

Groups mark 10th anniversary of first detainees imprisoned at Guantanamo Bay

Washington, D.C. – On January 11, 2012, the [National Religious Campaign Against Torture](#) (NRCAT) helped organize and lead national events in Washington marking the 10th anniversary of the day the first detainees were imprisoned in the U.S.-controlled detention facility at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. The 66 organizations co-sponsoring the events in Washington joined together in a call for the U.S. government to close the detention center at Guantanamo Bay.



Through a rally at Lafayette Park, a human chain, and an interfaith service, participants, who also expressed opposition toward detention provisions in the 2012 National Defense Authorization Act that violate human rights, gathered together in solidarity to urge President Obama to keep his campaign promise and shut down Guantanamo. The detention center has become a symbol of an era in which the U.S. government used torture as an interrogation technique.

Rev. Richard Killmer, Executive Director of NRCAT, said, "Guantanamo is the symbol of our country's violation of our deepest values," he said in his remarks. "Regardless of how it is operated now compared to how it was operated in earlier years, it stands in the minds of hundreds of millions of people in our nation and around the globe as the place where America broke faith with itself and used torture as an interrogation technique. Torture is immoral, illegal, and never justifiable -- without exception.

"Guantanamo is a symbol of our nation's vulnerability to abandon our principles and commitment to the rule of law in times of crisis. It is a stain on our image and reputation. It weakens our moral authority and influence around the world, and it puts our troops and our citizens abroad in danger. The challenge for the United States is to assure that U.S.-sponsored torture never happens again.

The Washington events were part of several vigils and protests that NRCAT co-sponsored across the country, including commemorations in Chicago, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Seattle and Ann Arbor. Additional information on the National Religious Campaign Against Torture's efforts encouraging the United States government to close the detention center at Guantanamo Bay is available at www.nrcat.org/close_guantanamo.