“Sometimes, I find myself walking around in my cellblock, wondering who these people are, who were detained in post-9/11 roundups along with my brothers and Center for Constitutional Rights clients between Hany Ibrahim and Yasser Ebrahim, two of the many people we partnered with the Public Theater on ‘The Michael Ratner Campaign for the Next Generation’ at the DePaul Art Museum in Chicago.

The fight for justice never stops— and it makes a huge difference to have funding we can count on to sustain our work. Recurring monthly gifts allow the Center for Constitutional Rights to plan ahead, and leverage resources to respond to challenges and opportunities as they arise. That means more hope for our clients, more support for grassroots movements, and more justice for all.

All new Justicetakers will receive a free copy of Michael Ratner’s autobiography, A Voice for the Voiceless. Don’t forget to give by establishing an automatic monthly gift at ccroj.org/donate

Thelma Newman Planned Giving Society
Supporting Justice for Generations to Come
Thelma Newman was not a wealthy woman, yet she made a six-figure gift to the Center for Constitutional Rights to support our work into the future. And she hoped to inspire others to do the same.

Newman was the legal assistant to our co-founder Morty Abramovitz and later to our board member John Cafferty, and permanent chief mechanic for Justice Sustainers and monthly donors who ensure that we have the necessary resources to respond to challenges and opportunities as they arise. That means more hope for our clients, more support for grassroots movements, and more justice for all.

In this newsletter, you will hear from your fellow supporters, as well as our partners in the fight for justice. Thank you for understanding that the path to justice is not always a direct one, that it is the relationship between one and many, for whatever lies ahead in the ongoing fight for justice. I am so thankful for you.

It is your deep partnership that makes it possible for us, and the results are family, to wake up each day with renewed energy for whatever lies ahead in the ongoing fight for justice. I am so thankful for you.

Vince Warren
Executive Director

January 2021 NEWSLETTER

WAYS TO GIVE BACK

DOUBLE THE IMPACT OF YOUR GIFT

The Michael Ratner Campaign for the Next Generation

Thanks to Katherine Frank’s generous match, you can double the impact of your commitment by making a new or increased gift to the Michael Ratner Campaign for the Next Generation. To make a contribution, visit ccroj.org/MRC

JUSTICE TAKES A FIGHT

In nineteen years, we have defended those imprisoned at Guantánamo — successfully advocating for the release of dozens of men held wrongfully, time and time again through the prison’s closure. We have fought back against attacks on Muslims and immigrants, called for accountability for torture, and illuminated the connections between post-9/11 military and carceral strategies and the long-standing practices that have targeted Black and Brown communities. And we have done it all in partnership with marginalized communities and social movements, with activists and artists, and most importantly, with you, our partners who ensure that we have the necessary resources to do this vital work together.

Yet twenty years later, the ideological commitment to maximum state security reflected in the so-called ‘War on Terror’ is still in effect, and neither our fight against
The 9/11 Effect: Reckoning with 20 Years of Injustice

The Center for Constitutional Rights continues to fight back. What follows is a glimpse of our multifaceted, long-term work to resist the ideologies of authoritarianism and help build a world of justice and love. Thank you for your crucial partnership in fighting for marginalized communities!

PATH-BREAKING LITIGATION

In summer, winter, autumn and in fall Years of life passed away without feeling Wounded heart bleeding without healing Precious times of my life have been stolen —from the poem "Souls" by Guantánamo detainee and CCR client Majid Khan

In 2003, Majid Khan was disappeared by the CIA and tortured sites to publicly tell his devastating story of disappearance, deterioration and torture in an unprecedented hearing in a Guantánamo courtroom. After hearing his testimony, the majority of the jury of military officers recommended clemency for Majid Khan, saying that what he suffered was akin to "torture performed by the most abusive regimes in modern history," and that "it should be a source of shame for the U.S. government." Khan is scheduled for release in February. His hearing was featured in The New York Times and numerous other publications.

A stubborn truth about the man at Guantánamo is that at some point they were so confused and scared off against U.S. soldiers with guns drawn, and were captured and shipped off to Guantánamo to neutralize the threat they posed. The well-documented but little known reality is that following his arrest in Afghanistan in 2001, the U.S. military ran a blindfolded, heavily-bound drag that consisted hundreds of feet and boys whose word was being at the wrong place at the wrong time.

