

SHUT DOWN GUANTANAMO!

Stop Inspiring Terrorism (14 Years Later)

January 11,
2016

January 11 marks 14 years since the U.S. facility at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba opened as an indefinite detention facility. Although the government has released hundreds of prisoners, over 100 people still languish in a facility that undermines the rule of law that supposedly separates our country from chaos. Most are being held without trial and about half (48) have been cleared for release. Only three who are there were convicted of crimes (Human Rights First, 11/16/15). Many have been exposed to harsh conditions that have been described as torture, including the force feeding of hunger strikers. Many of these techniques were confirmed in the 2014 Senate report on post-9/11 CIA “interrogations.”

While President Obama pledged to close the prison at the beginning of his first term in 2009, Congress has repeatedly blocked funding to shut down the site. Guantánamo has brought international condemnation upon the US, once considered by many as an example of democracy and the rule of law. This issue is of even more importance as the US has begun to normalize relations with Cuba.

In January 2015, the *New York Times* reported that “President Obama’s goal ... is to deplete the Guantánamo prison to the point where it houses 60 to 80 people and keeping it open no longer makes economic sense.” Despite a strong signing statement in December 2015 indicating he still desires to close Guantánamo and vetoing the first version of the 2016 defense authorization bill, President Obama signed the final legislation which continues to restrict his ability to transfer prisoners out of the facility.

Guantanamo has been referred to as “the most expensive prison on earth,” with the *Miami Herald* reporting in 2011 that it then cost \$800,000 per year per inmate, climbing to an estimated \$2.6 million per person in 2014 (Politifact, 12/21/14). Overall, the cumulative costs from 2002 to today are well over \$3 billion.

Amnesty International (AI), the Center for Constitutional Rights (CCR), and others continue to call for the prison to be shut down, with CCR noting in 2014 that the (supposed) end of combat operations in Afghanistan “should guide the closing of the prison and bring a swift end to years of indefinite detention without charge or trial.”

Today in Washington, DC, AI, CCR, Code Pink, the National Religious Campaign Against Torture, National Coalition to Protect Civil Freedoms and others had a noon rally (www.facebook.com/events/97812212250879). Rally promotional materials state that “Guantánamo is the bitter legacy of a politics of fear, which must be rejected. President Obama has just one year left to fulfill his first-term promise.”

In 2012 on the 10th anniversary, this call to action was made, which is still valid: Close Guantánamo and end abuses of detainees everywhere; end indefinite detention and military commissions; charge and fairly try detained men in federal court or release them; ensure accountability for torture and other serious abuses; fully investigate, prosecute and provide remedy for victims; counter Islamophobia underpinning Guantánamo and US detention policies more broadly; and ensure security with human rights.

Continuing to hold people in an off-shore prison without prosecution is an unacceptable violation of human rights, which is inspiring people to take action against the United States in acts of so-called “terrorism.” It is time to shut it down.



In Portland, the Portland Close Guantánamo Coalition is working to ask City Council to welcome released Guantánamo prisoners who have no host country to return to. For more information see: <http://www.nogitmos.org/portlandcloseguantanamo>

Local groups organizing today’s action include the Peace and Justice Works (PJW) Iraq Affinity Group, Amnesty International Group 48, the Portland Close Guantánamo Coalition, Jewish Voice for Peace-Portland and Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility.

This flyer was prepared
in January, 2016 by the
Peace and Justice Works Iraq Affinity Group

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Meetings usually 2nd Wednesdays, 7 PM; next one is January 13.

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Contact us about our meetings !