



January 3, 2016

Dear President Obama,

On behalf of Amnesty International's 1.2 million supporters in the United States, I write to make a final plea that you use all the powers of your office to close the detention camp at Guantánamo Bay. We are gravely concerned that if you fail to do so, President-elect Trump may attempt to bring dozens or even hundreds of people there, to be held in unlawful detention for decades and possibly subjected to torture and other forms of cruel treatment.

Despite your positive actions to date, your legacy will include failing to cure this corruption of our country's ideals of justice and fairness. You will leave behind Guantánamo as a system of injustice that—having survived for 15 years, two political parties and four presidential terms of office—may remain open for the foreseeable future.

Our concern is heightened by the sharp rise in anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant rhetoric during the election. Proposals for large-scale detention without charge, which once seemed inconceivable, are now on the table as options your successor may pursue. Guantánamo, with its shameful tradition of secrecy and insularity from legal process, would be all too convenient a location for mass imprisonment without charge, returning the United States to one of its grimmest chapters.

"It is past time to shut down the detention facility at Guantánamo," you said recently at MacDill Air Base, and not for the first time. You emphasized that Congress would be "judged harshly by history" due to restrictions it placed on your ability to transfer detainees. However, despite your concerted efforts, it is your presidency that will be judged harshly—by history, the international community and human rights supporters across the United States and the rest of the world— if you fail to take all possible measures to transfer those remaining out of Guantánamo.

Your actions now will impact this country's decisions on detention without charge, torture and human rights for decades to come by informing the way young people understand the

injustice of Guantánamo. People under the age of 25 have spent all or much of their lives with Guantánamo open. Most are too young to remember the photos of torture at Abu Ghraib, or of men at Camp X-Ray kneeling next to their cages. They do not know the collective shock and moral outrage that millions of Americans felt then, which led political figures from Colin Powell to John McCain to call for the closure of Guantanamo. Through your actions now, you can ensure new generations learn this history—and do not repeat it.

We also urge your administration, in closing Guantánamo, to abandon the military commissions. These ill-conceived tribunals simultaneously fail to respect human rights principles or achieve justice. To be sure, anyone responsible for the crimes against humanity committed on September 11, 2001 should be brought to justice in fair trials. Guantánamo and the military commissions have not—and cannot—provide that justice. The 15th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks recently passed, and those who lost loved ones in the attacks have a right to see justice in their lifetime. However, not only do the military commission trials seem unlikely to begin—much less conclude—for years to come, when they do take place they will fail to meet international fair trial standards.

You began your presidency with an executive order to end the Guantánamo detentions and to close the detention camp there. We urge you to end it with bold action to realize your promise.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Margaret Huang". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Margaret" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Huang".

Margaret Huang
Executive Director
Amnesty International USA