



**MEDIA RELEASE for 8 Jan 2022 at 1pm**  
***20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Guantanamo Bay***  
***Rally this Saturday at Parliament then Trafalgar Square***

**UK Guantanamo Network, MPs and former inmates march on Saturday 8 January to demand closure of the illegal detention centre after two shameful decades. “Mr Biden, close down this prison!”**

**100 volunteers in orange jump suits and black hoods will walk from Parliament Square to Trafalgar Square on January 8, 2022 to demand that President Biden close the illegal Guantanamo Bay detention centre on the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its opening.**

Two decades of enforced disappearance, torture and detention without trial. How will your publication cover this terrible anniversary?

- The prison at Guantanamo was built to be outside the law. Men have been kidnapped and held there after 9/11 without trial. It has been repeatedly condemned by the United Nations.
- **Yes it is still open!** 39 men are still held, many never even charged with a crime.
- Many have been tortured. That makes it difficult to give these men a fair trial. Any trial becomes awkward for the US government and its allies, so plans have been made to let them die in prison without access to a court or a visit from their families.
- Some have been ordered for release but years later are still imprisoned.
- Many who were released were handed to countries who then jailed or tortured them again, still without a trial.

“Are they ‘the most dangerous?’” asks journalist and human rights campaigner Andy Worthington, “Or just the ones whose trials would be most embarrassing? Are they innocent? We don’t know, because they’ve never been tried.”

“If these men are criminals, give them fair trials. If they are prisoners of war, send them home. It can only be one or the other, because there is no such thing as an “enemy combatant” with no human rights. There is no magical island where habeas corpus does not exist.”

The UK Guantanamo Network, including Amnesty International, Freedom from Torture, the Guantanamo Justice Campaign and the London Guantanamo Campaign demand the immediate end of this shameful episode. President Joe Biden has said he wants Guantanamo closed, as have a number of former and serving generals. No law is keeping it open, just lack of political nerve. What's needed is pressure from citizens who know that the rights of any prisoner will eventually affect their own.

“Guantanamo Bay was Patient Zero for the decline in human rights and democracy that we have seen these last 20 years. It created the logic that was later used to attack the Capitol. It's a mess. America can't champion the rule of law while it runs a gulag” - David Burke, Secretary of the Lewes Amnesty Group

The rally on Saturday follows similar actions across Europe and an international academic conference on Guantanamo Bay at the University of Brighton. The story of one detainee, Mohamedou Salahi was told in 2021 in the courtroom drama The Mauritanian, featuring Tahar Rahim, Jodie Foster and Benedict Cumberbatch. Other events are planned for this entire year or until the prison is finally closed.

For more information: [tinyurl.com/closegitmonow](https://tinyurl.com/closegitmonow)

### **Times and Places - 8th Jan 2022**

12:45pm	Vigil in Parliament Square
1:30pm	Proceed up Whitehall to Trafalgar Square
2:00pm	Speakers at Trafalgar Square
2:30pm	Ends

### **Speakers – Others to be confirmed**

Omar Deghayes	Former Guantánamo detainee and British resident
John McDonnell	MP and former Shadow Chancellor of the Exchequer
Andy Worthington	Journalist and human rights activist

### **Contact**

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### **Health and Safety precautions**

We are confident that the procession and meeting will be carried out in compliance with government-mandated COVID-19 health precautions, and the responsibilities we all have to each other. The event will be held in the open air. All participants will be masked. During the procession and the meeting, we will observe social distancing, keeping two metres apart. Every participant is asked to take a lateral flow test before leaving for the event. Throughout the event, stewards will ensure that social distancing and mask wearing are observed.