

SHUT DOWN GUANTÁNAMO

“A man dies when he refuses to stand up for that which is right. A man dies when he refuses to stand up for justice. A man dies when he refuses to take a stand for that which is true.” Dr. M.L. King Jr.

Dr. King’s words are as true today as they were in Selma, Alabama in 1965. Today, here in front of the Augusta Armory, we stand up for what is right, just, and true by calling on our government to close the Guantánamo Bay prison. That prison opened twenty-one years ago. It was one of many secret “black sites” around the globe where prisoners the U.S. military and CIA believed were terrorists disappeared and were tortured. Secret Justice Department memoranda redefined the meaning of torture and the U.S.’s obligations under the Geneva Conventions to allow prisoners to be tortured and otherwise abused at these sites with impunity. For more than four years Guantánamo operated in secret, with no one knowing who was imprisoned there. It wasn’t until May 2006 that the prisoners’ names at Guantánamo were finally disclosed. And it wasn’t until April 2009 that the secret Justice Department memoranda were made public.

By then, 780 men and boys, all of them Muslim, had been imprisoned in Guantánamo Bay. The vast majority – 86 percent – were sold to the U.S. for a bounty, typically \$5,000. Currently, 35 men remain imprisoned at Guantánamo, 23 of which **have never been charged with any crime or offense and are held indefinitely**, in violation of international law. Adding to their injury, 20 of these 23 **have been approved for release but are still held**.

Secret prisons, torture, indefinite detention without charge, and secrecy are signs of a morally bankrupt nation. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said it plainly: “A nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death.” The prophet Isaiah long ago spoke of God’s requiring acts of justice to undo such moral bankruptcy:

Is not this the fast that I choose:
to loose the bonds of wickedness,
to undo the thongs of the yoke,
to let the oppressed go free,
and to break every yoke?
Is it not to share your bread with the hungry,
and bring the homeless poor into your house;
when you see the naked, to cover them,
and not to hide yourself from your own flesh?(Is. 58:6-7)

Twenty-one years of Guantánamo is enough! We must make amends as a nation for the torture, killings, and many terrible wrongs we have done, and are still doing, to the prisoners held at Guantánamo. We vigil here today in solidarity with them.

Here is what you can do to get involved and inform yourself:

Organizations to contact:

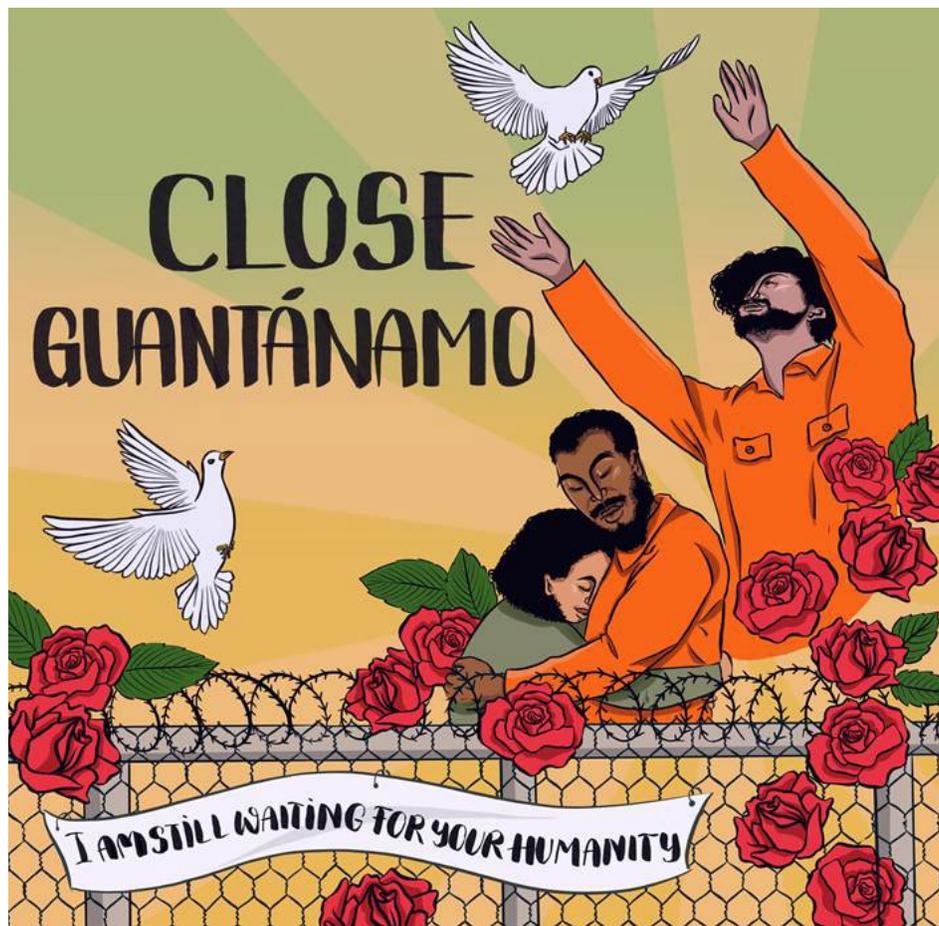
- Witness Against Torture: <https://witnessagainsttorture.com/>
- Close Guantánamo: <https://www.andyworthington.co.uk/tag/close-guantanamo/>
- No More Guantánamos: <https://www.nogitmos.org/>

Films to watch:

- The Mauritanian
- Guantánamo Diary Revisited (sequel to The Mauritanian)
- Taxi to the Dark Side
- Guantánamo's Child: Omar Khadr

Books to read:

- Mohamedou Ould Slahi, *The Mauritanian* (Back Bay Books 2020 (restored ed.))
- Mansoor Aydefi, *Don't Forget Us Here* (Hachette Books 2021)
- Jérôme Tubiana, *Guantánamo Kid* (SelfMadeHero 2019 (illustrated))
- Jane Mayer, *The Dark Side* (Anchor Books 2009)
- Nazia Kazi, *Islamophobia, Race, and Global Politics* (Rowman & Littlefield 2021 (updated ed.))



(flyer by Frank Panopoulos 12/30/2022)