

Witness Against Torture

Torture, Former Combatants, Political Prisoners, Terror Suspects, & Terrorists

<https://witnessagainsttorture.com/2016/02/25/wat-responds-to-obamas-guantanamo-plan/>

Campaign and Advocacy

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Close, Dont Move Guantanamo Witness Against Torture Responds to Obamas Guantanamo Plan

President Obamas plan to close the prison at Guantanamo is finally here. But its as useless as the Executive Order he signed almost eight years ago.

Republican candidates and leaders have shoved the plan back in Obamas face, repeating the big lie that the prison houses only the worst of the worst. The media has declared the proposal dead on arrival, quickly returning to its saturation coverage of a primary season verging on farce.

Obamas plan proposes to close the facility but not end the legal and moral abomination it represents. Indefinitely detaining men without charge or trial in the continental United States in supermax prisons no less is as unacceptable as indefinite detention at Guantanamo. The Military Commissions are unworkable and unfair, and cannot be tweaked into legitimacy. Saving money by changing the zip code of an unjust system does nothing to lessen its moral cost. Any talk of expenses should be about how to offer compensation to the men the United States abused and provide proper resources for their resettlement.

The presidents plan is silent on our nations accountability for the torture it has perpetrated at Guantanamo. That torture continues through force-feeding those prisoners who protest their detention by hunger striking. Indefinite detention is itself a means of torture, as the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Torture has stated.

The idea that Guantanamo was ever simply about national security is a fiction. Guantanamo was, is, and will continue to be an internment camp for Muslim men that is designed to destroy human beings. It both feeds and feeds off an Islamophobia that has gripped much of the country since 9-11. It sustains the racism and fear-mongering behind the mass incarceration of African Americans, Latino/as, and the poor, challenged by a new movement Obama claims to support. There can be no true tolerance so long as the prison at Guantanamo, or its terrible spirit, lives on.

Maybe Obama is naive enough to believe that he really tried to close the prison. Republican opposition has been sickening. But Obamas own lack of will, his political blunders, and his failure to truly reckon with Guantanamo have been among the greatest barriers. His speech presenting the plan was all about our security what holding, or releasing, the men at the prison means for American safety and not our crimes what the United States did to the men there. A sense of shame, above all, should drive action on the prison.

[As we gathered in front of the White House](#) last month to mark the prisons opening fourteen years ago, we spoke a vision of justice beyond failed promises and the cynicism of politics:

We hear a beautiful sound.
It is the breaking of chains.
We see a path full of hope.
We have found the way.
Let them go home. Let them go home. Let them go home.
Let them go today.