

SHUT DOWN GUANTÁNAMO

A true revolution of values will lay hand on the world order and say of war, "This way of settling differences is not just." This business of burning human beings with napalm, of filling our nation's homes with orphans and widows, of injecting poisonous drugs of hate into the veins of peoples normally humane, of sending men home from dark and bloody battlefields physically handicapped and psychologically deranged, cannot be reconciled with wisdom, justice, and love. A nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death. Rev. Dr. M.L. King Jr.

More than ever, Dr. King's words retain their relevance today. Here in front of the Augusta Armory, we call attention to the spiritual death gripping the USA. Our \$886 billion defense budget supports wars that leave in their wake: tens of thousands of civilian corpses; cities in rubble; the displacement of surviving civilian families, fleeing in trails of tears; the imprisonment of many other innocent civilians, held without charge and trial. These are all violations of international law. Meanwhile, gun violence pervades this country and our communities are left impoverished, without jobs, adequate health care and schools.

January 11, 2024 is the twenty-second anniversary of the Guantánamo Bay prison's opening, where prisoners continue to be imprisoned indefinitely without charge. We call on our government to close the prison. 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, 30 men remain imprisoned at Guantánamo, 19 of which **have never been charged with any crime or offense and are held indefinitely**, in violation of international law. Adding to their injury, 16 of these **19 have been approved for release but are still held**.

Secret prisons, torture, indefinite detention without charge, and secrecy are signs of a nation undergoing spiritual death. Twenty-two years of Guantánamo is shameful! 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 and elsewhere from the wars we support. 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/>
- September 11 Families for Peaceful Tomorrows: www.peacefultomorrows.org
- Amnesty International: www.amnestyusa.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.))

Get Involved:

Write or Call the White House: Tell President Biden that all the men cleared for release from the Guantánamo Bay prison should be transferred immediately to countries where their human rights will be respected. Call or email today: www.whitehouse.gov/get-involved/write-or-call

Support the Guantanamo Survivors Fund: Over 750 men have been transferred out of Guantánamo. Many still face significant hurdles to resuming a normal life, including mental and medical problems caused during their detention, lack of access to decent health care, inability to work because of ill health, and the social stigma of having been in Guantánamo. The Guantanamo Survivors Fund provides immediate short-term support for their most urgent needs. Learn more and donate to the Guantanamo Survivors Fund: www.nogitmos.org/guantanamo-survivors-fund

Write to the men who are still in Guantánamo: See more information at witnessagainsttorture.com/join-us



(flyer by Frank Panopoulos 12/19/2023)