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# Bay Area Human Rights Groups Join International Day of Action to Shut Down Guantànamo

*Candlelight march in downtown San Francisco  
will highlight demands for an end to torture and  
indefinite detention, repeal of Military  
Commissions Act*

San Francisco -- Six years after the first hooded, shackled men were brought to the U.S. prison at Guantànamo, Cuba, Bay Area activists will stage a solemn candlelight march through downtown San Francisco to demand that the U.S. government shut down the detention camp, end indefinite detention, stop waterboarding and all other forms of torture, and repeal the Military Commissions Act of 2006.

Called by Act Against Torture and co-sponsored by the American Friends Service Committee, the San Francisco office of Amnesty International USA, and the Presenté affinity group of Marin, the march will assemble at 4 p.m. on Friday, Jan. 11, 2008 at the steps of the U.S. Court of Appeals at 95 7th St., at the corner of Mission St. The marchers will then proceed down Market St. to the Justin Hermann Plaza. Activists dressed to represent the Guantànamo detainees -- wearing orange jumpsuits, black hoods, and chains -- will lead the way; other marchers will wear orange armbands and carry candles.

The San Francisco action is one of more than 75 scheduled for Friday around the world, from Warsaw, Poland, to Christchurch, New Zealand. In Washington, D.C., there will be a rally on the National Mall and a march to the Supreme Court. In New York, among other events, orange-garbed demonstrators will be in the audience for the Today Show. In the Bay Area vigils will also take place in Berkeley and Walnut Creek.

The call for action came originally from Witness Against Torture, an East Coast-based activist organization, and the American Civil Liberties Union, which has played a major role in legal efforts to ensure fair treatment for the detainees.

Although Bush Administration officials repeatedly labeled the Guantànamo detainees "the worst of the worst," most of them turn out to be guilty of nothing more than being in the wrong place at the wrong time. Of some 775 men and boys who have been held at Guantànamo since its opening in 2002, not one has been convicted of a charge of terrorism. Of the roughly 275 prisoners remaining today, only 10 have been charged and only three cases are pending trial. In desperation, hundreds have attempted suicide, and four have succeeded.

"Six years of injustice at Guantànamo and other secret U.S. prisons is a bitter occasion to mark," said Steve Masover of Berkeley, a member of Act Against Torture. "As a nation, we can only attempt to recover our humanity and our democracy by immediately ending detention without due process; by stopping our government's practice of torture, permanently and completely; and by prosecuting and holding accountable for their crimes the officials, past and present, who made practice of torture a policy of the United States government."

The full demands of the march:

- Shut down Guantànamo, Abu Ghraib, Bagram and all other U.S. prisons overseas, including secret CIA detention facilities.
- Either charge the detainees and turn them over to an international court, or release them.
- Pay reparations to current and former detainees and their families for violations of their human rights.
- Clearly and unequivocally forbid torture and all other forms of cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment, by the military, the CIA, prison guards, civilian contractors, or anyone else.
- Repeal the Military Commissions Act of 2006 and restore *habeas corpus*.

For more information on the International Day of Action to Shut Down Guantànamo, visit

[www.actagainsttorture.org](http://www.actagainsttorture.org)

[www.witnesstorture.org](http://www.witnesstorture.org)

[www.aclu.org/safefree/detention/closequantanamo.html](http://www.aclu.org/safefree/detention/closequantanamo.html)