

SHUT DOWN GUANTÁNAMO

Twenty years ago this day, Guantánamo Bay prison opened. The U.S. government concluded that the island prison would be beyond the reach of U.S. and international law. Guantánamo was one of many secret “black sites” around the globe where prisoners the U.S. military and CIA believed were terrorists disappeared and were tortured. Secret Justice Department memoranda redefined the meaning of torture and the U.S.’s obligations under the Geneva Conventions to allow prisoners to be tortured and otherwise abused at these sites with impunity. For more than four years Guantánamo operated in secret, with no one knowing who was imprisoned there. It wasn’t until May 2006 that the prisoners’ names at Guantánamo were finally disclosed. And it wasn’t until April 2009 that the secret Justice Department memoranda were made public.

By then, 780 men and boys, all of them Muslim, had been imprisoned in Guantánamo Bay. The vast majority – 86 percent – were sold to the U.S. for a bounty, typically \$5,000. Currently, 39 men remain imprisoned at Guantánamo, 27 of which **have never been charged with any crime or offense, and are held indefinitely**, in violation of international law.

Secret prisons, torture, and indefinite detention without charge, are signs of a morally bankrupt nation. The prophet Isaiah long ago spoke of the consequences of such moral bankruptcy and what our response should be (Is. 1:15-17):

When you spread out your hands in prayer,
I hide my eyes from you;
even when you offer many prayers,
I am not listening.
Your hands are full of blood!
Wash and make yourselves clean.
Take your evil deeds out of my sight;
stop doing wrong.
Learn to do right; seek justice.
Defend the oppressed.
Take up the cause of the orphan;
plead the case of the widow.

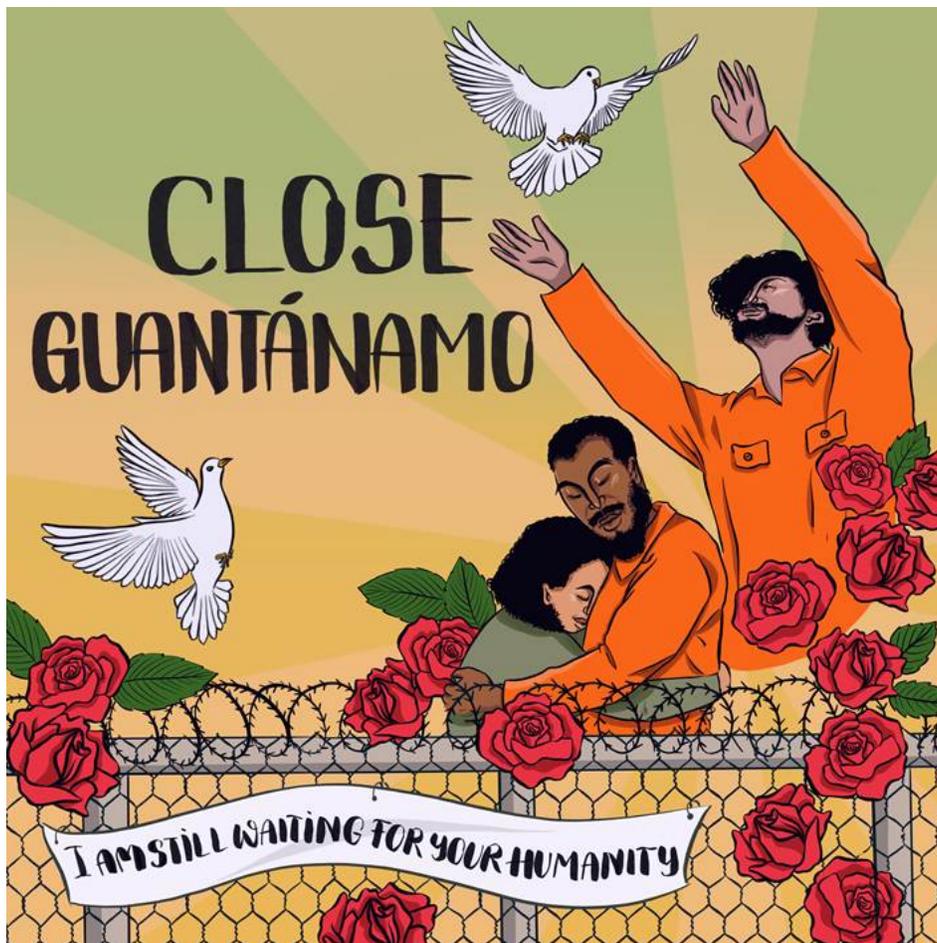
We must make amends as a nation for the torture, killings, and many terrible wrongs we have done, and are still doing, to the prisoners held at Guantánamo. We vigil here today in solidarity with them, and call on our government and military to shutdown down Guantánamo.

Death Poem

Take my blood.
Take my death shroud and
The remnants of my body.
Take photographs of my corpse at the grave, lonely.

Send them to the world,
To the judges and
To the people of conscience,
Send them to the principled men and the fair-minded.

And let them bear the guilty burden before the world,
Of this innocent soul.
Let them bear the burden before their children and before history,
Of this wasted, sinless soul,
Of this soul which has suffered at the hands of the “protectors of peace.”
(by Jumah Al Dossari, imprisoned at Guantánamo 2002-2007, without charge)



For more information on Guantánamo, please go to: <https://www.closeguantanamo.org>