"Words can’t explain the suffering of my family, the worry and tears of my mother. The years I couldn’t see my wife because I was stuck in this open prison and couldn’t fly."
—Naved Shinwari

Words can’t explain the suffering of those men...caged by our government...I had no sense of [time] passing...I was all alone...I couldn’t sleep...I don’t still sleep...I was all alone...I couldn’t speak...I was all alone...it was all over the world. I couldn’t find a way to stop the torture..."
—Mohammed al Qahtani, who was held without trial at Guantánamo Bay prison for more than 10 years despite being entitled to a medical evaluation to determine whether the government may continue to detain him in light of the severe mental distress he suffers. We have been fighting for him since 2005 and we will persevere.

We are currently fighting for five of the 30 men still detained at the base, including representing two Guantánamo Bay detainees at the Central Court at the Hague. We are fighting for their release so the government must be held accountable for what happened.

"I still don’t know if I will ever be charged with a crime."
—Omar Farah, Senior Staff Attorney and Associate Director of Strategic Initiatives, reflecting on the case of his client, CCR donor Carolyn Purcell

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The 9/11 Effect: Reckoning with 20 Years of Injustice

The Center for Constitutional Rights

The 9/11 Effect: Reckoning with 20 Years of Injustice

In 2003, Majid Khan was disappeared by the CIA and tortured. In summer, winter, autumn and in fall, we started representing Khan in a case against the U.S. government. Khan is scheduled for release in February. His hearing was featured in the New York Times and numerous other publications.

A stubborn myth about the men at Guantánamo is that at some point they were ensnared hundreds of men and boys whose worst crime was being in the wrong place at the wrong time. In 2005, Senior Staff Attorney and Associate Director of Strategic Initiatives, reflecting on the case of our client Tariq Ba Odah, said that what he learned from the case is a historic challenge to corporate impunity for human rights violations. We are currently fighting to challenge the national narrative that justified suspending basic legal protections in the interest of “national security.”

“When we look for people fighting for those men...caged by our government at the U.S. prison at Guantánamo, we see the Center for Constitutional Rights. CCR remains a beacon of light in these dark times.” —Board Co-Chair Lisa Crooms-Robinson

"“The Center for Constitutional Rights heals wounds of injustice so that all people may take their rightful place in society and fully participate.” —CCR Director Carolin Purcell

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"I spent more than a decade there. Our short film shares his story." —Faheem A. Rashid, a client of the Center for Constitutional Rights who was unlawfully detained at Guantánamo when he was 17 and spent more than a decade there. Our short film Waiting for Fahd shares his story.

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THE 9/11 EFFECT: RECKONING WITH 20 YEARS OF INJUSTICE

—CCR Legal Director Baher Azmy

ideology building upon narratives transforming politics, law, and oppressing its own people in service and establish domestic policies to before 9/11: launch foreign wars crisis. The government used the launch a shocking human rights criminal act...into a platform to United States turned a horrific "Following the 9/11 attacks, the Photo taken by Justin Norman

Wounded heart bleeding without healing Years of life passed away without feeling In summer, winter, autumn and in fall marginalized communities!

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guantanamo to neutralize the threat they posed. The well-documented but little-known reality is that following his invasion of Afghanistan in 2001, the U.S. military ran a slipshod, bounty-based dragnet that resulted hundreds of false starts and whose worst crimes were being at the wrong place at the wrong time.

—Dov Ever, Senior Staff Attorney and Associate Director of Strategic Initiatives, reflecting on the case of our client Tariq Ba Odah in Rolling Stone in 2015. In 2016, after litigation and public pressure drawing attention to his courageous long-term hunger strike forced the government’s hand, Ba Odah was released—after 14 years of detention without charge or trial.

Our client Tariq Ba Odah in Rolling Stone in 2015. In 2016, after litigation and public pressure drawing attention to his courageous long-term hunger strike forced the government’s hand, Ba Odah was released—after 14 years of detention without charge or trial.

In 2005, Majid Khan was disappeared by the CIA and tortured at an unknown "black site" before being transferred to Guantanamo in 2006. We started representing Khan in 2006, and because, as Khan himself said, "the government was so scared of his potential to reveal their illegal conduct, it took a year of fighting just to meet with him." This fall, Majid Khan finally became the first person held in CIA secret detention and torture to publicly tell his devastating story of disappearance, detention, and torture in an unreported hearing in a Guantanamo courtroom. After hearing his testimony, the majority of the jury of military officers recommended clemency for Majid Khan, saying that what he suffered was akin to "torture performed by the most abusive regimes in modern history" and "should be a source of shame for the U.S. government." Khan is scheduled for release in February. His hearing was featured in the New York Times and numerous news publications.

