Fifteen thousand and sixty-three miles away from Medford, Massachusetts lies Guantanamo Bay, U.S. Naval Base, on the shores of Cuba, where 91 prisoners remain detained, and anxiously await their day in court or to be finally released. For the last seven years, President Obama has vowed that he would do all in his power to close the military prison, yet the facility remains on 45 square feet of land fenced in with barbed wire where the majority of these prisoners have lived for the past fourteen years. On February 23rd, Obama drafted a twenty-one -page plan completely dedicated to the closing of one of the most infamous prisons in the world.

Guantanamo Bay was established on January 11, 2002 by the Bush Administration to detain, interrogate, and try people suspected of terrorism and has since housed over 779 people accused of terrorist activity or affiliated with terrorist groups that have targeted the United States. Since it opened its doors, the Military Tribunal has convicted only 3 Guantanamo detainees and has released 680 detainees. For years, humanitarian groups such as Amnesty International and the Human Rights Watch have adamantly spoken out against this prison’s numerous human rights violations.

This isn’t the first time Obama has embarked on a plan to close the military detention center. In 2009 President Obama signed an executive order to close the detention camp within a year however this plan quickly fell through. At the time, the executive order was not enacted due to the fact that there were way too many prisoners detained that would need to be released or transferred to another base. The difficulty with prosecuting detainees from Gitmo lies in the reality that the United States have little proof to form a full-fledged trial against many of the detainees

In the previous executive order, Obama planned to move the remaining detainees to US soil, for their trial and sentencing in domestic courts instead of often ineffective military tribunals. If found guilty, they could be imprisoned in American prisons alongside American prisoners. However, in 2009 Congress passed legislation prohibiting the transfer detainees to the United States as it would be a huge security risk to do so. As a result of this law, Obama could not move forward with is executive order and instead the detention center continues to stay open for business while slowly releasing and resettling detainees either within their home countries or other countries willing to accept them as citizens.

At the time of this executive order, there was widespread support from the American public in favor of closing of Guantanamo Bay, however this support has since dwindled. Currently the discourse around Guantanamo Bay is extremely polarized and controversial. A recent [CNN poll](http://www.cnn.com/2016/03/04/politics/guantanamo-bay-poll-north-korea/) found that 56 percent of the American people are against the closing of Guantanamo Bay while 40 percent are in support of closing its doors. In addition, Congress remains adamantly against the president’s plan on completely shutting down the detention base. Furthermore, Paul Ryan, the House Speaker has recently stated the GOP is gearing up for a legal battle against the president and his plan to close Guantanamo Bay.

Ninety-one prisoners remain in Guantanamo Bay. Thirty-six are recommended for release, Forty-five are held in indefinite law of war detention, and only ten detainees have actually been charged or convicted of crimes according to the [New York Times’ Guantanamo Docket](http://projects.nytimes.com/guantanamo).

Guantanamo Bay will recommend a detainee to be repatriated to their home country if it is deemed to be stable environment for the detainees’ reintegration into their home life. Repatriation is prohibited for detainees who are citizens of currently unstable countries like Yemen. Detainees from these countries must await approval to be released and settled in a altogether different country or the eventual stabilization of their home state. As a result, 30 Yemenis, like Ahmed Yaslam Said Kuman and Mohammed Abdullah Al Hamiri, who have been released for transfer since 2010 remain detained in Guantanamo Bay to this day.

The 45 men who remain imprisoned without charges are held indefinitely in the Guantanamo prison. Their cases remain stagnant due to lack of substantial evidence against them. Regardless of their thin cases, The US government continues to detain them in Guantanamo Bay on the fear that if they are released they will reengage in terrorist activity. The case for this suspicion rests not only on the behaviors of the detainee but also the data on re-engagement curated by the [Office for the Director of National Intelligence](http://www.dni.gov/index.php/newsroom/reports-and-publications/207-reports-publications-2015/1248-summary-of-the-reengagement-of-detainees-formerly-held-at-guantanamo-bay,-cuba-sept-2015). The most recent 2016 data found that over time the number of detainees who have been either confirmed or suspected of re-engagement has been on the rise.

So far there have been seven new cases of re-engagement from recently released detainees. However, the rise in recidivism of detainees could be rooted in the treatment of detainees. “The longer we hold people the longer they may be inclined to commit acts against the U.S. if they haven't already,” said Stina Stannik, the President of Tufts’ Amnesty International. She also remarked that this fear of detainee engagement should not deter the closing of Guantanamo Bay and should instead be a reality that should be dealt with head on instead of continuing to violate human rights laws by detaining prisoners.

The history of Guantanamo Bay has been plagued by a slew of condemnations from the international organizations. Organizations like Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and the United Nations have called repeatedly for the closing of Guantanamo Bay due to its numerous Human Rights violations. A study conducted by the International Justice Center found the Guantanamo Bay to be in violation of the American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man, as they currently have forty-five men detained for an immense amount of time without being charged for any crime. Since then, Congress passed the National Defense Authorization Act of 2014 allowing the US government to continue detaining uncharged prisoners “until the end of hostilities,” thus making it completely legal to continue holding the majority of their detainees until they find that terrorist hostilities have ended, an end which may never come.

Obama’s new plan is extremely similar to executive order he introduced 7 years ago. It is still illegal to bring Guantanamo detainees on U.S. soil, and while a large amount of the detainees are approved for transfer, their release date remains uncertain. Furthermore, Obama is largely unsure how to handle the remaining detainees under continued detention.

The future of the Guantanamo Bay remains fairly uncertain. In order for Obama to have this victory, he would need full support from a majority republican Congress to allow detainees on American soil and to transfer the remainder of the detainees to third countries or have them repatriated. In reality, the possibility of closing Guantanamo Bay seems less of a tangible goal and instead wishful thinking as Obama now has little under a year left to pursue with initiative. In a recent speech on the shuttering of Guantanamo, president Obama remarked that he was “Clear eyed about the hurdles to closing Guantanamo Bay.” These hurdles make it hard to determine whether or not this goal can be achieved by the end of the Obama administration. If it does not, it may be a while before we see another initiative to close Guantanamo Bay.