

News Release – January 9, 2025

MAINERS JOIN CALL TO CLOSE GUANTÁNAMO

When: Saturday, January 11, 2025, 1 p.m (Snow date, Jan. 12th)
Where: Augusta, at the National Guard Armory, 179 Western Avenue – Parking on site
What: VIGIL & RALLY to Close Guantánamo after 23 years of Detention and Torture

Speakers include Frank Panopoulos, an attorney representing a Guantánamo prisoner who was recently released after being held indefinitely and without charge for 18 years

Sponsors: Pax Christi Maine, Peace Action Maine, Maine Veterans for Peace, Witness Against Torture, Global Network Against Weapons & Nuclear Power in Space, PeaceWorks of Greater Brunswick, Maine Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, Smilin' Trees Disarmament Farm, Maine Veterans for Peace, and Augusta Women in Black.

The message we wish to convey is simple: Shut down Guantánamo. According to the ACLU, since the prison opened January 11, 2002, 779 prisoners have been held there, including 21 children. More than 85% of those prisoners were sold as prisoners to the U.S. for a bounty. Currently, 15 remain imprisoned – 6 held indefinitely without charge in violation of international laws. Three of these 6 have been approved for release, some long ago, but are still held.

The United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms While Countering Terrorism released a report on June 14, 2023, detailing the arbitrary and rights-depriving nature of continued detention at Guantánamo. Her report found, among other things, that, “[T]he Guantánamo Bay detention infrastructure remains constituted by, among other constituent elements, near-constant surveillance, forced cell extractions, undue use of restraints, and other arbitrary and problematic implementation of the [operating procedures] stemming from . . . structural and entrenched physical and mental healthcare deficiencies . . . inadequate access to family including failure to facilitate meaningful familial calls and visits . . . and ongoing, arbitrary detention characterized by fair trial and due process violations. . . . [T]he totality of these factors, without doubt, amounts to ongoing cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment at the Guantánamo bay detention facility, and may also meet the legal threshold for torture.”

On November 30, 2021, Senator Dick Durbin spoke before the U.S. Senate to call for closing Guantánamo, stating: “*Guantánamo does not reflect who we are or who we should be. Indefinite detention without charge or trial is antithetical to American values, and yet more than two-thirds of the people detained at Guantánamo today have never been charged with a crime. How can that be any form of justice?*”

Actions are taking place throughout the country to state that 23 years of detention and torture in Guantánamo is shameful, completely unacceptable, and abhorrent!

FMI: on Guantánamo: <https://www.closeguantanamo.org>
Re: event – Frank Panopoulos fpanopoulos@icloud.com 202.549.9802