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Italy Court Upholds Convictions on CIA Agents for Torture and Rendition Program

Posted By [John Glaser](#)

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Italy's highest court on Wednesday [upheld guilty verdicts against 23 Americans](#) for the 2003 kidnapping of an Egyptian Muslim cleric while he was in Milan, in the first criminal convictions for the US's post-9/11 "extraordinary rendition" program.

Following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the US used extraordinary rendition to send suspects to countries that would torture them. In 2003, Hassan Mustafa Osama Nasr, an Egyptian imam, was snatched from the streets of Milan by the CIA and flown to Egypt where he was tortured for seven months.

The American officials involved – 22 CIA agents and one Air Force pilot – were never actually extradited to Italy and were tried in their absence. They were sentenced to seven years in jail, except former CIA Milan station chief Robert Seldon Lady, who was sentenced to nine years.

They are believed to be in the US and are not likely to serve their sentences. But if they travel to Europe they risk being arrested.

"We have one of the highest courts in a European country upholding convictions of CIA agents for really egregious human rights violations," Amnesty International's Julia Hall said.

"Our hope is that the United States would... begin to cooperate with people who are trying to reveal the truth about what happened during the Bush era."

