



<http://www.witness torture.org>

January 11, 2010

Dear Member of Congress,

We, members of Witness Against Torture, are a grassroots organization committed to the closure of Guantánamo and an end to torture. Since 2007, we have marked January 11—the day in 2002 when the first “war on terror” prisoners came to President George W. Bush’s Guantánamo—as a day of national shame. Since this day, Guantánamo detainees have faced torture, abuse, continuing indefinite detention, crushing hopelessness, and legal artifices.

In our analysis:

- Most of those detained were in fact non-combatants and presented no threat to our national security.
- The entire system of indefinite detention and extra-judicial proceedings is essentially corrupt and incapable of providing justice.
- Every passing moment that these men are held compounds the irreparable harm inflicted on them, effectively constituting additional ongoing torture.
- Our nation is responsible for the present circumstances and therefore unquestionably responsible—morally and otherwise—for resolving the injustice and providing restitution to those wrongfully detained.
- This system’s damage to our nation has outweighed any possible benefit.

After years of action, prayer and demonstrations, the election of Barack Obama ushered in a new era of hope for justice, accountability and the restoration of the rule of law.

Unfortunately, since President Obama’s Executive Order outlawing torture and declaring a firm timeline for the closure of Guantánamo, we have only seen more evasion, convolution, and protracting by the Obama Administration and Congress.

Since coming to office, the Administration has presented Guantánamo as an administrative problem, a cause of embarrassment, and a foreign policy liability. It has never faced it for what it truly is: a grave injustice which the United States is duty bound, by the best of its traditions and basic standards of fairness and decency, to immediately set right. “Justice delayed is justice denied”—the great maxim of the Civil Rights Movement that has made this administration’s political ascent possible—has been forgotten.

This cannot continue!

***We, along with the groups listed below, demand the immediate closure of the military prison at Guantánamo, an end to indefinite detention regardless of location, and the institution of due process.***

Today we begin a fast and vigil for justice that will extend through January 22—the Obama administration’s now defunct deadline for Guantánamo’s closure. We will be in the streets and the corridors of power calling on members of Congress to display courage and compassion.

**We ask that you support our efforts by circulating a ‘Dear Colleague’ letter to President Obama asking for the following:**

- 1. Immediately release those already cleared and proceed with their immediate repatriation. Men who cannot safely be repatriated must be offered resettlement to the United States as free men if desired. We cannot continue to evade our own responsibilities by waiting for other nations to fulfill them. There are already communities willing to accept these individuals and more will follow if courageous leadership is provided.*
- 2. Charge all others with federal crimes and proceed with speedy trials with all due process, or else release them. There can be no category of persons detained without habeas corpus and evidentiary determination of sufficient reason for denial of liberty. The long delay in adjudication of these cases makes it incumbent upon the government to assume the highest standard of transparent and consistent justice for all those remaining.*
- 3. Immediately institute due process and internationally recognized standards at all detention facilities operated by the United States or its allies, as well as any facilities or agencies utilized by our operations.*
- 4. Provide restitution to the noncombatants who have been held unjustly for years, and to their families who have suffered their long-term loss. We must make America safer by exonerating these men and helping them recover and rebuild their lives.*

*We recognize that these are difficult and potentially unpopular positions that require great courage and fortitude for implementation, but they are right and truly “change we can believe in.” To continue to do any less is to invalidate all that this nation purports to defend. Therefore we pledge our unwavering support in these efforts.*

We appreciate your consideration and hope you will join us in this cause for justice.

Sincerely,

Richard Sroczyński  
on behalf of Witness Against Torture  
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Witness Against Torture’s “Fast for Justice” has been endorsed by:

<a href="#">After Downing Street</a>	<a href="#">National Accountability Action Network (NAAN)</a>	<a href="#">Scotland Against Criminalising Communities</a>
<a href="#">Bill of Rights Defense Committee</a>	<a href="#">National Lawyers Guild, New York City Chapter</a>	<a href="#">September 11th Families for Peaceful Tomorrows</a>
<a href="#">CODEPINK Women for Peace</a>	<a href="#">Nevada Desert Experience</a>	<a href="#">Shannonwatch</a>
<a href="#">Casa Baltimore/Limay</a>	<a href="#">No More Guantánamos</a>	<a href="#">Sisters of Mercy New York, Pennsylvania Pacific West Justice Team</a>
<a href="#">Center for Constitutional Rights</a>	<a href="#">Norfolk OffBase, GI Coffeehouse and Convergence Space</a>	<a href="#">Sisters of Mercy of the Americas - Institute Justice Team</a>
<a href="#">Circleville Quakers</a>	<a href="#">North Carolina Stop Torture Now</a>	<a href="#">Socialist Party USA</a>
<a href="#">Coalition for Justice Blacksburg VA</a>	<a href="#">Northern NJ Socialist Party</a>	<a href="#">Society of Franciscan Workers, Inc.</a>
<a href="#">DC Poets Against the War</a>	<a href="#">Nowegian Peace Ass.</a>	<a href="#">Split This Rock</a>
<a href="#">Defending Dissent Foundation</a>	<a href="#">Open Door Community</a>	<a href="#">Stop the War Machine</a>
<a href="#">Des Moines Catholic Worker</a>	<a href="#">Pax Christi USA</a>	<a href="#">The Catholic Worker</a>
<a href="#">Docudharma</a>	<a href="#">Peace Action</a>	<a href="#">Torture Abolition and Survivors Support Coalition International</a>
<a href="#">End US Wars</a>	<a href="#">Peace Action Montgomery</a>	<a href="#">United for Peace and Justice</a>
<a href="#">Greater Boston Stop the Wars Coalition</a>	<a href="#">Peace of the Action</a>	<a href="#">Veterans For Peace, Chapter 15</a>
<a href="#">HUMAN Network INDIA</a>	<a href="#">PeaceMajority Report</a>	<a href="#">Voices for Creative Nonviolence</a>
<a href="#">IUCC Advocates for Peace and Justice</a>	<a href="#">Peoria Area Peace Network</a>	<a href="#">WNPJ- Wisconsin</a>
<a href="#">Jacksonville Florida - Peace in the Present Moment</a>	<a href="#">Radio Free Maine</a>	<a href="#">War Resisters League</a>
<a href="#">Jeanie Wylie Community, Detroit</a>	<a href="#">Rogers Park Catholic Worker</a>	<a href="#">Women Against War</a>
<a href="#">Kairos Chicago</a>	<a href="#">San Miguel County Board of Commissioners, Colorado</a>	<a href="#">Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom/ Pittsburgh branch</a>
<a href="#">Lehigh-Pocono Committee of Concern (LEPOCO Peace Center)</a>	<a href="#">Saratoga Peace Alliance, Saratoga Springs, NY</a>	<a href="#">World Can’t Wait</a>
<a href="#">Mary the Apostle Catholic Worker</a>	<a href="#">School of the Americas Watch</a>	
<a href="#">Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns</a>		
<a href="#">Metro New York Religious Campaign Against Torture</a>		
<a href="#">Michigan Coalition for Human Rights</a>		

