

Center for Constitutional Rights

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

<https://ccrjustice.org/home/press-center/press-releases/guant-namo-turns-20-all-biden-needs-shut-it-down-political-will-say>

Public Facing Advocacy Writing

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January 10, 2022 Today, on the eve of 20th anniversary of the arrival of the first men detained in the so-called war on terror in the U.S. prison at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, the Center for Constitutional Rights issued the following statement:

For 20 years, this monstrous creation of the U.S. government has been intentionally inflicting human suffering. Today, we think of the victims: the 780 Muslim men and boys who have faced injustice and brutality, from torture to indefinite detention to sham trials to force feeding to profound indifference, if not hostility, from U.S. political leaders. We also think of the families who have been without their loved ones for so long and do not know when or if they will see them again. In the name of our clients still there, we call on President Biden to fulfill his pledge to shut it down. He has [the authority and the capacity](#) to do so; all he needs now is the will.

Thirty-nine men remain in the prison. Twenty-seven have not been charged. Twenty-six are survivors of CIA torture. Five are our clients:

The prison should never have been opened, and there has never been a good reason to keep it open, save for the politics of fear, domination and impunity. We must look at Guantanamo with renewed urgency: the world has changed since 2002 and since 2020. The U.S. war in Afghanistan has ended, making the bad legal argument for detaining people at Guantanamo even worse: even the unfounded and unconstitutional justifications upon which the U.S. government launched its war on terror no longer exist. Last year, to mark the 19th anniversary of the opening of the prison, more than a hundred non-governmental organizations [joined a letter](#) urging President Biden to close the prison and end indefinite military detention. And just last month, the Senate held a bi-partisan [hearing on closing Guantanamo](#).

Still, despite political and public agreement that we must immediately end this injustice, President Biden has only transferred one man out of the island prison in his entire first year of office. After withdrawing from Afghanistan, he claimed to have ended the forever war, but the ideology and infrastructure of that war will persist as long as its primary prison camp and torture chamber remains open, we continue to hold people indefinitely and without charge or fair trial, and there is no redress for victims of the U.S. torture program or accountability for those responsible for it. Guantanamo was unjust and illegitimate on January 11, 2002. It is unjust and illegitimate today. We have been there from the beginning, fighting to shut it down, and we will be there at the end.

The Center for Constitutional Rights has led the effort to bring justice to Guantanamo for the past 20 years. We were the first organization to file a case on behalf of men detained there, the first civilians to go there, and the first to meet with a survivor of the CIA torture program. We organized hundreds of attorneys to ensure that anyone held at Guantanamo who wanted legal representation could have it. We have made hundreds of trips to the base to visit our clients and advocated for them in legal proceedings from Guantanamo to the U.S. Supreme Court to the International Criminal Court.

The Center for Constitutional Rights works with communities under threat to fight for justice and liberation through litigation, advocacy, and strategic communications. Since 1966, the Center for Constitutional Rights has taken on oppressive systems of power, including structural racism, gender oppression, economic inequity, and governmental overreach. Learn more at ccrjustice.org.

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