

From [Andy Worthington](#) | Original Article



I'm delighted to reproduce below a statement by my friend, the former Guantánamo prisoner Omar Deghayes, which was [read out at a rally](#) (at which I spoke) outside the White House on January 11, 2011, the 9th anniversary of the opening of the prison. Omar, whose testimony is at the heart of the documentary film, "[Outside the Law: Stories from Guantánamo](#)", which I co-directed with Polly Nash, was held in US custody from May 2002 until December 2007, and spent most of that time at Guantánamo, after being held first in Pakistan and in Bagram, Afghanistan.

His comments provided a powerful conclusion to the rally, and a reminder not only of how justice still eludes the 173 men still held, but also of how the American people are prevented from hearing about the injustices of Guantánamo first hand, as Omar, and every other cleared prisoner, is prevented from visiting the US to meet people and to tell their stories, and the Obama administration, Congress and the D.C. Circuit Court have [all made sure](#) that no cleared prisoner will be allowed to live in the US, even if they face torture in their home countries, and no other country can be found that is prepared to offer them a new home.

A statement from Omar Deghayes, January 11, 2011

Two years ago, President Barack Obama [pledged to bring an end](#) to the anomaly that is Guantánamo within a year, and to thereby restore America's moral standing in the world. Yet today, on January 11, 2011, we are marking the beginning of the tenth year since the first prisoners were transferred to Camp X Ray — and Guantánamo remains open, Obama's promise in ruins.

This past December 19th just marked three years to the day that I tasted freedom again and was released from Guantánamo to the warm embrace of my family and the community who fought so hard for my freedom. But not a day has passed since in which my thoughts and prayers have not remained with the 173 men who continue to languish in Guantánamo, detained without trial, most of them not facing any charge, and entering their tenth year of being separated from their loved ones. 90 of these men have actually been cleared for release long ago.

One of these men who continues to be unjustly detained is [Shaker Aamer](#), the last British resident still detained at Guantánamo who has yet to come home to the UK. Today we remember Shaker's wife and four children — all of whom are British nationals, the youngest of whom has never seen his father. Shaker's children are being forced to endure yet another year of suffering, not knowing if or when their beloved father will return. Justice has been delayed yet another year for Shaker and the other 173 men detained in Cuba; and justice delayed is justice denied.

If this was not enough, President Obama's intention to [sign an executive order](#) formalising the indefinite detention of the prisoners in Guantánamo now leaves us with the very real and disturbing prospect that, if we collectively fail to act and stand up, many of the men who continue to be held in Guantánamo will be left to rot there indefinitely. It is therefore vital that the American people continue in their efforts; and I cannot thank you enough for your tremendous courage and resilience in keeping up the fight for the prisoners in Guantánamo and ensuring that these men are not forgotten.

As we enter the tenth year of this lawlessness, I and the former prisoners who, with me, formed the [Guantánamo Justice Centre](#) in 2009, are united with one voice in calling upon President Obama to fulfill his promise and bring a swift end to the shameful stain on the United States that is Guantánamo. We call on the Obama administration to free the remaining prisoners from what Adnan Abdul Latif, one Yemeni prisoner, [recently called](#) a "piece of hell that kills everything, the spirit, the body and kicks away all the symptoms of health from them," and to resettle those wrongly detained where they can rebuild their lives in safety and in peace.

**In solidarity,
Omar Deghayes
Legal Director, Guantanamo Justice Centre, London, UK.**