

# Witness Against Torture

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

**<https://witnessagainsttorture.com/2015/05/19/an-open-letter-to-president-obama/>**

## Public Facing Advocacy Writing

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### **Our Latest Press Release: Rights Groups Send An Open Letter to President Obama and Ashton Carter: Free the 57 Guantanamo Prisoners Approved for Transfer**

Together the undersigned organizations call for the prison at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, to be closed, and we ask President Obama and Defense Secretary Ashton Carter to swiftly transfer the 57 prisoners at Guantanamo who have already been cleared for transfer the majority for over five years and release or charge in a federal court those who have not been cleared for transfer.

May 23 marks the second anniversary of President Obamas promise to resume releasing prisoners from Guantanamo, after Congress raised legislative obstacles, which he made during [remarks at the National Defense University](#). The Presidents promise was prompted in particular by a prison-wide hunger strike at Guantanamo, undertaken by men who according to SOUTHCOM Commander General John Kelly were devastated that the administration had backed off closing the prison.

Since that speech, 44 men have been freed. However, 122 men remain at Guantanamo, even though almost all of them have never been charged, let alone tried, for any crime. It is time for President Obama, and Defense Secretary Carter, to take action to transfer the 57 men still held who have already been approved to leave Guantanamo, and to release or charge in federal court those who remain.

Today, just days before the anniversary of President Obamas promise, a delegation of British MPs is visiting Washington, D.C., to discuss the release of Shaker Aamer, one of the 57 and the last British resident in Guantanamo. This follows the creation of a cross-party Parliamentary Group, and [a motion passed by the British Parliament](#) in March, calling for his release and return to his family in the U.K., and a similar call made by Prime Minister David Cameron in a meeting with President Obama in January.

As well as calling for the transfer of the 57 men cleared for transfer, including Shaker Aamer, we also call on the administration to speed up the [Periodic Review Boards](#) (PRBs), designed to review the cases of the men who have not been cleared for transfer and are not facing trials. Since the PRBs began in November 2013, 14 men have been reviewed and nine have been cleared for transfer. If the process does not speed up, it will take until January 2021 to complete the reviews 19 years after Guantanamo first opened.

The prison at Guantanamo is an expensive mistake that according to national security officials, and President Obama harms U.S. security interests. The U.S. government must act to close the prison as quickly as possible.

**For further information, please contact Andy Worthington of Close Guantanamo at: [andyworthington87@gmail.com](mailto:andyworthington87@gmail.com)**

**or Matt Hawthorne of the National Religious Campaign Against Torture (NRCAT) at: [mhawthorne@nrcat.org](mailto:mhawthorne@nrcat.org)**

**For further information about the British Parliamentary delegation, please contact Katherine OShea of Reprieve at: [katherine.oshea@reprieve.org](mailto:katherine.oshea@reprieve.org)**