



**North Carolina
Council of Churches**

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Dear Governor Cooper,

As people of faith, we write in the wake of the report released on September 27, 2018, by the North Carolina Commission of Inquiry on Torture (NCCIT), *Torture Flights: North Carolina's Role in the CIA Rendition and Torture Program*. We are requesting that you establish a task force to investigate the activities in North Carolina related to the CIA's Rendition, Detention, and Interrogation program in the years 2001-2006. Our faith teaches us that torture, in addition to being illegal, is immoral. We urge you to publicly denounce the use of torture and cruelty in our state.

After 18 months of investigation and research and two days of public hearings in 2017, the NCCIT found credible evidence that Aero Contractors, based at the Johnston County Airport, was responsible for more than 80% of the CIA Rendition flights. The flight itself was a form of torture used to dehumanize the individuals as they were transported between CIA black sites where additional forms of torture were administered. The Executive Summary of the report concludes, "These flights, using North Carolina's public infrastructure and flown by its citizens, implicates North Carolina directly in abduction, disappearance, and torture." Besides being immoral, the evidence presented in the NCCIT report shows that torture is ineffective for gathering accurate intelligence and has had negative consequences for our national security.

People of faith have been raising their voices since 2005 protesting the use of North Carolina's public property for the purpose of rendition and torture. While there are a multitude of faith traditions in our state, we unite with one voice to condemn torture. Such behavior demeans the ones created in God's image and condemns the ones perpetrating the violence. As the Executive Director of the North Carolina Council of Churches, The Rev. Dr. Jennifer Copeland, has said: "When those of us who look like God harm others of us who look like God, we are called to confess these wrongs. In our confession, we offer repentance and seek forgiveness. Sometimes, we are able to move as far as restoration, working to restore the relationships broken by our harmful behavior." Our faith teaches us that we have a responsibility to care for those who have been abused and victimized.

People of faith continue to pray for those who were rendered by the CIA and for their families. We also pray for those who kidnapped, rendered, tortured, and imprisoned these 49 named victims and those whose jobs enabled the process. We trust that our elected officials will respond positively to our call for action by shining the light of truth on these shameful events in our state. Finally, we believe tangible support for the victims and their families is the next step toward redress and justice for those harmed. Or, to employ our faith language, it is the step necessary for restoration.

As Governor of North Carolina you are uniquely positioned to call for an investigation of our state's involvement in torture from 2001-2006. We call on you to consider the ethical dimensions issues at stake, the increased risk to our service members, and the harm it has inflicted on our state's reputation. Our communities and those harmed by this program can only begin to heal when we are willing to tell the truth. We respectfully request that you launch a governmental inquiry.

Sincerely,