

This letter was originally published on Dec. 18, 2014. You can read it in Polish and see all the signatories [here](#) . If you would like to add your signature - you do not need to be a Polish citizen, all nationalities are welcome - send an email to redakcja@kulturaliberalna.pl. Signatories from all over the world are needed to show that "the whole world is watching."

"Over the last few days numerous 'public personalities' have expressed opinions which in various ways were apologetic of torture being applied on Polish territory. It is hard to measure the nefarious effects of such opinions being repeated over and over again.

In 2002 - 2003 a secret CIA prison was operational in our country in which - according to all indications - persons suspected of islamic terrorism were interrogated while using torture. In spite of stubborn denials of the authorities which at the time agreed to let this base be established, the truth about the prison in Stare Kiejkuty has been disclosed. The recent publication of the US senate report concerning the secret CIA prisons provides an idea of the level of degeneration and cruelty committed, among other countries also in Poland.

Poles have an obligation to resolutely assess the moral implications and draw legal consequences from the fact that a secret CIA prison existed in Poland. We should not allow ourselves to loose our sensitivity to what happened, even if the fault of the Polish government was limited to relinquishing sovereignty over the secret base in favour of an allied country without knowing about the interrogation methods that were applied there. Our authorities are responsible for assuring the observation of human rights on the country's entire territory and cannot unlawfully create enclaves which are excluded from any oversight whatsoever. Poles, as the heirs of peaceful democratic opposition movements and 'Solidarność' and also as Europeans, may not forget on what principles the political system in which we now live, was founded. Without the development of the idea of human rights, neither the creation of a democratic opposition in Poland would have been possible, nor the building of a state based on the rule of law. The rule of law must be cared for.

The quality of democracy depends to a great extent on whether that specific society is faithful to its own principles. Torture is a method which robs people of their basic dignity and trust humanity. Justifying its use constitutes not only the embezzlement of the values of freedom and democracy on which the actual Poland has been built, but also a regression in our cultural

development. One can imagine that in some circumstances of extreme threat, politicians or officials decide to apply extraordinary measures. The rule of law however, requires in such a case that the answer be a court case, whatever the final decision of that court may be.

A lack of reaction from the public opinion and court authorities in this case will constitute a threat not only to the very principles of the rule of law, but also to the moral integrity of Poland."

Among the signatories of this open letter are:

Adam Bodnar, vice-president of the Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights

Halina Bortnowska, former president of the Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights

Artur Domosławski, famous reporter and author

Agnieszka Holland, film director

Agata Kowalska, a year ago led a live radio debate about Stare Kiejkuty on radio TokFm (Poland's major news radio station)

Karol Modzelewski, former Solidarność icon

Andrzej Olechowski, former Minister of Foreign Affairs

Józef Pinior, former member of the European Parliament and the EU committee that investigated European complicity in extraordinary rendition and torture

Ewa Siedlecka, journalist who regularly writes on legal issues in Poland's biggest daily newspaper *Gazeta Wyborcza*

Aleksander Smolar, head of the 'Batory Foundation' (Polish name for the local chapter of the Open Society Institute)

Magdalena Środa, a highly respected professor of ethics

Paweł Śpiewak, head of the Jewish Historical Institute

Andrzej Zoll, former head of the Constitutional Tribunal

