

Guantanamo - 13 Years of Illegal Detention

This month, January 2015, marks the beginning of the 14th year of detaining prisoners at the Guantanamo Bay detention camp. This prison has operated outside the boundaries of the system of laws that are at the core of our Constitution. The practice of torture, violation of our own legal system and of the Geneva Conventions are a disgrace.

In his January 5th New York Times Op-Ed “The Path to Closing Guantanamo”, State Dept. Special Envoy Cliff Sloan states:

“The reasons for closing Guantánamo are more compelling than ever. As a high-ranking security official from one of our staunchest allies on counterterrorism (not from Europe) once told me, “The greatest single action the United States can take to fight terrorism is to close Guantánamo.” I have seen firsthand the way in which Guantánamo frays and damages vitally important security relationships with countries around the world. The eye-popping cost — around \$3 million per detainee last year, compared with roughly \$75,000 at a “supermax” prison in the United States — drains vital resources.”

Six years ago East Bay Citizens for Peace applauded President Obama’s executive order to close the prison within one year and to provide for humane treatment in conformity with all applicable laws governing the conditions of such confinement, including Common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions

It is to our country’s great moral shame that 127 of the original 800 men from more than 20 countries remain incarcerated there. 59 were approved for release 5 years ago. We agree with Cliff Sloan who in the same Op Ed concludes that “Imprisoning men without charges for this long — many of whom have been approved for transfer for almost half the period of their incarceration — is not in line with the country we aspire to be.”

Today East Bay Citizens for Peace again calls for the closing of Guantanamo Bay detention camp, the end to extraordinary rendition, a commitment to never again tolerate torture in our name and a promise of a fair judicial process without further delay for all detainees. We also believe that to uphold the law and to regain integrity and decency for ourselves and in the eyes of the world, it is necessary to bring to justice all those who engaged in and sanctioned torture. This would be a step toward healing and regaining our democracy.

East Bay Citizens for Peace
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