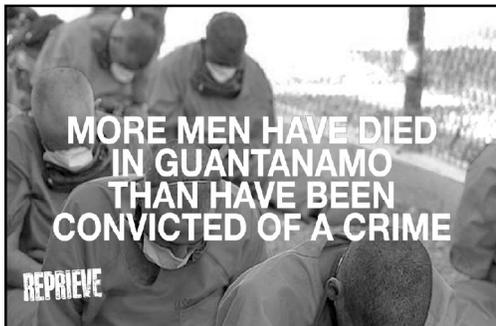


CLOSE GUANTÁNAMO: Still America's Shame

January 11,
2019

January 11 marks exactly 17 years since the U.S. opened its notorious detention facility at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba. Although at one point roughly 770 prisoners were held, **just 40 people remain in indefinite detention in this legal no-**

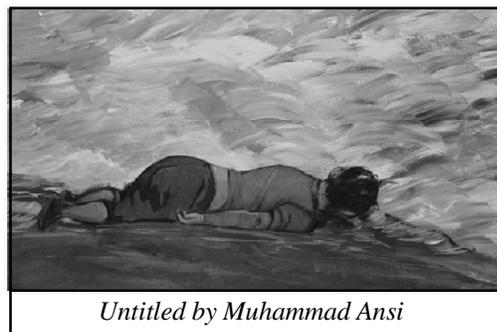


man's land (Public Radio International, 12/11/18). Twenty-six—nearly two thirds—are considered “**forever prisoners**” which means most have life sentences without having faced trial (*Washington Post*, 12/21/17). Three of the 40 have been cleared for release, but President Donald Trump refuses to allow it (closeguantanamo.org/Prisoners). Only four have been successfully convicted of crimes, while nine prisoners have died (Reprieve.org, 8/19/18). 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.”

As President-Elect, Trump pledged to “load [Guantánamo] up with bad dudes.” In November 2017, he suggested the man who killed eight people by driving into them with his truck in New York should be put there as an “enemy combatant” even though he wasn’t captured on a field of battle (BBC, 11/1/17).

Reprieve notes: “The vast majority of detainees in Guantanamo (86%) were not captured by US forces. Instead the Government filled the prison with people they bought for bounties. The US flew planes over parts of Afghanistan and Pakistan offering \$5,000 for any ‘suspicious person.’ This amounted to approximately seven years’ average salary for most people in the area, encouraging them to turn over innocent men in exchange for a life-changing amount of money. Since then, it has turned out they got it wrong most of the time. It didn’t even take long for those in charge to see their mistake— as early as 2002, Guantánamo’s operational commander complained that he was being sent too many ‘Mickey Mouse’ detainees.”

An art show at John Jay College in New York featuring paintings and other art by detainees at Guantánamo made headlines in 2017. Many of the paintings were based around the ocean, despite many of the prisoners never having seen the ocean. When a hurricane came in 2014, the guards temporarily took down tarps that had been blocking their views (*New York Times*, 9/15/17). Once the paintings became internationally recognized, the US declared no more art would be shared, and the detainees no longer legally owned them (*NY Times*, 11/27/17).



Untitled by Muhammad Ansi

Guantánamo 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 \$11 million per person in 2018. “This means that it costs \$29,000 per prisoner per night to keep Guantánamo open - far more than any federal prison” (Reprieve.org). 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 (Jan. 11, 2019) in Washington DC, AI, CCR, Code Pink, Witness Against Torture and others had a mid-day rally. Rally promotional materials say the goals are: “*to close Guantánamo, and call for a stop to cruelty, fear, racism, islamophobia and lies.*”

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 making us less safe, not more secure. **If we want to “make America great again,” it is far past time to shut Guantánamo prison down.**

Local groups organizing today’s action include the Peace and Justice Works (PJW) Iraq Affinity Group
Portland Peaceful Response Coalition and Amnesty International Group 48 (Portland).

This flyer was prepared
in January, 2019 by the
Peace and Justice Works Iraq Affinity Group

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Meetings usually 2nd Mondays, 7 PM; next one is January 14.

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Contact us about our meetings!