

WEB UPDATES – TACTICAL CAMPAIGN AGAINST TORTURE	
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Date	16/11/2006
Section	Features and action
Web action	WA 01/06
AIDOC	AMR 51/173/2006

Title
Justice for Guantánamo detainees! The detention camp approaches its 5 th anniversary

Feature
<p>In January 2002, the US authorities transferred the first "war on terror" detainees – hooded and shackled – to the US Naval Base in Guantánamo Bay, Cuba. Despite widespread international condemnation, hundreds of people of more than 30 nationalities remain there.</p> <p>The US administration chose Guantánamo as the location for this detention facility in an attempt to keep the detainees out of the reach of the US courts.</p> <p>The totality of the detention regime in Guantánamo – harsh, indefinite, isolating and punitive – amounts to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment in violation of international law.</p> <p>The detainees and their families face severe psychological distress. In desperation, numerous detainees have embarked on hunger strikes, being kept alive through painful force feeding procedures. A number have attempted suicide. In June 2006, three detainees were found dead in their cells; they had apparently hanged themselves.</p> <p>As more evidence surfaces that the abuse of Guantánamo detainees has been widespread, condemnation at home and abroad increases. Amnesty International was one of the first voices to call for the camp to be closed, and many other organizations, institutions and individuals have since expressed their outrage at the detention centre.</p> <p>On 29 June 2006, the US Supreme Court ruled that the military commissions established by President Bush to try “war on terror” detainees were unlawful.</p> <p>Instead of using the ruling as a springboard for change, the US government responded with new legislation – the Military Commissions Act 2006 - further restricting judicial review of detentions and providing for the trial by military commission of foreign nationals held by the US anywhere in the world as “enemy combatants”.</p> <p>This act undermines basic principles of justice and opens the door to more human rights violations and impunity in the name of counter-terror.</p> <p>Guantánamo is a symbol of this injustice. The US government must close it.</p> <p>Detainees must either be released with full protections or charged and tried in full and fair proceedings.</p> <p>Take action!</p>

Write to the US Ambassador in your country calling on him to:

- Relay your concerns to the relevant authorities in the US administration;
- Support your call for the closure of Guantánamo and for all those held to be fairly tried or released;
- Respond to your concerns within a reasonable time.

Letter web action

Dear [Name of the US Ambassador in your country],

It is nearly five years since the first detainees were transferred to the detention camp at the US Naval Base in Guantánamo Bay, Cuba. More than 400 detainees remain held there indefinitely, causing serious distress to them and their families, and serious damage to the reputation of your country.

I believe that lasting security and real justice for the victims of terrorism cannot be achieved without respect for the human rights of all detainees and fair trials for anyone suspected of involvement in terrorism. I do not believe that the Military Commissions Act, signed into law by President Bush on 17 October 2006 can bring this about. Instead it threatens to entrench into legislation policies that have been widely condemned.

Five years on, the Guantánamo detention camp has become an icon of injustice committed in the “war on terror”, undermining security and respect for the rule of law. It must be closed down.

The closure of this detention facility must not lead to the transfer of human rights violations elsewhere. All those in US custody, wherever they are held, must have their human rights fully respected. Secret and indefinite detention must end. Those who are not to be charged with criminal offences and brought to a full and fair trial should be released. The case of each detainee to be released must be individually assessed to ensure that he is not transferred to a country where he will face further human rights violations.

I recall President Bush’s repeated assertions that the USA remains committed to the “non-negotiable demands of human dignity”, including the rule of law. I urge you to relay my concern to the US administration and to do all in your influence to make respect for human rights and the rule of law a reality for all those in US custody and their families.

Yours sincerely,

Send appeals to

US Ambassador in your country. Go to the official list of US embassies to find the means of contact of the US Embassy in your country.

<http://usembassy.state.gov/>

Links to documents

- Bush signs away detainees' rights

<http://web.amnesty.org/pages/stoptorture-061017-features-eng>

- Guantánamo: A Human Rights scandal [background pages]
<http://web.amnesty.org/pages/guantanamobay-background-eng>
- Report: A framework for closing Guantánamo Bay detention centre
<http://web.amnesty.org/library/index/engamr510972006>