

February 2, 2021

President Joseph Biden
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden:

We are a diverse group of non-governmental organizations working at both the local and national levels, and on issues including immigrants' rights, racial justice, and combatting anti-Muslim discrimination. We write to urge you to close the prison at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, and to end indefinite military detention.

Among a broad range of human rights violations perpetrated against predominantly Muslim communities, Guantánamo – designed specifically to evade legal constraints, and where Bush administration officials incubated torture – is the iconic example of the post-9/11 abandonment of the rule of law. Nearly eight hundred Muslim men and boys were held at Guantánamo after 2002, all but a handful without charge or trial. Forty remain, at the astronomical cost of \$540 million per year, making Guantánamo the most expensive prison in the world.

Guantánamo embodies the fact that, for nearly two decades following the September 11, 2001 attacks, the United States government has viewed communities of color – citizens and non-citizens alike – through a security threat lens, to devastating consequences. This is not a problem of the past. Guantánamo continues to cause escalating and profound damage to the men who still languish there, and the approach it exemplifies continues to fuel and justify bigotry, stereotyping, and stigma. Guantánamo entrenches racial divisions and racism more broadly, and risks facilitating additional rights violations.

For example, President Trump proposed sending undocumented immigrants to Guantánamo to be held as “enemy combatants.” He further built upon the discriminatory animus, policies, and practices that Guantánamo represents through his odious Muslim Ban, each iteration of which was explicitly promulgated under the false pretense of protecting the nation from terrorism. And the Trump administration’s militarized federal response to protests against the extrajudicial killings of George Floyd and other Black people was fueled by the war-based post-9/11 security architecture and mindset that Guantánamo epitomizes.

It is long past time for both a sea change in the United States’ approach to national and human security, and a meaningful reckoning with the full scope of damage that the post-9/11 approach has caused. Closing Guantánamo and ending indefinite detention of those held there is a necessary step towards those ends. We urge you to act without delay, and in a just manner that considers the harm done to the men who have been imprisoned without charge or fair trials for nearly twenty years.

Please contact Aliya Hussain at the Center for Constitutional Rights (ahussain@ccrjustice.org) and Scott Roehm at the Center for Victims of Torture (sroehm@cvt.org) with any questions or to discuss.

Sincerely,

Action Center on Race & the Economy

Adalah Justice Project

Advocate Visitors with Immigrants in Detention

American Civil Liberties Union

American Friends Service Committee

American Friends Service Committee, Colorado

American Muslim Empowerment Network (AMEN)

Amnesty International USA

Asian Americans Advancing Justice - Asian law Caucus

Bellevue Program for Survivors of Torture

Birmingham Interfaith Human Rights Committee

Black LGBTQ+ Migrant Project

Borderlands for Equity

Bridges Faith Initiative

Capital District Coalition Against Islamophobia, Albany, NY

Center for Constitutional Rights

Center for Gender & Refugee Studies

Center for International Policy

Center for Victims of Torture

Central American Martyrs Center

Central Jersey Coalition Against Endless War

Centro de Trabajadores Unidos - IWP

Chicago Religious Leadership Network on Latin America - CRLN

CLEAR project (Creating Law Enforcement Accountability & Responsibility)

Cleveland Catholic Worker, Ohio

Cleveland Jobs with Justice

Close Guantánamo
Coalition for Civil Freedoms
CODEPINK
Defending Rights & Dissent
Demand Progress Education Fund
Denver Justice and Peace Committee
Detention Watch Network
EarthSong
Going Beyond Sustainability
Government Information Watch
Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters, USA-JPIC
Hope House
Human Rights First
Immigrant Advocacy Project
Immigrant Defense Project
Interfaith Community for Detained Immigrants
International Refugee Assistance Project
InterReligious Task Force on Central America (IRTF Cleveland)
Islamophobia Studies Center
Jews Against Anti-Muslim Racism
Justice for Muslims Collective
Kairos Community, NY
Lincoln Park Presbyterian Church
Louisiana Advocates for Immigrants in Detention
MADRE
MoveOn
Muslim Advocates
Muslim Justice League
Muslim Solidarity Committee
Muslim Solidarity Committee, Albany, NY

Muslims For Liberty
Muslims for Social Justice
National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers
National Immigrant Justice Center
National Immigration Project (NIPNLG)
National Network for Immigrant & Refugee Rights
National Religious Campaign Against Torture
Network in Solidarity with the People of Guatemala (NISGUA)
No More Guantánamos
NorCal Resist
North Carolina Stop Torture Now
Northern Illinois Justice for Our Neighbors
NWI Resistance
Oak Grove Church of God
Open Society Foundations
Pakistan Association of New York Capital District
Palestinian Rights Committee, Upper Hudson Peace Action
Peace Action
Peace Action: The New School
Peacemakers of Schoharie County, NY
Physicians for Human Rights
Project SALAM, Albany, NY
Project South
Provincial Council Clerics of St. Viator (Viatorians)
Reformed Church of Highland Park, NJ
Refugee Council USA
Reprieve US
Reviving the Islamic Sisterhood for Empowerment
Rural Awakening
School of the Americas Watch (SOA Watch)

School of the Americas Watch, Illinois Chapter
Sept. 11th Families for Peaceful Tomorrows
South Asian Americans Leading Together (SAALT)
Southwest Asylum & Migration Institute (SAMI)
T'ruah
Tea Project
The Advocates for Human Rights
The Feminist Front (FF)
Transformations CDC
Tsuru for Solidarity
UC Davis Immigration Law Clinic
United Stateless
US Campaign for Palestinian Rights (USCPR)
USC Gould International Human Rights Clinic
Veterans For Peace
Veterans For Peace, Chapter 10
Vietnam Veterans Against the War, Inc.
Washington Office on Latin America
Win Without War
Witness Against Torture
Witness at the Border
Witness for Peace Southeast
Women Against War
Yemeni Alliance Committee
Yemeni American Merchants Association

CC: The Honorable Lloyd J. Austin, United States Secretary of Defense
The Honorable Antony Blinken, United States Secretary of State