

# Witness Against Torture

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

**<https://witnessagainsttorture.com/2016/06/08/june-newsletter-join-upcoming-events-presente-joe-dan-and-michael-2/>**

### 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.

Dear friends,

Thank you for all of your support these past few months. We want to give you an update on some of our projects and invite you into events happening this month.

We are excited to announce that we have raised \$1700 for the Ramadan Project of the National Coalition to Protect Civil Freedoms (NCPFCF). This fund will provide Muslim detainees in the U.S. with commissary money during Ramadan (June 6-July 6). Thank you to all who donated and to Maha Hilal from NCPFCF for organizing us.

This month brings sad and encouraging news. First, we are saddened by news that U.S. District Judge Robert Kugler denied the [Duka brothers final appeal](#). During 2016s Fast for Justice members of Witness Against Torture traveled to Camden, New Jersey to stand with the Duka brothers and their family. We then published [an article](#) to highlight the case. In 2008, they were found guilty of conspiracy to commit terrorism and other charges. Yet, the whole plan was conceived and planned by two FBI-paid informants and preemptively prosecuted by the legal system. Ultimately, these three Muslim men from a working-class family in Cherry Hill, New Jersey became victims of the post-9/11 counterterrorism frenzy that engulfed the United States.

On the encouraging side, we understand that [the Obama administration is pushing for the release of twenty or so men from Guantanamo](#). This would mean freedom for the majority of those cleared for release. Nevertheless, this is not enough and we will continue to pressure the administration to bring this ugly history to an end and permanently close Guantanamo.

#### **Torture Survivor Awareness Week: June 22nd-26th**

If you are in the east coast area, please consider supporting the Torture Abolition and Survivors Support Coalition (TASSC) by attending their activities in Washington, DC for International June Survivors Week. The theme is We Will Not Be Silent. Email [Kelsey@tassc.org](mailto:Kelsey@tassc.org) for more information.

**Wednesday, June 22:** Conference at Gowan Hall, Catholic University, 9:00am-5:00pm (located opposite Brookland metro)

**Thursday, June 23:** Capitol Hill Advocacy: 9:00am 5:00pm

**Saturday, June 25:** White House Vigil at Lafayette Park: 11:00am 4:00pm

Commemorate victims of torture by keeping vigil, celebrating life, remembering lost friends and family, and renewing our commitment to a world where torture is banned forever. Listen to music, poetry, survivor testimonies and statements of solidarity from human rights groups and interfaith allies who are part of this ongoing struggle.

**Sunday, June 26:** Celebration at Busboys and Poets: 6:00pm 10:00pm 2021 14th St, NW Washington DC

You may also mark the week by organizing your own events and vigils that focus on sharing the stories of the men in your local communities and public spaces. Email [witnesstorture@gmail.com](mailto:witnesstorture@gmail.com) to let us know what you have planned.

#### **Take Action**

The ACLU has launched #FreeSlahi [petition](#). Mohamedou Slahi, the author of Guantanamo Diary, has been unlawfully imprisoned for 14 years by the U.S. government. Thirteen of those years have been at Guantanamo Bay prison, where he was subjected to gruesome torture. The U.S. has never charged Slahi with a crime.

The U.S. governments justifications for holding Slahi fail because he has never taken part in any hostilities against the United States. He poses no threat to the United States. A former chief military prosecutor in the Guantanamo military commissions, Colonel Morris Davis, has said he couldnt find any crime with which to charge Slahi.

In 2010, a federal judge ordered Slahis release, rejecting the governments arguments since evidence was tainted by torture and coercion or was otherwise not credible. But the government appealed. Now, the U.S. is currently holding him indefinitely despite his innocence.

Slahi just had the Periodic Review Board hearing he should have had four years ago, and hopes to prove hes not a threat to the United States. Read more [here](#).

### **Save the Date: Witness Against Torture Resisting the RNC (July 15-17 Cleveland, Ohio)**

WAT has accepted an invitation to participate in the Peoples Convention the weekend before the Republican National Convention July 15th -17th. We will be gathering to offer an anti-torture viewpoint and confront the pro-torture and hate-filled rhetoric of Donald Trump. We are also planning on sticking around to find creative ways to engage the RNC. If you are interested in joining us in Cleveland, please RSVP at [witnessstorture@gmail.com](mailto:witnessstorture@gmail.com)

### **Joe Morton Daniel Berrigan, S.J. Michael Ratner: Presente!**

The Witness Against Torture community continues to grow in our shared analysis, in our expanding leadership, and in our work. But now we pause to remember those who have left our circle. Over the last few months, three people who were integral to the founding of our community passed from this plane. None of them would have sought or acknowledged their particular contributions to our community all of them would have focused on the need not to mourn, but organize.

But in order to keep organizing, we must also take a moment to remember their witness. And express our deep, deep gratitude.

[Joe Morton](#) (December 7 1935 April 7, 2016) was a mentor, a friend, an example, a teacher, a resister, a gardener. a lover of people and life. He was part of conversations planning the trip to Cuba in 2005. He was part of every WAT action since then. He would always show up. He would chop firewood. He would deliver juice during our fasts. He would put on a jumpsuit and go to jail. Joe would always be present in the moment, but never fail to ask whats next. Its hard to imagine whats next without Joe. Well all have to figure that out, alone and together.

[Dan Berrigan, SJ](#) (May 9, 1921 April 30, 2016) was a poet, priest, and prophet. Without the imagination, words, and creative action of Dan Berrigan, Witness Against Torture would never have begun.

Our apologies, good friends, for the fracture of good order, the burning of paper instead of children, the angering of the orderlies in the front parlor of the charnel house. We could not, so help us God, do otherwise..We say: killing is disorder, life and gentleness and community and unselfishness is the only order we recognize. For the sake of that order, we risk our liberty, our good name.

Dans softness of speech, sense of humor and humility, boldness of action, and call to friendship and community were part of the initial conversation that led to a trip to Cuba in 2005, and the subsequent beginning of the Witness Against Torture community. He has been part of everything we have done. We were fortunate to share the earth with Dan for as long as we did.

[Michael Ratner](#) (June 13, 1943 May 11, 2016), in the introduction to our book about the work of Witness Against Torture, recounts one of our first meetings when we went to the Center for Constitutional Rights to share our plan about traveling to Cuba to protest the Guantanamo prison. He writes: I thought it was a great sentiment, and an important initiative, but I also thought they were out of their minds.

But Michael took us seriously. He counseled us. He supported us. He pushed us. He pulled us. He cried with us. He believed in us, and because of that belief, we put one foot in front of the other. Michael understood the link between the courtroom and the street. Our work would have never begun without him.

Our community would not exist if not for Joe, and Dan, and Michael. And the work will be harder, but all the more important, in their absence.

### **Witness Against Torture on Social Media**

Please like us on [Facebook](#) & follow us on [Twitter](#) & [Instagram](#).

Check out our latest news and updates on [Tumblr](#).

Post any pictures of your local activities to our [flickr account](#) and we will help spread the word.

### **Donate to support our work**

Witness Against Torture is completely volunteer driven and run. We have no paid staff, but do have expenses associated with our organizing work. If you are able, please donate [here](#).