

Guantánamo detainees: 4 years without justice

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Four years ago, the USA transferred the first “war on terror” detainees - hooded and shackled - to the detention facility at Guantánamo Bay Naval Base, Cuba.

As the detention regime at Guantánamo Bay enters its fifth year, around 500 people from 35 countries continue to be held without charge or trial. Denied their rights under international law, there are mounting allegations of torture and ill-treatment of detainees at the camp.

Detainees effectively remain in a legal black hole, many with no access to any court, legal counsel, or family visits. Many are subjected to confinement in small cells for up to 24 hours a day with minimal opportunity for exercise. Detainees are often kept in isolation, sometimes for months, as punishment for the infraction of strict camp rules. Several of the detainees have attempted suicide. Most recently Bahraini Jumah al Dossari attempted suicide, reportedly for the tenth time. Other detainees have in desperation embarked on hunger strikes, being kept alive, sometimes against their will, through painful force feeding procedures.

Appalling conditions, allegations of torture and other ill-treatment, detention of individuals in Guantánamo for up to four years without justice: these are alarming violations of human rights. US plans to try detainees by military commission will bring even more injustice. These commissions are not independent and allow statements extracted under torture or coercion, and hearsay evidence.

Guantánamo detainees must be released, unless charged with recognizable criminal offences and brought to fair trial.

Take action!

Write to US President George W. Bush demanding that he close down the detention facility at Guantánamo Bay, and either charge and try the detainees in line with international standards, or release them.

Action works: Since AI started highlighting specific cases of Guantánamo detainees, 15 of them have been released from US detention. Of those detainees transferred to their home countries, 7 remain in detention and 8 have been released.

See: <http://web.amnesty.org/pages/usa-100106-action-eng>