatedly lied to the public about the effectiveness of its brutal torture methods, which included forms of assault referred to as "rectal feeding," as well as long-term sleep deprivation and threats levied against the family members of those forced to undergo abuse.

[Survivors of torture](#) and children who endured forced rendition have [repeatedly called](#) for the full release of the report, as well as accountability for the atrocities brought to light. Yet the Obama administration granted [blanket immunity](#) to all Bush-era CIA torturers and has vigorously fought against calls for transparency. Just days ago, a court rejected an ACLU lawsuit under the Freedom of Information Act demanding the full release of the report—a decision the civil liberties group intends to appeal.

"The CIA inspector general's 'inadvertent' destruction of this copy of the full torture report is extremely disturbing and should have been reported to the court," Ashley Gorski, a staff attorney with the ACLU's National Security Project, told AlterNet. The CIA's destruction of the report defies Congress's intent, which is that the agency uses the study so that the mistakes of the past are never repeated."

Yet, in remarks made last month, presumptive Republican nominee Donald Trump [declared](#) he plans to escalate the CIA torture program. "They asked me, What do you think about waterboarding, Mr. Trump? I said I love it. I love it, I think it's great," he said. "And I said the only thing is, we should make it much tougher than waterboarding, and if you don't think it works folks, you're wrong."

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