



National Religious Campaign Against Torture

www.tortureisamoralissue.org
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November 30, 2009

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate

The Honorable John Boehner
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate

CC: All Members of Congress

Dear Members of Congress:

As leaders of major religious groups in the United States, we are very aware of the importance of symbols in one's spiritual life. So, too, are symbols important in the spiritual life of a country.

Guantanamo is the symbol of our country's violation of our deepest values. Regardless of how it is operated now compared to how it was operated in earlier years, it stands in the minds of hundreds of millions of people in our nation and around the globe as a place where America broke faith with itself and used torture as an interrogation technique. Torture is immoral, illegal, and never justifiable -- without exception.

Our government must close the detention center at Guantanamo Bay now to help us heal spiritually and to put an end to this dark and errant chapter in our history. For those detainees that must continue to be incarcerated, we believe that appropriate alternative sites can be identified.

We ask that you do everything in your power to help close Guantanamo -- now.

In faith,

Rev. Dr. Sharon E. Watkins
General Minister and President
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

Dr. Ingrid Mattson
President
Islamic Society of North America

Bishop Gregory Vaughn Palmer
President, The Council of Bishops
The United Methodist Church

Archbishop Vicken
Diocesan Legate
Armenian Church of America

Rabbi Yael Ridberg
President, Reconstructionist
Rabbinical Association

Rev. Gradye Parsons
Stated Clerk of the General Assembly
Presbyterian Church, USA

Rev. Geoffrey A. Black
General Minister and President
United Church of Christ

Bishop Demetrios of Mokissos
Chancellor
Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Chicago

Joe Volk
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Friends Committee on National Legislation

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Mennonite Church USA Executive Leadership

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Church of the Brethren

Rabbi Tirzah Firestone
Co-chairs, Rabbis for Human Rights-North
America

Dr. Sayyid M. Syeed
National Director, Office for Interfaith
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Islamic Society of North America

Archbishop Nicolae Condrea
Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese in the
Americas

Rev. Dr. David P. Gushee
President
Evangelicals for Human Rights
Distinguished University Professor of Christian
Ethics, Mercer University

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General Secretary
National Council of Churches

Suhag Shukla
Managing Director
Hindu American Foundation

Rev. M. Linda Jaramillo
Executive Minister, Justice and Witness
Ministries, United Church of Christ

Very Rev. Thomas Cassidy, SCJ
President
Conference of Major Superiors of Men

Jane Burke, SSND
Executive Director
Leadership Conference of Women Religious

The Most Reverend Michael Seneco
Presiding Bishop
North American Old Catholic Church

Rev. Peter Morales
President
Unitarian Universalist Association of
Congregations

Steven Gerber
Executive Director
Rabbis for Human Rights-North America

Dr. George Hunsinger
Professor of Theology
Princeton Theological Seminary
Founder, National Religious Campaign
Against Torture

Marie Dennis
Co-President
Pax Christi International

Rev. Dr. Rick Schlosser
Executive Director
California Council of Churches

The Rev. Russell L. Meyer
Executive Director
Florida Council of Churches

The Rev. Gary L. Harke
Executive Director
Pennsylvania Council of Churches

The Reverend Dennis D. Sparks
Executive Director
West Virginia Council of Churches

Rabbi Ellen Lippmann
Co-chair
Rabbis for Human Rights-North America

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Executive Director
New Hampshire Council of Churches

David Leslie
Executive Director
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The Rev. Jill Job Saxby
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Maine Council of Churches

Scott D. Anderson
Executive Director
Wisconsin Council of Churches

Rev. Richard Cizik
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Rick Love, Ph.D.
Consultant for Christian-Muslim Relations

Dr. Glen Stassen
Lewis B. Smedes Professor of Christian
Ethics
Fuller Theological Seminary

Timothy Floyd
Director, Law & Public Service Program
and Professor, Mercer University

Dr. Cheryl Bridges Johns
Professor of Christian Formation
Pentecostal Theological Seminary

Rev. Peter Laarman
Executive Director
Progressive Christians Uniting

Rev. Peg Chamberlin
Executive Director, Minnesota Council of
Churches; President-Elect, National Council
of Churches

Rev. Dr. Jim Antal
Minister and President
Massachusetts Conference
United Church of Christ

Rev. Stephen Miller
Acting Executive Director
New Mexico Conference of Churches

Dr. Ron Sider
President
Evangelicals for Social Action

Rev. Brenda Lynn Kneece
Executive Minister
South Carolina Christian Action Council

Charlie Clements
President and CEO
Unitarian Universalist Service Committee

Jim Winkler
General Secretary
General Board of Church and Society
The United Methodist Church