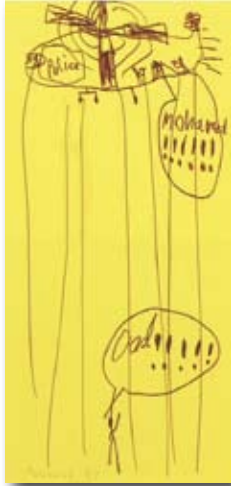


# JUSTICE FOR DAD

## IMPORTANT UPDATES (JANUARY 2010)

This information sheet provides updated information and activities to supplement the lesson plan and short film *Justice for Dad*.

The film is a powerful document of two families' long wait for justice as their loved ones are held in Guantánamo Bay, denied their human right to a fair trial.



**'It's my Dad in a helicopter and they are taking him up and I'm shouting his name and he's shouting my name... They're taking him to Guantánamo.'**

When Mohammed El-Banna, was being filmed in early 2007 for Amnesty's film *Justice for Dad*, his father Jamil El-Banna had already been held without charge for five years in Guantánamo Bay, the US military prison on the island of Cuba.

After the film was made, in December 2007, Jamil El-Banna and fellow British resident Omar Deghayes were released from Guantánamo Bay without charge and returned home to the UK.

Attempts by the Spanish government to have them extradited to Spain for questioning by the authorities were rejected by a UK court, so both men were able to finally return to their family homes and start rebuilding their lives.

Since then, Jamil El-Banna and Omar Deghayes have been involved in campaigning for the rights of Guantánamo prisoners, seeking justice for those who remain locked up and providing help and support to those who have been released, and their relatives. To this end they, and other former detainees, established the Guantánamo Justice Centre in July 2009: [www.guantanamojusticecentre.com](http://www.guantanamojusticecentre.com)

## GUANTÁNAMO BAY UPDATE

**'As President, I will close Guantánamo, reject the Military Commissions Act and adhere to the Geneva Conventions.'**

**Barack Obama, Washington DC, 10 August 2007**

11 January 2010 marked the eighth anniversary of the opening of Guantánamo Bay, the US military base that has illegally detained more than 750 people, some of them children. The detainees have not been given fair trials, making their detention illegal under international law.

Barack Obama's inauguration in January 2009 seemed to signal an important human rights victory. Within his first 48 hours in office, he announced that, after seven years of Amnesty campaigning for Guantánamo to be closed, he would finally close it within one year. In addition, the President also declared an end to the practice of secret detention, torture and cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment and punishment.

However, due to resistance from some members of Congress, the date for the closure of Guantánamo has already slipped. And although President Obama immediately outlawed the CIA-run secret detention programme, he said that the US would continue 'rendition' – the unlawful practice of transferring individuals from one country to another without consent, and without following any judicial or administrative process. During the 'war on terror', the United States has secretly flown large numbers of men to countries where they have suffered torture or other ill-treatment, and have been detained for long periods without charge.

A year ago President Obama ordered the suspension of the highly-flawed Military Commission trials, but in 2010 these trials are set to be re-started with little more than minor tweaks. In Amnesty International's view, these are not *fair* trials.

Since President Obama took office, over 20 detainees have been transferred out of Guantánamo, but nearly 200 still remain imprisoned without charge.

One detainee has been transferred to face trial in a federal court in New York and the administration has announced that another five will also be transferred to the city for such trials, with the likelihood that the death penalty will be sought against them. The US Attorney General has also said the administration has decided to refer another five cases back to the Pentagon for trial by military commission. Other prisoners may be relocated to the US state of Illinois prison – some still apparently to be held indefinitely and without charge: Guantánamo with a different post-code.

## JUSTICE FOR DAD

### UPDATED TEACHING IDEAS

Teachers are encouraged to cover this important topical issue in schools. It is within the remit of Citizenship and related subjects to provide the opportunity for students to explore controversial contemporary issues, to enable the development of political literacy and also the development of skills in critical thinking and advocacy and representation. By providing an opportunity to explore these issues, which are of particular concern to some ethnic minority groups in the UK, schools also go some way to meeting responsibilities around Community Cohesion.

- Revisit the *Justice for Dad* lesson plan, Activities 1-3, to remind students of the issues at hand. Students will consider the issue of the right to a fair trial and the impact that the denial of this right has on individuals, families and communities. Students are also made aware that rights can compete and conflict, and difficult decisions have to be made to balance these.
- Share the above updated information on the cases featured in the film and the proposed closure of Guantánamo Bay. President Obama's original January 2009 Executive Order to close Guantánamo and the latest Whitehouse press releases on this can be found on the Whitehouse website: [www.whitehouse.gov](http://www.whitehouse.gov) (search 'Guantánamo').
- Ask students to complete the extension activity *What is a fair trial?* Download for free from [www.amnesty.org.uk/education](http://www.amnesty.org.uk/education) (select the Terrorism, Security and Human Rights topic). Accompanying teacher's notes explain the legal definition of a 'fair trial'.
- As a follow up, students could find out about the current debate over Obama's proposed closure of Guantánamo Bay. Encourage them to research online US and UK newspaper editorials for different perspectives on the issue, to help prepare for a discussion/debate that considers key questions such as:
  - How should the prisoners of Guantánamo Bay be put on trial? Should they be given public trials in federal courts or closed trials in military courts?
  - What should happen to those who are found guilty of terrorist offences? Is the death penalty an appropriate punishment?
- Complete Activities 4 and 5 from the original lesson plan. Provide students with the opportunity to advocate their own position on the debate, by letting Amnesty know what they think should happen to the prisoners currently in Guantánamo. A template for a creative action is included in the original lesson plan.

**Amnesty International and others are calling for a full and independent review into claims of the use of torture in Guantánamo. We have produced a lesson on the use of torture against suspected terrorists. Download for free from [www.amnesty.org.uk/education](http://www.amnesty.org.uk/education) (select Torture).**

For updates on Amnesty's campaigning work on Guantánamo: [www.amnesty.org.uk/guantanamo](http://www.amnesty.org.uk/guantanamo)