

Heute vor zehn Jahren internierte die Bush-Regierung die ersten 20 Gefangenen in Guantánamo Bay auf Kuba. Anlässlich dieses Jahrestages sammeln sich heute tausende Amerikaner überall in den Vereinigten Staaten um erneut die Schließung des Lagers zu fordern. Sie verlangen für alle dort Gefangenen ein faires, offenes, ziviles Gerichtsverfahren.

Wir von American Voices Abroad – Amerikaner in Berlin – stehen zusammen mit Amnesty International an diesem 10. Jahrestag. Wir stehen vor unserer Botschaft am Pariser Platz und verlangen folgendes von unserer Regierung:

We call on our government

- to charge and prosecute all detainees in fair and open trials, or release them to countries that will respect their human rights;
- to abandon military commissions and any pursuit of the death penalty;
- to bring justice to all violators of human rights – torturers and enforcers of disappearance;
- and to respect international human rights law in all counterterrorism operations.

Just after his inauguration 3 years ago, President Obama promised to close Guantánamo. But as of today, most of the detainees have been neither charged nor fairly tried. There have been no releases at all in the past 12 months even though the U.S. government has cleared half of the present 171 inmates for release.

In mid-December, President Obama signed into law the National Defense Authorization Act, despite his own reservations about several critical provisions, including military detention without charge or trial. This act also restricts the transfers of cleared detainees from Guantánamo to foreign countries for resettlement or repatriation, making it even more difficult to close the prison camp. We expect the constitutionality of these provisions to be tested in the courts. We call on President Obama to continue to make the case for closing.

And, in the last few days, there have been related developments. Lengthy secret negotiations, many of them here in Germany, between the U.S. government and the Taliban have led to the opening of a Taliban political office in Qatar. In return, the United States may soon be releasing five prisoners from Guantánamo. If the Taliban and the United States agree to conduct peace negotiations, it would be the most significant political breakthrough since the start of the war. This is a critical time. President Obama: Take advantage of this moment! Start releasing the remaining prisoners in Guantánamo!

And, as we are beginning to read even in the mainstream press – for example, in The New York Times on the Web: President Obama should acknowledge the long history of the Guantánamo naval base and initiate the process of returning it to Cuba. He would be keeping his campaign promise and would begin to put the mistakes, not only of the last ten years, behind us. This recognition of our “military interventionism” would “lay the groundwork for new relations with Cuba and other countries in the Western Hemisphere and around the globe.... Surely there would be no fitter way to observe today’s grim anniversary than to stand up for the principles Guantánamo has undermined for over a century.”

<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/11/opinion/give-guantanamo-back-to-cuba.html?ref=opinion>