

June 15 Marks 6,000 Days of Guantánamo: Rights Groups Tell Donald Trump to Close the Prison, Say “Not One Day More!”



PRESS RELEASE

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Today, June 15, 2018, is a depressing milestone in the long history of U.S. detention at Guantánamo Bay. Today the Guantánamo prison, set up after the 9/11 attacks, has been open for 6,000 days.

Most of the men held at Guantánamo over the last 6,000 days (16 years, five months and four days) have been held without charge or trial, in defiance of international laws and treaties governing the treatment of prisoners. There are only two acceptable ways to deprive an individual of their liberty: either as a criminal suspect, to be tried in a federal court; or as a prisoner of war, held unmolested until the end of hostilities. The men at Guantánamo are neither. Instead, after 9/11, the Bush administration conceived of a novel category of prisoner — one without any rights whatsoever — and implemented this at Guantánamo.

Although the prisoners were granted constitutionally guaranteed habeas corpus rights by the Supreme Court in June 2008, those rights were eviscerated by a number of appeals court decisions between 2009 and 2011, effectively gutting habeas corpus of all meaning for the Guantánamo prisoners. The unacceptable reality of Guantánamo now is that the men still held can only be freed at the whim of the president, a statutory change by the U.S. Congress, or a landmark judicial decision. None of these possibilities are remotely plausible at present.

Donald Trump inherited 41 prisoners from Barack Obama, but he has only released one man, a Saudi repatriated to ongoing imprisonment as part of a plea deal he agreed in the military commission trial system in 2014. Of the 40 men still held, only nine are facing, or have faced trials. Five were approved for release by high-level government review processes under President Obama, but are still held, while the other 26, accurately described as “forever prisoners” by the media, are being held indefinitely without charge or trial.

Every day that Guantánamo remains open is a black mark against America’s notion of itself as a nation founded on the rule of law, which respects the rule of law. We call on Donald Trump to close it without further delay, and to charge or release those still held.

Andy Worthington, the co-founder of the Close Guantánamo campaign, said: “6,000 days is far



longer than the two world wars combined. It is outrageous that the U.S. government continues to perpetuate the myth of an ‘endless war,’ as a supposed justification for holding prisoners indefinitely without charge or trial, when this is, in fact, a policy for which there is no justification whatsoever.”

Sue Udry, Executive Director of Defending Rights & Dissent said: “Guantánamo Bay prison is a living symbol of America’s refusal to live up to the promise of our Constitution. Although President Trump has made clear his disinterest in human rights, due process, and the rule of law, we call on him to choose justice over inhumanity and close the prison immediately.”

Helen Schietinger of Witness Against Torture said: “It is significant — and not accidental — that all the men who have been imprisoned at Guantánamo are Muslim. How many holy months of Ramadan have they missed during these 6000 days? How many more must they endure, never being allowed visits by their families?”

Close Guantánamo
Defending Rights & Dissent
Dorothy Day Catholic Worker
London Guantánamo Campaign
No More Guantánamos
September 11th Families for Peaceful Tomorrows
TASSC International (Torture Abolition and Survivors Support Coalition)
The Tea Project
Voices for Creative Nonviolence
Witness Against Torture
World Can’t Wait

Please note that the photo used above is from the Close Guantánamo campaign’s [Gitmo Clock](#) [1] initiative. The clock counts in real time how long Guantánamo has been open, and throughout the year supporters of the campaign have been taking photos with posters counting how long the prison has been open, and urging Donald Trump to close it. Those photos can be found [here](#) [2].

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Links:

[1] <http://www.gtmoclock.com/>

[2] <https://www.closeguantanamo.org/Gitmo-Clock-2018-photos>

[3] <http://closeguantanamo.org/>

[4] <mailto:info@closeguantanamo.org>

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