

Witness Against Torture

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

<https://witnessagainsttorture.com/2014/01/08/fast-for-justice-2014-day-3/>

Campaign and Advocacy

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,

Joy, gratitude, and greetings to you! We've had a full day of reflections, meetings, rehearsals, and street theater that we hope you will enjoy reading about.

Morale is good here, and we continue to expand as new people arrive in DC to witness with us. Many of us were invigorated today by getting out into the streets and engaging with the public. It's exciting to feel the energy building.

If you have been checking in on witnessagainsttorture.org or directing friends there during the last couple of days, you may have noticed that our server has been down. It is up and running now! These updates will be posted there, along with material related to our vigils.

Thank you for your solidarity, as we join our spirits with those of our brothers in Guantanamo.

In Peace,

Witness Against Torture
www.witnessagainsttorture.org

Please share your fasting experiences with us so we can pass them on to the larger community.

let us know if you are interested in joining a fasters reflection conference call, scheduled for 8pm DC time on Friday email witnessagainsttorture@gmail.com with conf call in the subject line, and we'll send you the call in information

[WAT in DC Photo Album](#) [9/11 Families Deserve a Real Trial Too Concerns Continue Over Algerian Detainees Forcibly Repatriated From Guantanamo](#) [Article from Art Laffin](#) [Video of the Supreme Court & Union station Action](#)

by Chrissy

After the morning reflection we took a short break, then began rehearsing our street theater piece under Debs skillful direction. It took some time for us to become familiar with our props and stage cues, and to exchange ideas for minor adjustments. A spirit of willingness and focus carried the group through a number of run-throughs.

When we got to the Supreme Court, [the result](#) was well worth the effort. We unfurled the banner-sized portrait of Shaker Aamer that Deb had painted, stood in line holding the letters of his name, and Luke immediately started us with a vigorous mic-check style recitation of an introduction to Shaker Aamer. Fin knelt with a hood over his head to represent Shaker; Chantal and Michael wore fatigues to represent guards, and patrolled the scene in chilling slow motion. The volume, the visuals, and the dynamic and concise nature of the piece we had rehearsed attracted listeners, some of them recording the event with their phones.

Chris continued to lead us as we recited excerpts from Shaker Aamer's writings, including [one published on Sunday in The Guardian](#). At best, we are numbers. I worry that when I come home that my children will call for Daddy, and I will sit unmoving. I am two three nine. I am not sure when I will ever be anything else. When we recited those words of Shakers, we hid the letters spelling out his name. In their place, Chantal and Mike strung the number 239 around Fin's neck. He knelt with his name stripped away and his humanity concealed under a black hood.

We concluded the vigil with a collective demand: Stop torture now! Processing towards our next performance, we sang, We who believe in freedom cannot rest / We who believe in freedom cannot rest until it comes / We gotta close Guantanamo today / We gotta close Guantanamo today, Stop Torture Now.

After performing at the Supreme Court we headed onwards to Union Station. Matt, Luke, and Chris helped us deal with the resistance we met with from station security; we calmly pressed past them without causing a problem, and were able to perform in the huge tiled lobby just inside the entrance. We performed for a second time outside Union Station too.

Back at St. Stephen, many of us remarked that we felt energized by connecting with the public. We felt that the pieces we read were a good mix of personal stories and factual background, and the repetition of the mic-check style gave our audience time to contemplate the words being spoken. We were thrilled to have the opportunity to vigil with such a big, beautiful portrait of one of the men we carry in our

hearts. The ease and naturalness of the rehearsal and performance made us reflect on the trust we have in one another as a community. It is that trust in one another that helps us to be strong and fully present in this time together consecrated time, dedicated to justice for the 155 men still at Guantanamo.

by C.R. Spicer Deciduous Trinity, becoming like you, Our limbs freeze but do not break. The firmer our fasts held purpose true, Shaker Aamer in that station of freedoms fall. Deciduous Trinity, becoming like you, In unions courage standing tall.

This morning in our opening circle we reflected on a song that our composer-in-residence Luke Nephew wrote this week while on the bus to DC. His slow, soulful melody accompanied these simple lyrics: Were gonna have a nation that dont torture no one. But its gonna take courage for that change to come. Chantal and Luke began, and it didnt take long for the majority of the circle to join in, filling the auditorium. We pondered the message in silence and were then invited to share reflections on the following prompt: In what ways are each of us being invited to live courageously to create a world where torture and indefinite detention no longer exist?

As we shared around this circle, I was struck by the sincerity and the vulnerability from which people spoke. Here are some phrases that were shared, snapshots of what courage means to individuals in our circle: Courage invites me to _____:

My time with this Witness Against Torture community has encouraged me to be courageous not only with my body in spaces of public action and in abstaining from food but also internally in my willingness to look honestly at who I am and to share my deepest self with others. For me the courage required for this inner journey is perhaps the most difficult to summon and I suspect building a world free from torture demands it.

provided by [Human Rights Watch Fahd Abdullah Ahmed Ghazi](#), a Yemeni, was on the third plane load of detainees to Guantanamo in January 2002, at age 17. Although he has been cleared to leave Guantanamo for well over a year, he remains stuck in Guantanamo pending an agreement between the US and Yemen to return him there. His daughter, who was two months old at the time of Ghazi's arrest is now 8 years old. The two reportedly send and drawings back and forth to each other regularly. He is now being held in the communal setting of Camp 4, but was previously held in the more restrictive camps where detainees are locked into a single cell 23 hours a day. For a list of what you can do to free Fahd check out [this PDF](#) from CCR.

Martin began in the movement with marijuana in the 60s, under the influence of Bob Dylan, Timothy Leary and Baba Ram Dass. He got out into the streets of Berkeley, and once pondered whether or not to help a policeman get into his gas mask. He ultimately decided not to, for the sake of appearances. Back in Buffalo, he was involved in the student movement, the occupation of administration buildings, and spent one night in jail, unfairly. He made his money in computer programming.

After retirement, he moved to California, and got back in the streets. He joined one of many weekly protests in Long Beach and he first saw Ann Wright there. He was involved in banner drops over freeways, and still has a soft spot for that type of action. He saw the Code Pink houses in Venice, and recommends the experience to all who get the chance. His first real arrest, for protesting Mr. John Yoo, resulted in acquittal.

He joined Cindy Sheehans actions in DC at the CIA and at the Washington Monument, and connected up with Witness Against torture in January 2011, getting arrested twice but so far no convictions. This is his fourth year with the January action.

He is currently fixated on the laws that constrain demonstrations on the White House sidewalk, and at the Supreme Court Plaza. His other preoccupation is the illegality of the occupation of the island of Cuba, and with Terror Tuesdays, when Obama approves the names of persons to be killed in a Star Chamber procedure. He is thankful for the solidarity of the WAT movement, for the people that come together to work for justice and for mercy, and for the people inside and outside the country whose hearts are broken by the sufferings of others.