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Published: 14 February, 2013, 01:25

Edited: 14 February, 2013, 01:26



Investigative journalists studying the CIA's infamous black-site shadow prisons say that at least 20 detainees once held in the secret torture cells are currently unaccounted for.

In the wake of the attacks of September 11, 2001, the US Central Intelligence Agency expanded their operations overseas to track down suspected terrorists by any means possible. Only two weeks after the World Trade Center's twin towers came crumbling down, in fact, then-Vice President Dick Cheney said America must embrace a mission that would involve working through "the dark side."

"A lot of what needs to be done here will have to be done quietly, without any discussion, using sources and methods that are available to our intelligence agencies," Cheney said at the time.

Over a decade later, Vice President Cheney is still regularly associated with the post-9/11 policies of the George W. Bush administration that current President-Barack Obama has fought to overturn, including the use of torture as an interrogation device. And although Pres. Obama was successful during his first term in office with shutting down the shadow prisons operated overseas by the CIA, a new report suggests that over 20 inmates of those elusive facilities started under Bush and Cheney have disappeared into thin air.

ProPublica, a news organization that bills itself as offering "*journalism in the public interest*," has combed through a 216-page report just published by Open Society Foundations on secret CIA detentions, and in doing so has determined that the number of suspected insurgents scooped up during the Bush years who have disappeared is outstanding.

"In 2009, ProPublica's Dafna Linzer listed more than thirty people who had been held in CIA prisons and were still missing," their analysis reads. *"Some of those prisoners have since resurfaced, but at least twenty are still unaccounted for."*

In the Open Society Foundation's report, "Globalizing Torture," the human rights group examines what is known today

about those prisons where an unknown number of foreign suspects were stored by CIA officials and kept locked up indefinitely to endure treatment that has been condemned largely as torture in the years since.

“Today, more than a decade after September 11, there is no doubt that high-ranking Bush administration officials bear responsibility for authorizing human rights violations associated with secret detention and extraordinary rendition,” reads the report’s executive summary. Despite this claim that is widely accepted, though, the report’s author says, *“the full scale and scope of foreign government participation — as well as the number of victims — remains unknown, largely because of the extreme secrecy maintained by the United States and its partner governments.”*

On the record, President Bush acknowledged that the CIA detained around 100 prisoners during his administration, of which only 16 are known to have been transferred at one point to the custody of the Pentagon. Of the over 30 detainees who were listed as missing during ProPublica’s 2009 report, today the organization has uncovered a number of interview with inmates who have since been freed and have openly discussed their detainment. At least one of those 30-plus inmates, Ali Abdul-Hamid al-Fakhiri, has died in prison in the three year’s since their last report.

ProPublica says that the CIA did not answer requests for comment.

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