We are currently fighting for five of the 39 men still detained at the base, including representing two of our clients at the International Criminal Court at the Hague. For their release, their families and friends are willing the whole prison to be shut down. In addition to the cases we have fought directly, the Center for Constitutional Rights has organized hundreds of pro bono attorneys to ensure that every man imprisoned at Guantanamo had the opportunity to be represented by counsel.

For more than a decade at Al Shemrani v. CACI, we have representing victims of torture at the Guantanamo Bay Abu-Ghurab prison in a case against a U.S.-based government contractor. It is a historic challenge to corporate impunity and human rights violations. We are one step away from a trial where our clients will be represented by counsel.

In 2013, we alleged that then-Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and the military chain of command approved interrogation practices they knew to be in violation of U.S. and international law. Our clients, who had been imprisoned at Guantanamo, were released without ever being charged with a crime.

"Solitary confinement has destroyed me...It was like a huge mountain that was on top of me. And the pressure on me was so high I screamed hours of my eyes...I had no sense of time passing...I was all alone in the world. I couldn’t find a way to stop the torture..." —Mohammed al-Qahtani, who has been held without trial at Guantanamo Bay prison for more than 14 years, despite being entitled to a medical evaluation to determine whether the government may continue to detain him in light of the severe mental stress he suffers. We have been fighting for him since 2005 and we will persevere.

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Majid Khan acclaimed in our Supreme Court case Al Shimari v. CACI, which successfully defended our clients’ right to seek redress for violations. We are currently number of detained men we are currently fighting for

"[After 9/11] the Center for Constitutional Rights was brave enough to challenge the national narrative that justified suspending basic legal protections in the interest of ‘national security.’" —Board Co-Chair Lisa Croom-Robinson

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“‘If you have an activist, a lawyer, a storyteller, you can change the world.” —Naveed Shinwari

"We will be one step closer to winning the war on terror if we are successful at finally securing a trial for our clients, whose stories are by the very definition of what it means to win a war.” —Olga Rodriguez, Executive Director of the Center for Constitutional Rights in a New York Times article on Guantanamo

"Waiting for Fahd

Be a voice for the voiceless—for another human being is suffering.” —Abdul Shari, a client of the Center for Constitutional Rights who was unthurtfully detained at Guantanamo when he was 17 and spent more than a decade there. Our short film Waiting for Fahd shares his story.

"A story that will be read and retold for generations to come." —Rev. Canon Michael J. Grant, senior scholar, United Methodist Church

"The 9/11 attacks, the United States turned a horrific criminal act...into a platform to such a shocking human rights crisis. The government used the same formula it had for centuries before 9/11: launch foreign wars and establish domestic policies to oppress its own people in service of some broader ideological conflict. Here, as before, in transforming politics, law, and culture, the United States constructed a dominant, destructive, and enduring 9/11 ideology building upon narratives of xenophobia..." —CCR Legal Director Baher Azmy

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around in my cellblock, wondering who Asian immigrants based only on their race, religion, with hundreds of other Muslim, Arab, and South brothers and Center for Constitutional Rights clients between Hany Ibrahim and Yasser Ebrahim, two Jessica Blank and Eric Jensen based on letters "Nobody tells me when I'm believe what happened, how and why. " —Hany Ibrahim is that you are Muslim. That's the whole story." —Hany Ibrahim

We partnered with the Public Theater on Letters from Detention, a theatrical work by Jessica Blank and Erin Jensen based on letters between Hany Ibrahim and Yasser Ebrahim, two brothers and Center for Constitutional Rights clients who were detained in post-9/11 U.S. military prisons. Our work with hundreds of other Muslim, Arab, and South Asians based only on their race, religion, immigration status, and national origin.

The Center for Constitutional Rights and our broad network of partners coordinated a letter urging President Biden to close the prison at Guantánamo Bay by the end of his term. However, as we have been reflecting on his fall, we have been reflecting on the narratives and building a rich tapestry of the Center for Constitutional Rights' family: the communities we serve, the communities we defend, the movement partners. And we don't do this work alone.

In those twenty years, we have defended those imprisoned at Guantánamo — successfully advocating for the release of dozens of men while demanding, time and time again, the prison's closure. We have fought back against attacks on Muslims and immigrants, called for accountability for torture, and illustrated the connections between post-9/11 military and carceral strategies and the stigmatization and harassment of Muslims and immigrants - what we have called the "Terror Narrative," a narrative of state security reflected in the so-called "War on Terror." We have been reflecting on the narratives and building a rich tapestry of the Center for Constitutional Rights' family: the communities we serve, the communities we defend, the movement partners. And we don't do this work alone.

