

By Debra Sweet

For most of the last 17 years, we've been in front of the White House on January 11, demanding the closure of the U.S. torture camp at Guantanamo on each anniversary of its opening. I'll be there again tomorrow with organizations focused on legal and Muslim rights and with faith organizations who know Guantanamo is immoral and unjust.

But why? 95% of the men imprisoned there have been released or have died, with the government saying those remaining are the most dangerous. No new prisoners have arrived since the Bush years. News coverage has almost ceased; the military commission trials are stalled out. And most people think the war on terror has slowed down.

*Here's why Guantanamo is important:*

The Trump/Pence regime has been making noises for more than two years about **sending more "bad guys" to Guantanamo** after issuing an executive order in 2018 to keep it open and spending hundreds of millions to upgrade facilities. This threat becomes more real in the chaos of Trump's plan to pull out of Syria. NBC news reports the U.S. is "[scrambling to find a place to send ISIS detainees.](#)"

In 2002, Guantanamo quickly became an international symbol of lawlessness because **the U.S. wanted it to symbolize - and actually be**

**a place physically and constitutionally "outside the law."**

It was never set up for justice, it was set up as a message to the world that the U.S. has a place where there will be NO JUSTICE. Pursuant to decisions by the Bush regime, especially by Dick Cheney, the CIA and the US military aided by the infamous John Yoo "torture memo," men were kidnapped, secretly rendered to black sites in Afghanistan, Poland, Jordan, Syria and other unknown places where they were given no legal rights, often tortured and up to 100 were killed. Many of these prisoners ended up in Guantanamo, joined by hundreds of farmers and Muslim travelers who were bought by the U.S. from warlords in Afghanistan or Pakistan.

They had no legal rights to be charged, have representation or communication with the outside world, so were in effect disappeared under the legally bogus designation of being "enemy combatants." Then, all were abused, a few were waterboarded and some tortured.

The torture camp was kept open by bipartisan agreement for eight years *after* Obama said he would close it. Having a place where people can be held without rights is a necessity for pursuing an endless, unjust, illegitimate, immoral "war on terror." Obama, who recognized irony, and did pay attention the sensibilities of allied imperialists, thought Guantanamo made the U.S. look bad.

**The difference is that Trump  
*wants*  
the U.S. to look bad.**

Guantanamo is one more arrow in his arsenal of increased bombing, targetted killing, special forces, nuclear threats and the mother of all military budgets to Make American Great Again. No irony intended. It has just been revealed, apparently unintentionally by the Guantanamo military court, that Gina Haspel, Trump's CIA Director, [may have run a black site at Guantanamo](#)

Guantanamo in the hands of a fascist regime - one that threatens to lock up its own political opponents and close the southern border - is truly dangerous. None of this is in the interests of humanity! The 40 "forever" prisoners who have no prospect of release and those who may be coming from anywhere in the world the Trump/Pence regime calls dangerous have no prospects for justice.

As Trump threatens a "state of emergency" declaration, I share the [Call from RefuseFascism.org](#), with its single unifying demand: "We must confront the reality that the world as we have known it is being torn asunder. This requires getting out of our comfort zones and not allowing our differences to stand in the way of rising together in an unprecedented, unrelenting mass struggle to confront the danger of a Trump/Pence fascist America.

**WE PLEDGE that we will not stand aside while there is still a chance to stop a regime that imperils humanity and the earth itself. Join us. Let's stand together with conviction and courage, overcoming fear and uncertainty, to struggle with all we've got to demand: **The Trump/Pence Regime Must Go.**"**

