

# MORE THAN 150 INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS CALL ON BIDEN TO CLOSE GUANTÁNAMO ON 21ST ANNIVERSARY

Guantánamo Bay “is the iconic example of the abandonment of the rule of law,” the letter argues.

Elise Swain

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A painting of a Guantánamo prisoner, hooded and shackled in an orange jumpsuit, being terrorized by a dog, illustrated by Sabri al-Qurashi while imprisoned at Guantánamo in 2014. Illustration: Courtesy of Sabri al-Qurashi

On the 21st anniversary of the first orange-jumpsuit clad “unlawful enemy combatants” arriving blindfolded and shackled to the U.S. naval base in

Guantánamo Bay, more than 150 international human rights organizations are urging President Joe Biden to finally shutter the prison. The [letter](#), coordinated by the Center for Victims of Torture, or CVT, and the Center for Constitutional Rights, calls for a closure to the current prison, an end to the indefinite military detention of the men living there, and a pledge to never again use the naval base for “unlawful mass detention.”

“It is long past time for both a sea change in the United States’ approach to national and human security, and a meaningful reckoning with the full scope of damage that the post-9/11 approach has caused,” the letter says.

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Following a slow trickle of transfers out of the facility under the Biden administration, 35 men remain imprisoned today. Over the last two decades, [779 men and boys](#) passed through the catastrophic prison. Of those who remain there today, 20 are eligible for transfer out of indefinite detention; three are awaiting judgment from six different government agencies, known as the Periodic Review Board; three more have been convicted; and nine are involved in pre-trial hearings in the [flawed](#) military commission system. The case against accused 9/11 mastermind [Khalid Sheikh Mohammed](#) and his co-conspirators is ongoing and has not yet reached trial.

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In the post-9/11 era, torture with impunity at CIA black sites, the failed invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, drone strikes, botched raids across a global battlefield, domestic surveillance of Muslims, and the incalculable loss of civilian life in the Middle East have defined America's quest for national security. But Guantánamo Bay, and its earlier iteration as a detention facility for Haitian refugees in the '90s, "is the iconic example of the abandonment of the rule of law," the letter argues.

"The world knows detainees were tortured, [as well as] the heinous methods, names of those who approved and participated, and that videotapes of torture were deliberately destroyed; yet not a single person has been held accountable," Yumna Rizvi, policy analyst for CVT, told The Intercept. "The fact that all those complicit remain free, [and that] some even describe what they did without fear of prosecution, is astounding. The U.S. has lost its credibility for human rights, justice, and accountability."



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Renewed pressure and calls for the prison to finally be closed are only the beginning of ending the injustice, argues CAGE's [Mansoor Adayfi](#). "We need to see compensation, acknowledgement, and an apology for what happened to us," Adayfi, a former Guantánamo prisoner, told The Intercept. "This is part of closing Guantánamo."

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