

January 11, 2023

President Joseph Biden
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Biden:

We are a diverse group of non-governmental organizations working, in both the United States and other countries, on issues including international human rights, immigrants' rights, racial justice, and combatting anti-Muslim discrimination. We write to urge you to prioritize closing the detention facility at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, and ending indefinite military detention.

Among a broad range of human rights violations perpetrated against predominantly Muslim communities over the last two decades, the Guantánamo detention facility – built on the same military base where the United States unconstitutionally detained Haitian refugees in deplorable conditions in the early 1990s – is the iconic example of the abandonment of the rule of law. The Guantánamo detention facility was designed specifically to evade legal constraints, and Bush administration officials incubated torture there.

Nearly eight hundred Muslim men and boys were held at Guantánamo after 2002, all but a handful without charge or trial. Thirty-five remain there today, at the astronomical cost of \$540 million per year, making Guantánamo the most expensive detention facility in the world. Guantánamo embodies the fact that the United States government has long viewed communities of color – citizens and non-citizens alike – as a security threat, to devastating consequences.

This is not a problem of the past. Guantánamo continues to cause escalating and profound damage to the aging and increasingly ill men still detained indefinitely there, most without charge and none having received a fair trial. It has also devastated their families and communities. The approach Guantánamo exemplifies continues to fuel and justify bigotry, stereotyping, and stigma. Guantánamo entrenches racial divisions and racism more broadly, and risks facilitating additional rights violations.

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 the Guantánamo detention facility, ending indefinite military detention of those held there, and never again using the military base for unlawful mass detention of any group of people are necessary steps 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 detained indefinitely without charge or fair trials for two decades.

Sincerely,

About Face: Veterans Against the War
Action by Christians for the Abolition of Torture (ACAT), Belgium
ACAT, Benin
ACAT, Canada
ACAT, Chad
ACAT, Côte d'Ivoire
ACAT, Democratic Republic of the Congo
ACAT, France
ACAT, Germany
ACAT, Ghana
ACAT, Italy
ACAT, Liberia
ACAT, Luxembourg
ACAT, Mali
ACAT, Niger
ACAT, Senegal
ACAT, Spain
ACAT, Switzerland
ACAT, Togo
ACAT, UK
Action Center on Race and the Economy (ACRE)
Adalah Justice Project
Afghans For A Better Tomorrow
African Communities Together
African Human Rights Coalition
Alliance of Baptists
American Civil Liberties Union
American Friends Service Committee
American Humanist Association
American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC)
Amnesty International USA
Assange Defense
Asylum Seeker Advocacy Project (ASAP)
Birmingham Islamic Society
Black Alliance for Just Immigration (BAJI)
Brooklyn For Peace
CAGE
Campaign for Peace, Disarmament, Common Security
Capital District Coalition Against Islamophobia
Center for Constitutional Rights
Center for Gender & Refugee Studies
Center for Victims of Torture
Center on Conscience and War
Centre for the Prevention of Violence and the Healing of Memories, Burkina Faso
Church of the Brethren, Office of Peacebuilding and Policy
Close Guantanamo

Coalition for Civil Freedoms
CODEPINK
Communities United for Status and Protection (CUSP)
Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, U.S. Provinces
Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR)
Dar al-Hijrah Islamic Center
Defending Rights & Dissent
Demand Progress Education Fund
Denver Justice and Peace Committee (DJPC)
Detention Watch Network
Father Charlie Mulholland Catholic Worker House
Federal Association of Vietnamese Refugees in the Federal Republic of Germany
Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR-USA)
Foreign Policy for America
Franciscan Action Network
Friends Committee on National Legislation
Friends of Human Rights
Friends of Matènwa
Haitian Bridge Alliance
Healing and Recovery after Trauma
Healing of Memories Global Network
Healing of Memories Luxembourg
Houston Peace and Justice Center
Human Rights First
Human Rights Initiative of North Texas
ICNA Council for Social Justice
Immigrant Defenders Law Center
Institute for Justice & Democracy in Haiti
Interfaith Communities United for Justice and Peace
Interfaith Movement for Human Integrity
International Federation for Humans Rights (FIDH)
International Federation of Action by Christians for the Abolition of Torture (FIACAT)
International Refugee Assistance Project (IRAP)
InterReligious Task Force on Central America
Islamic Society of North America (ISNA)
Islamophobia Studies Center
Jewish Voice for Peace, Los Angeles
Libyan American Alliance
Lincoln Park Presbyterian Church Chicago
LittleSis / Public Accountability Initiative
MADRE
Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns
Massachusetts Peace Action
Mid-Missouri Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR)
Military Families Speak Out
MPower Change

Muslim Advocates
Muslim Counterpublics Lab
Muslim Justice League
Muslim Solidarity Committee, Albany NY
Muslims for Justice Futures
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd
National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers
National Campaign for a Peace Tax Fund
National Council of Churches
National Immigrant Justice Center
National Immigration Law Center
National Immigration Project (NIPNLG)
National Lawyers Guild
National Network for Arab American Communities (NNAAC)
National Religious Campaign Against Torture
No More Guantánamos
No Separate Justice
NorCal Resist
North Carolina Stop Torture Now
Orange County Peace Coalition
Out Against War
Oxfam America
Parallax Perspectives
Pasadena/Foothill ACLU Chapter
Pax Christi New York
Pax Christi Southern California
Peace Action
Peace Action New York State
Peacemakers of Schoharie County
PeaceWorks Kansas City
Physicians for Human Rights
Polygon Education Fund
Project SALAM (Support And Legal Advocacy for Muslims)
Provincial Council Clerics of St. Viator
Quixote Center
Refugee Council USA
Rehumanize International
Relieve US
Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights
September 11th Families for Peaceful Tomorrows
South Asian Network
Southwest Asylum & Migration Institute
St Camillus/ Pax Christi Los Angeles
Tahirih Justice Center
Tea Project
The Advocates for Human Rights

The Episcopal Church
The United Methodist Church, General Board of Church and Society
UndocuBlack
United Church of Christ, Justice and Local Church Ministries
United for Peace and Justice
Upper Hudson Peace Action
US Campaign for Palestinian Rights
USC Law International Human Rights Clinic
VECINA
Veterans For Peace
Veterans for Peace Chapter 110
Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA)
Win Without War
Witness Against Torture
Witness at the Border
Women Against War
Women for Genuine Security
World BEYOND War
World Can't Wait
World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT)
Yemeni Alliance Committee

CC: The Honorable Lloyd J. Austin, United States Secretary of Defense
The Honorable Antony Blinken, United States Secretary of State
The Honorable Merrick B. Garland, United States Attorney General