



CLOSE GITMO

END MILITARY COMMISSIONS

Write an Op-Ed

Here is a sample Op-Ed that you can use as a template to craft your own about the seven year anniversary of Guantánamo.

During the presidential campaign, Barack Obama repeatedly expressed his intention to shut down the Guantánamo Bay prison camp and end the military commissions. On day one of his presidency, that's exactly what he should do.

Closing Guantánamo was one of the few points of agreement between the two presidential candidates this year. And the list of respected military leaders and public officials of all political stripes who have demanded the system be shut down continues to expand. Among many others, Colin Powell, Hillary Clinton, and Henry Kissinger all share this view. Those leaders understand that the Guantánamo prison has made America *less* safe, by alienating our allies and instigating our enemies, and that America's strength and security have always depended as much on moral authority as on military might.

But now, days before Inauguration, the question for President-elect Obama is what to do with the nearly 250 individuals that have not been charged, but are still being held by our government, some for over seven years.

The only solution is to return to America's established system of justice for detaining and prosecuting suspects. The creation of any other ad-hoc, illegal detention system or "third way" that permits the executive branch to suspend the rule of law and hold suspected terrorists without charge or trial will only move Guantánamo on-shore.

The time-tested U.S. military and civilian courts are perfectly equipped to handle complex national security cases.

The United States has captured and successfully prosecuted scores of terrorism suspects, at home and abroad, both before and after Sept. 11. Indeed, a recent report from Human Rights First examines more than a hundred international terrorism cases that were prosecuted in U.S. federal courts, and concludes that those courts are well-positioned to accommodate the government's legitimate national security interests without compromising the fundamental rights of defendants. Federal prosecutors have an imposing array of prosecutorial weapons for targeting suspected terrorists, including statutes that criminalize assault and homicide, the use of weapons of mass destruction, and harboring or concealing terrorists.

The Obama administration's new Justice Department must conduct a comprehensive review of all detainee records to determine whether there is legitimate evidence of criminal activity. Where there is not, detainees should be repatriated to their home countries or, if there is a risk of torture or abuse, transferred to countries that will accept them.

The next president has a major opportunity to lead America on its journey to regain its values and credibility. It is time to make a fresh start and prosecute these cases in U.S. courts worthy of American justice. And it is time for our nation to stop betraying its own values – and the values of so many who died on 9/11.



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