

Witness Against Torture

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

<https://witnessagainsttorture.com/2019/01/08/day-1-fast-for-justice-in-dc/>

Public Facing Advocacy Writing

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.

A beautiful sunrise back-lit our protest at the Pentagon early Monday morning.

O crisis, intensify!

The morning is about to break forth. Abdulaziz

O Prison Darkness

O prison darkness, pitch your tent.
We love the darkness.

For after the dark hours of the night, Prides dawn will rise.

Let the world, with all its bliss, fade away
So long as we find favor with God

A boy may despair in the face of a problem,
But we know God has a design.

Even though the bands tighten and seem unbreakable,
They will shatter.

Those who persist will attain their goal;
Those who keep knocking shall gain entry.

O crisis, intensify!

The morning is about to break forth.

January 8, 2019

Dear Friends,

The 2019 Fast for Justice has begun! The above poem written by Guantanamo detainee Abdulaziz served to frame our first full day in DC on Monday. We read and reflected on the poem during our solidarity fasters conference call in the evening. The final verse, O crisis intensify! The morning is about to break forth reminded us of our start to the day: our vigil at the Pentagon, where a beautiful sunrise unfolded behind us and eerily lit up the Pentagon facade we faced. Abdulaziz kept his hope alive in the darkness of his Guantanamo imprisonment, imagining the new light of dawn in the midst of crisis. We feel the responsibility to foster that hope on the streets of DC and in the communities of our readers who accompany us from home. Below please read more from Paulette and Art about the Pentagon vigil.

Borrowing from the words of Clare Grady, a Kings Bay Plowshares activist who was on our conference call in the evening: Let us remember the value of steadfastness and communal work. May our message be heard and magnified. In intense crisis, let us long for the dawn!

Peace and gratitude,
Witness Against Torture

At our Witness against Torture Action at the Pentagon
by Sr. Paulette Schroeder

At our Witness against Torture Action Jan. 7 in front of the Pentagon, I felt so humbled and grateful to be standing for the 40 men still detained in Guantanamo. Though many of these men have been cleared for release or for trial the men still languish in conditions that are deplorable. President Trump refuses to even consider releasing anyone during his term of office.

Every Monday a.m. The Dorothy Day Catholic Worker Community in D.C. stands in solidarity with all who suffer from U.S. militarism. Our Witness Against Torture group had the privilege of joining this faith-filled community for this freezing Monday morning.

While singing, praying, and speaking on behalf of the men, I held the sign: Is this who we are? I felt the profound sadness and discouragement of these men who haven't seen nor heard nor touched their spouse or child through many long years. It is this hope to be rejoined with their family that keeps them going, hoping for good people of conscience to give attention to these men's unjust confinement. Please God, let it be.

PentagonDDCW-WATVigilStatement/Litany Prepared by Art Laffin January 7, 2019
(Readers: Art Laffin, Frida Berrigan and Brian Terrell)

Good Morning. We greet all Pentagon workers and police in a spirit of peace and nonviolence. Since 1987 the Dorothy Day Catholic Worker has vigiled here each Monday to uphold God's command: Thou shalt not kill in nonviolent resistance to an empire that sanctions global violence and killing as evidenced by its vast war machine worldwide that included over 800 foreign military bases (including Guantanamo Bay), its military intervention in numerous countries, and its policy to prepare for and threaten to wage nuclear war. We, members of the DDCW and Witness Against Torture (WAT), come to the Pentagon, the center of warmaking on our planet, to say YES to love, justice and life and NO to the death-dealing policies of a warmaking empire. God calls us to love and never to torture, kill and wage war. WAT formed in 2005 when 25 Catholic Workers and other peacemakers from the U.S. went to Guantanamo Bay Detention site and attempted to visit the detainees being held at the facility. For the last 13 years members of WAT have fasted and engaged in numerous nonviolent actions to call for the closing of Guantanamo. Today is the first day of WAT's week-long Fast for Justice to mark the 17th year when the first detainees were taken to Guantanamo on January 11, 2002. We call for the immediate closing of Guantanamo, and for an end to the crime of torture and indefinite detention.

Refrain: End the Crime of Torture Close Guantanamo Now!

Today, 40 men continue to languish at Guantanamo, most for the last 16 years, never knowing their fate, with no resolution to their cases in sight. We need to see these men as members of our own blood family and act on their behalf.

Refrain: End the Crime of Torture Close Guantanamo Now!

We remember and pray for all victims of the U.S. empire, including the 9 men who have died at Guantanamo since its opening. Adnan Latif was one of these men who have been all but forgotten. Latif, who spent more than ten years in Guantanamo without ever being charged with a crime, would often go on a hunger strike to protest his unjust confinement. A Yemeni citizen, poet, father and husband, Latif was subject to severe beatings, druggings and torture. He had been cleared for release at least four separate times yet continued to be imprisoned. On September 8, 2012, Latif was found dead in his cell. No independent investigation has been conducted into his death, or the deaths of the other eight detainees. In Latif's own words he asks: Where is the world to save us from torture? Where is the world to save us from the fire and sadness? Where is the world to save the hunger strikers? Adnan Latif: we and many others hear your cry and that is why we are here today!

Refrain: End the Crime of Torture Close Guantanamo Now!

We call for an independent investigation into the death of Latif and those who died at Guantanamo! In the name of the detainees who continue to be unjustly held at Guantanamo, we call on all who work at the Pentagon to implore President Trump to issue an executive order to close Guantanamo immediately!

Refrain: End the Crime of Torture Close Guantanamo Now!

We also remember today all those who have died and continue to suffer from the brutal U.S.-backed Saudi war against the Houthi rebels in Yemen. The U.S. continues to provide direct military support and weapons to Saudi Arabia for this war, even though a recent Senate resolution called for an end to refueling Saudi warplanes, targeting and sharing intelligence. Thousands have died from the war, starvation is widespread and suspected cholera cases have exceeded one million. Save the Children conservatively estimates that 85,000 Yemeni children under age five have died from starvation and disease during the last three years.

Refrain: The Children are Dying End the War in Yemen!

Since 2010, according to *The New York Times*, the United States has sold the Saudi thirty F-15 multirole jet fighters, eighty-four combat helicopters, 110 air-to-surface cruise missiles, and 20,000 precision guided bombs. Last year, the United States also sold the Saudis ten maritime helicopters in a \$1.9 billion deal. A Lockheed Martin made bomb was used in the Saudi bombing of a school bus in Yemen on Aug. 9, 2018 killing 40 children. We demand an immediate end to this war!

Refrain: The Children are Dying End the War in Yemen!

Please join us as we commit to ending, torture, oppression, racism, Islamophobia and war. Together let us heed the biblical mandate: to proclaim liberty to the captive to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon and from the prison those who sit in darkness (Luke 4:18 and Is 42:7) to beat swords into plowshares and to train for war no more. (Isaiah 2:4, Micah 4:3) Now is the time to close Guantanamo, end the war in Yemen and ALL wars, transform the Pentagon into a center that serves life instead of death, and to create the Beloved Community!