

# Witness Against Torture

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

<https://witnessagainsttorture.com/2014/09/11/september-newsletter/>

### Newsletters

We save our lengthy posts for this site. If you want quicker, more frequent updates about our actions, along with photos and videos, please head over to our [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#) pages.

Dear Friends,

Over the course of the last month, as we watch the events of Ferguson, Gaza, and Iraq unfold, we are reminded of the great need for justice and human rights in our world. Yes, we are saddened by the violence and deaths that continue in our communities both close and afar. However, the story does not end there. We are also encouraged by the strength of the grassroots community to resist police brutality, remain steadfast in their hope for freedom, and the capacity to resist non-violently in the midst of such repression. They remind us of the need to continue in our work even when things seem difficult, [as they do with Guantanamo these days](#).

We have not forgotten the 149 men who continue to languish in Guantanamo, and we hope that our advocacy and witness give them strength to endure the endless inhumane treatment of our government. Emad Hassan, who is known in Guantanamo Bay by the prisoner number ISN 680, has been in Guantanamo Bay for 12 years. In 2009 he was cleared for release by six different branches of the U.S. government. He is on hunger strike to protest his unjust detention. In the [Baltimore Sun](#) he writes, All I am asking from the United States government is for my humanity to be recognized All I ask is to live free.

### **Witness Against Torture and other NGOs request release of Force Feeding Tapes; No Response from Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel.**

Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel has ignored a letter from a group of NGOs, including Human Rights Watch, the ACLU, Physicians for Human Rights, Reprieve and Witness Against Torture, in which we ask him to release the videotapes of detainees being force-fed.

The signatories write in the letter: This administration has promised the American people transparency in the conduct of government affairs. If, as the government repeatedly claims, the force-feeding of hunger striking detainees at Guantanamo Bay is being done in a lawful and humane manner then subjecting these videotapes to public scrutiny would seem to be the best way to demonstrate this fact.

Alka Pradhan, a Reprieve attorney for Abu Wael Dhiab, who has been cleared for release since 2009, said: It is very disappointing that the man in charge of overseeing Guantanamo where our client is being held without charge or trial, despite having been cleared for release years ago by President Obama's administration is ignoring this letter by some of the most prominent NGOs in the world. The methods being used to force-feed our desperately ill client are gratuitously brutal. President Obama keeps saying that he wants his administration to be transparent and accountable; one way to prove that he means it is for his Secretary of Defense to respond to this important letter and make the video tapes available for the public to see the ongoing abuse at Guantanamo.

### [Read Declassification Request](#)

### **Join us in Washington D.C. for the annual Fast. January 5th -13th, 2015**

Join the Witness Against Torture community as we gather in Washington D.C. to remember the opening of the prison camp in Guantanamo. This January 11th, 2015, marks 13 years of torture and indefinite detention. Right now 149 men remain, 79 of whom have been cleared for release but remain held without charge or trial. The administration will not disclose how many of them continue to hunger strike and how many are being tortured through the brutality of force feeding. We continue to struggle until all those unjustly detained are free.

If you can only come for one day, join us for the major event with our coalition partners on January 11th. Or join us as we gather in community all week, from Tuesday January 5 until Tuesday January 13th, to fast in solidarity with the men at Guantanamo, especially those who remain on hunger strike, and to use our creative energy to encourage citizens and government officials in Washington D.C. to see the humanity of the men in Guantanamo and call for the closure of the prison.

We fast because you hunger strike, we struggle till you live free.

For more information about coming to DC contact us at [witnesstorture@gmail.com](mailto:witnesstorture@gmail.com)

### **Take Action Today to support Torture survivor Abou ElKassim Britel**

[North Carolina Stop Torture Now](#) is sponsoring a [petition](#) asking four national leaders to acknowledge and apologize for the wrongful

imprisonment and torture of Abou ElKassim Britel. Hewas arrested in 2002, imprisoned, brutally tortured, and detained until 2011. He has never received an official acknowledgement of wrongdoing, apology, or restitution from Pakistan, The United States, Morocco, or Italy, the governments responsible for his ordeal.

You can sign the [petition](#) today demanding that President Barack Obama of the United States, King Mohammed VI of Morocco, Prime Minister Matteo Renzi of Italy, and Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif of Pakistan. As the leaders of the four countries implicated in Britels harrowing ordeal, they must take responsibility and apologize. Please take action today and spread the word through social media with #BritelApology

[Please click here to view and sign the petition.](#)

[Click here for more information.](#)

## **Witness Against Torture Writes to Pope Francis.**

On August 23rd, we reached out to Pope Francis inviting him to do more for the men in Guantanamo. A WAT committee sent a letter thanking him for his words on June 26th, 2014, the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, when he offered a firm condemnation of every form of torture and characterized torture as a moral sin and a very serious sin. Finally, our letter invited him to consider some concrete action he could take to help end the torture that continues in Guantanamo.

Here some of the actions we invited him to consider:

We ask you to participate in this worthy effort to close Guantanamo, in whatever way you can. From our perspective, these are some possible actions:

Meet with men who were once imprisoned at Guantnamo Bay, as well as attorneys and activists associated with the effort to close the prison, to better understand the issue and to exchange ideas about possible responses. We would be honored if you welcomed an audience of members of our organization.

Make a statement that condemns the practice of indefinite detentionitself a form of tortureat Guantnamo Bay, Cuba, perhaps on a significant date like 11 January, the anniversary of the opening of prison camps in Guantnamo Bay.

Direct Cardinal Pietro Parolin to participate in diplomatic negotiations with countries around the world, especially the United States, to repatriate prisoners or resettle them in third countries. He could work quietly behind the scenes or make a public plea for the cooperation of every state in this effort.

Offer detainees temporary resettlement in Vatican City Our hope is that when one state takes the lead, others will follow. The United States bears responsibility for the prisoners in Guantnamo Bay, but any assistance from the Vatican, through a profound act of mercy, could help tip the scales toward greater involvement of many countries in this effort.

[Click here to read the full version.](#)

## **Witness Against Tortures Friday Fast for Justice:**

Join in solidarity with the men on hunger strike in Guantanamo by fasting on Fridays. We invite you to consider joining the [Friday Fast for Justice](#). Go without food in solidarity with the hunger strikers in Guantnamo. If you are already participating in or are interested in participating [please sign up here](#). You can commit to fasting on a specific Friday; weekly for a particular time period; until Guantnamo is closed; or whatever you are willing and able to do.

**If you join the fast, we would ask you to:**

1. Fast on Friday, in any form you like.
2. Make three phone calls ([Click here to see who we are currently focusing our calls on](#))
3. Write to a prisoner at Guantnamo. ([Click here for instructions on how](#))

## **Witness Against Torture on Social Media:**

Please like us on [Facebook](#) & follow us on [Twitter](#) & [Instagram](#)

Post any pictures of your local activities to our [flicker account](#) and we will help spread the word on [Tumblr](#).

## **Donate to support our work:**

Witness Against Torture is completely volunteer driven and run. We have no paid staff, but do have expenses associated with our organizing work. If you are able, please donate here. [www.witnesstorture.org](http://www.witnesstorture.org)