

Witness Against Torture

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

<https://witnessagainsttorture.com/2016/07/27/july-newsletter-rnc-report-back-and-news/>

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.

News from Guantanamo Bay Prison

We celebrate the releases of Abdul Rahman Ahmed, a Yemeni who is either 36 or 37 and Omar Hamzayavich Abdulayev, 37, from Tajikistan who are now in Serbia. Fayiz Ahmad Yahia Suleiman, 41 was released to Italy. We think of them and their newfound freedom, knowing their struggles for healing are not over. We also celebrate the clearing for release of New York Times best selling author Mohamedou Ould Slahi. Please join his familys work to get him released immediately you can sign the letter to Secretary of Defense Carter [here](#) and call your representatives to ask that they release him immediately.

We also want to update you on one of the men who was sent to Uruguay in 2014 and who now is being maligned by right-wing Senators as a terrorist amidst wild speculation as to his whereabouts. Abu Wael Dhiab (Jihad Diya) was brutally force-fed while imprisoned in Guantanamo and still must use crutches to walk because of his torture in US custody. As with many of the men released in recent years, adjusting to life in exile has been extremely hard if not impossible: no family, no Muslim community, none of the emotional or social supports needed by torture survivors, and the expectation to learn Spanish and get a job. In June, WAT facilitated Dhiabs reconnection with one of his former lawyers, Jon Eisenberg, who just provided key information about Dhiabs situation, [here](#). We hope you will read his account and share widely to help counter the demonizing narrative.

WAT joins Cleveland activists during the RNC

WAT has returned home from their visit to Cleveland during the Republican National Convention last week. We never came close to the Convention Center, because our business was elsewhere, in the neighborhoods ignored by the citys glitzy convention promotion.

WATs participation in the Peoples Justice and Peace Convention

On the weekend before the RNC, we joined the Peoples Justice and Peace Convention to help write a Peoples Platform. The convention adopted our proposed platform planks for Torture Abolition and Accountability as a component of the Racial and Social Justice section of the platform. Our [anti-torture platform](#) demands that the United States fully repudiate torture, which became a systematic state practice following September 11, 2001. It gives detailed policy prescriptions for immediately closing the Guantanamo prison, bringing justice to the detainees, ensuring accountability for torture, and strengthening anti-torture provisions. We recommend using the [full anti-torture platform](#) as a resource to guide our community members ongoing activism and advocacy work.

The organizers of the Peoples Convention mounted the Public Square speakers platform in downtown Cleveland on the last day of the RNC to announce their Peoples Platform to the press and public. They planned to share their platform with both the Republican and Democratic national conventions and their delegates. Perhaps more importantly they are seeking to speak truth to the people by sharing the platform widely with activists and voters, urging them to study the document and compare it with what the major political parties are offering. The full platform document will soon be available at the website of [Cleveland Nonviolence Network](#)

WAT on the streets of Cleveland



On the eve of the RNC, WAT members gathered in Market Square on the west side to hold a demonstration with our own answer to Donald Trump's full embrace of torture: Witness Love. (insert attached photo) Luke Nephew led us into the square singing a chant he composed for the occasion:

The walls that they build
To tear us apart
Will never be as strong as
The walls of our hearts.

We invited those gathered around our banner to speak to the ways in which we choose love in response to the world's violence. On Day 1 of the RNC we joined the End Poverty Now Rally and March for Economic Justice. Around 600 activists marched from an abandoned industrial lot in an impoverished east side neighborhood into the heart of a shiny, modern downtown business corridor and plaza, accompanied by perhaps hundreds of black-clad police on bicycles. Democracy Now did a lengthy [report](#) on the march in which they interviewed Luke Nephew about ending torture (at 1:22:32), showed our banner and song (at 1:14:45) and ended with Mimi and Luke singing My Liberation. You can see WAT's photos [here](#).

The Peace Poets in Cleveland

Luke, Enmanuel, Abe, and Mimi buoyed our efforts with their poetic artistry in two Peace Poet shows during our days in Cleveland. Watch the Peace Poets stirring performance [here](#) (starts at 1:40:08) that closed out an inspiring evening on racial justice at the Peoples Convention at Olivet Institutional Baptist Church in this video. And watch our Facebook page for upcoming video posts from the Peace Poets July 17th show, The Peoples Mic: Word to the Resistance, at the Ohio City Masonic Arts Center.

Please save the date and plan on joining us at the [SOAWatch gathering](#) in Arizona this October 7-10. We will send out details soon.

Join us on social media



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