

Center for Constitutional Rights

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

<https://ccrjustice.org/home/blog/2017/01/11/remarks-ccr-s-aliya-hussain-15th-anniversary-guant-namo>

Speech W Transcript

The CCR blog

Today marks the 15th anniversary of the arrival of prisoners at Guantnamo Bay. This morning, CCRs Aliya Hussain delivered the below remarks at a rally in Washington, D.C.

Aliya Hussain delivers remarks at the Guantanamo rally

On behalf of CCRs clients who remain unjustly detained at Guantnamo Bay, I want to thank you for standing in solidarity with them today.

Because you are here, they are not forgotten. Because you will listen, their voices will be heard. Because you will continue to resist, they have reason to hope.

We gather today because President Obama has failed to close Guantnamo, and turn the page on this horrific chapter of our country's history. He has failed the men at Guantnamo, and he has failed us.

The prison was created 15 years ago to isolate, dehumanize, and indefinitely detain Muslim men.

To this day, the Obama administration has maintained policies that normalize the regime of indefinite detention, preserve the flawed military commissions system, and fail to hold accountable those responsible for the U.S. torture program. According to public reporting, it is likely that dozens of prisoners will be left in Guantnamo after January 20.

Now, Guantnamo will be inherited by someone who has said that he wants to expand its whose blatantly Islamophobic campaign gives cause to fear that there will be worse human rights violations to come.

Mohammed Al Qahtani. Abdu Ali al Haji Sharqawi. Guled Hassan Duran. Majid Khan.

These are the names of some of the men that CCR represents. Over the last few years, my colleagues and I have travelled to the base regularly. We've seen the inside of the prison, and have come to know who our clients are as people.

Protesters at White House Guantanamo rally

To refer to this remaining group as the worst of the worst as proponents of Guantnamo do obscures the reality of the prison and who is there:

After fifteen years in U.S. custody few of them have ever been charged with a crime, or ever will be.

They have aged over the years in the prison, and bear the physical and psychological scars of torture, abuse, and prolonged solitary confinement.

They are brothers, sons, husbands, and fathers, who dream of being reunited with their families, and rebuilding their lives as free men. They are eager to put Guantnamo behind them.

It is the politics of fear that justifies their continued detention the same rhetoric we see within the United States and throughout the world that criminalizes and demonizes Muslims communities in the name of national security. We must reject that narrative.

It is for those men, that we gather here today and call for an end to indefinite detention, the absolute rejection of torture, and a continued push to close the prison.

If we are to take President-elect Trump and his potential cabinet members at their word, then we must prepare for dark days ahead. The future remains uncertain, but one thing is clear: together we will persevere. It is the only choice we have.

[View the discussion thread.](#)

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