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Rights Groups Mark Beginning of a Decade of Wrongful Detentions at Guantánamo and Demand Obama Close Island Prison with Justice

Rally in Front of White House to Close Guantánamo Bay Followed by Procession to DOJ

January 11, 2011, Washington, DC — As the prison at Guantánamo enters its 10th year, Amnesty International USA, the Center for Constitutional Rights, Witness Against Torture, September 11 Families for Peaceful Tomorrows, the Center for Justice and International Law (CEJIL) and other human rights groups called on President Obama to close the U.S. detention center at Guantánamo Bay with justice at a rally in front of the White House. They closed the rally by reading a message from Omar Deghayes, a man who was arbitrarily detained at Guantánamo without charge for 6 years before being allowed to return to his home in England. [Mr. Deghayes' statement is viewable on CCR's website here](#). After the rally, activists representing the 173 men still at Guantánamo marched in orange jumpsuits to the U.S. Department of Justice, where they held a vigil.

The groups are calling on President Obama to end indefinite arbitrary detention and unfair military commissions trials at Guantánamo Bay, and to either charge and fairly try or release the detained men. The rights groups demanded the president re-commit to rapidly closing Guantánamo, lift the blanket ban on all repatriations to Yemen, and continue to make diligent efforts to resettle the many men who cannot return to their home countries for fear of torture and persecution.

CCR, AI-USA, WAT and the Center for Justice and International Law (CEJIL) released a “Close Guantánamo with Justice” statement that is gathering support from prominent human rights organizations, activists, scholars, artists, writers, and torture survivors from all around the world—including the United States, Latin America, the Middle East, Europe, Australia, and Africa. The statement includes a plea to the international community to offer homes to the men at Guantánamo who have been cleared for release or won their habeas cases, but cannot leave until third countries

make humanitarian gestures to offer them resettlement. [The statement and list of signatories is available on the CCR website here.](#)

Said **Pardiss Kebriaei**, Center for Constitutional Rights staff attorney representing men detained at Guantánamo, "Approximately 30 men could be released from Guantánamo tomorrow but for a fear of torture or persecution in their home countries. These men appeal to the international community for help in offering them safe havens and a chance to rebuild their lives. People of conscience in the world cannot let yet another anniversary of Guantánamo pass without doing something to help close it. Offering resettlement is a key part of the solution."

Said **Valerie Lucznikowska**, September 11 Families for Peaceful Tomorrows, "Our politicians must stop exploiting our grief and our concern for our safety for political ends. The rule of law, the essence of a democratic society, demands Constitutional federal trials of those who continue to be detained in Guantánamo. We cannot continue to deny human beings their freedom without legal charges and fair trials. Those who have been cleared must not continue to be held simply because of their nationality or the U.S. government's indecisiveness. Guantánamo has made us less safe. Close it."

Said **Tom Parker**, Amnesty International USA's advocacy and policy director of terrorism, counterterrorism and human rights, "For nine years Guantánamo has been a global symbol for injustice and abuse. The idea that you can't hold people indefinitely without trial has been around since the Middle Ages. It is a basic human right. President Obama continues to promise change, but what this administration has actually delivered is continuity for one of the darkest chapters in America's recent history."

Said **Matthew W. Daloisio**, organizer with Witness Against Torture. "The Obama administration's failure to close Guantánamo and undo Bush-era policies is a disaster for the rule of law, the best American ideals, and the security of people everywhere who want to live in peace. This is not about the politics of Left and Right; it's about what's right and wrong. Guantánamo, abusive treatment, and indefinite detention are wrong, and must once again be decisively rejected."

Said **Andy Worthington**, British author and Guantánamo expert, "One year after President Obama promised to have closed Guantánamo 173 men are still there, the majority of whom should never have been held in the first place. Without concerted action from the American people it's very possible the majority will never be released."

Said **Viviana Krsticevic**, **Executive Director** of the Center for Justice and International Law (CEJIL), "Indefinite detention at Guantánamo will not end unless the international community offers safe homes for the men who cannot return to their countries of nationality for fear of torture or persecution. As co-counsel with the Center for Constitutional Rights before the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, representing Djamel Ameziane—an Algerian man now entering his tenth year of arbitrary detention at Guantánamo, who will remain indefinitely imprisoned until a third country offers him resettlement—we call on President Obama to initiate dialogue with the Organization of American States so that countries in the Americas wishing to be involved in the resettlement process as a humanitarian gesture may do so."

For more information, please visit www.amnestyusa.org, www.ccr.org, www.peacefultomorrow.org, www.witnesstorture.org, www.cejil.org/en, and <http://www.andyworthington.co.uk/>.

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