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It is your deep partnership that makes it possible for you, and the rest of our family, to wake up each day with renewed energy for whatever lies ahead in the ongoing fight for justice! Thank you for understanding that the path to justice is not always a direct one, or that it is a relationship of destinations. It is your deep partnership that makes it possible for you, and the rest of our family, to wake up each day with renewed energy for whatever lies ahead in the ongoing fight for justice! Thank you for understanding that the path to justice is not always a direct one, or that it is a relationship of destinations.

We harness the power of film to educate, activate, and build community.

Freedom Films

Freedom Films is an emerging screening and conversation series that presents powerful, cutting-edge work about the political and social unrest shaping our world. We also co-sponsored the 2021 War on Terror Film Festival, a month-long virtual program featuring films made over the last twenty years that document abuses, highlight crimes, and satirize atrocities of war on terror.

Art by Chadi Al-Dhabi and Dwanye Averette; clients of the Center for Constitutional Rights, has been exhibited in New York City and Washington, DC. In 2022, their collaboration with the Tea Project, their work will be featured in "Remembering the Exceptional Torture, Trauma, & Reparations | Chicago to Guantánamo" at the Dusable Art Museum in Chicago.

Follow the Center for Constitutional Rights on social media:

Thank you for making it possible to be fierce and resilient in the fight for justice!

Thelma Newman Planned Giving Society

Supporting Justice for Generations to Come

Thelma Newman was not a wealthy woman, yet she made a six-figure gift to the Center for Constitutional Rights to support our work into the future. And she hoped to inspire others to do the same.

Newman was the legal assistant to our co-founder Morty Stavis at the United Electrical Workers. She knew the fight for justice is long, and she wanted to support it even beyond her own lifetime.

The members of our Thelma Newman Planned Giving Society have included us in their estate plans. Join them today.

The fight for justice never stops—and it makes a huge difference to have funding we can count on to sustain our work. Recurring monthly gifts allow the Center for Constitutional Rights to plan ahead, and to leverage resources to respond to challenges and opportunities as they arise. That means more hope for our clients, more support for grassroots movements, and more justice for all.

All new Justice Sustainers will receive a free copy of Dhaya Al-Bihani's autobiography, Al-Bihani the Brave.

Visit our multimedia web resource to end anti-Muslim discrimination and torture, immigrant rights organizations, and organizations working broadly on civil rights, civil liberties, and racial justice.

ADVOCACY

Our multimedia web resource presents award-winning, cutting-edge works about the post-9/11 military and carceral strategies and the stigmatization and harassment of Muslims and immigrants, called for accountability for torture, and illustrated the connections between post-9/11 military and carceral strategies and the stigmatization and harassment of Muslims and immigrants - what we have called the "Terror Narrative," a narrative of state security reflected in the so-called "War on Terror."
Sometimes, I find myself walking between Hany Ibrahim and Yasser Ebrahim, two Jessica Blank and Eric Jensen based on letters Letters from Detention We partnered with the Public Theater on these people are, why I am here, this time for no charge.” —Yasser Ebrahim (CONT’D)

The Center for Constitutional Rights and our broad network of partners coordinated a letter urging President Biden to close the prison at Guantánamo by April 11 of this year, which was signed by more than 100 signatories, including organizations working to end anti-Muslim discrimination and torture, immigrant rights organizations, and organizations working broadly on civil rights, civil liberties, and racial justice.

The Center for Constitutional Rights has been defending those imprisoned at Guantánamo — successfully advocating for the release of dozens of men while demanding, time and time again, the prison’s closure. We have fought back against attacks on Muslims and immigrants, called for accountability for torture, and illustrated the connections between post-9/11 military and carceral strategies and the ideologies of war, xenophobia, and authoritarianism that drove the U.S. government’s response to 9/11, while also reshaping destructive narratives and building structures needed for justice, accountability, and healing.

In the previous three years, we have defended those imprisoned at Guantánamo — successfully advocating for the release of dozens of men while demanding, time and time again, the prison’s closure. We have fought back against attacks on Muslims and immigrants, called for accountability for torture, and illustrated the connections between post-9/11 military and carceral strategies and the ideologies of war, xenophobia, and authoritarianism that drove the U.S. government’s response to 9/11, while also reshaping destructive narratives and building structures needed for justice, accountability, and healing.

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