

Open Letter to the People of Canada from the Detainees at Canada's Guantanamo Bay

We are writing to you because the government of Canada will not speak with us. We are three Muslim men who have been detained under a security certificate, without charge or bail, for between 5 and 6 and a half years. We are not allowed to know the evidence against us.

We are held at a place called the Kingston Immigration Holding Centre (KIHC), located on the grounds of Millhaven Penitentiary. Some people have called this place Guantanamo Bay North. Like the detainees in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, we are held indefinitely. This is a kind of psychological torture that is almost unimaginable...we know that ultimately, we will be let out, because we are innocent men.

...Right now we are on a liquid-only hunger strike protesting the conditions of our detention...It is hard on us and our families. But it is the only voice we have.

When we were detained in Toronto, there were many hunger strikes protesting our conditions of detention. Because of this, the new facility at Millhaven was built, and now we are three hours away from our loved ones. Many of the things promised to us, such as educational programs and a library, have not happened. We do not have the same rights as convicted criminals to trailer visits with our families. And now we are faced with the denial of medical care...shots for Hepatitis C have not been given since September 2, 2006. Surgeries for a knee injury and a double hernia have not been scheduled.

Our demands are very simple.

- There must be a supervisor present with us when we move within the facility. Without a supervisor present, the possibility remains of a guard making a false accusation against us. As we have seen too often here, when it comes down to our word against a guard's, the staff will side with the guards.
- Medical care must be delivered to us in the living unit if we are not accompanied by a supervisor to the administration building. We have not refused the offer of medical care. We want medical care. Medical care was given to us in this area before September 10, 2006, and now our refusal to go to the administration building without a supervisor -- a choice we have made for our own safety -- is being used as an excuse to deny us medical care.
- We would like to have access to the media without guards present during an interview. We had private

access to the media at Metro West, without needing approval from the jail.

- We want an end to daily head counts. There are only three of us. It is humiliating and unnecessary.
- We would like to use phone cards to call family overseas. The KIHC makes us use the most expensive plan available, which our families can't afford because they are on social assistance. Since calls are monitored, it makes no sense why a cheaper calling card cannot be used.
- We want the same rights as other federal inmates: access to a library, educational programs, and trailer visits with our families where we can stay together for three days every month.
- Our "yard" is a small concrete area. Just three metres from this is a huge grassy area, but we are not allowed to enjoy it. It is surrounded by two huge fences, but nobody currently uses it. We see no reason why we cannot enjoy the outdoors.
- ...there is no independent body or neutral mediator and there is no translator for meetings with staff (English is not our first language). All our complaints about staff are dealt with by staff. They are not objective, so the complaints are always dismissed, with no appeal. This is not fair. There is no ombudsperson that we can speak with.

Ultimately, we wish to be treated as human beings, and all human beings have rights...

Our hearts cry from the suffering we see in the world, and we ourselves try to cope day to day with lives that have been stolen from us based on secrets. Our families are in prison, too. The children long for us to be home with them to play, to help with the schoolwork, to be there as they grow up...

Many times before, people across this country have spoken up for our rights, and we thank you from the bottom of our hearts. Right now, we face a very difficult situation, and if the government will not speak with us, we hope they will listen to you.

Please contact your Member of Parliament, write a letter to the newspaper, and call Stockwell Day, and ask him that he fix the problems at KIHC.

Secret trials are a wound to Canadian democracy. Justice for our situation can help heal that wound.

Mahmoud Jaballah
Mohammad Mahjoub
Hassan Almrei

TAKING ACTION

1. Write and call Stockwell Day, Minister responsible for the Canadian Border Services Agency (which runs the KIHIC). Demand that he meet immediately to resolve the crisis at KIHIC.

Stockwell Day, MP
House of Commons,
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6
Phone: (613) 995-1702
Fax: (613) 995.1154
day.s@parl.gc.ca
communications@psepc.gc.ca

2. Contact the new immigration minister, Diane Finley, at (866) 496-3400. Ask that she meet with the families of the detainees as requested and that she take action to meet their demands.

3. Write a letter to the detainees. Mohammad Mahjoub, Mahmoud Jaballah, and Hassan Almrei can be reached at:

Kingston Immigration Holding Centre
c/o CSC RHQ Ontario Region
440 King Street West
PO Box 1174
Kingston, Ontario K7L 4Y8

For more information on security certificates, secret trials, and how to help, email No One Is Illegal - Kingston:

noii-k@gmail.com

and visit:

<http://www.homesnotbombs.ca/secrettrials.htm>

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