



Speak Directly for Human Rights

Resource Package
Amnesty International USA

www.amnestyusa.org/lobby



Above: A detained immigrant visits with his son and family members in a California detention center ©Steven Rubin

Amnesty International members across the United States are meeting with elected officials to press for the closure of Guantanamo Bay Detention Center, for Immigrants' Rights, and for Women's Rights.

Now is the pivotal time to lobby your elected officials! After pledging to close the detention center at Guantanamo Bay Cuba by January of 2010, the Obama Administration is slipping on their promise. At the same time, Congress is beginning to hammer out the details of what provisions might go into a large immigration bill expected to be taken up soon, perhaps by early next year. And, the administration has told the U.S. Senate to move on ratifying the treaty for the rights of women. After many years, we have an opportunity to see this important treaty be ratified by the U.S. Government.

Now is the time to influence the decisions of the elected officials who are in Congress to represent you, and to ensure that human rights are at the forefront. In this Resource Package you'll find materials to help you meet effectively with your elected officials.

You will find:

Part I: A Timeline for Planning your Meetings with your Elected Officials

Part II: Background Information

Part III: Preparing for a Congressional Office Visit

Part IV: Materials to leave with your Congressional Office

Finally, thank you. Not only are you keeping yourself informed about the issues, you are actively working to support human rights.

With warm regards,



Chris McGraw
Grassroots Advocacy Program Director
Amnesty International U.S.A

Check for updates

The day before you meet with your Representatives and Senators, plan to check the Amnesty International U.S.A website, www.amnestyusa.org/lobby, so that you can download any supporting materials, inform yourself of late-breaking news and take note of any modifications to our requests for members of Congress.

What's new in version 2?

- Fixed a typo with our conference call time on November 18: We'll hold a conference call at 7:30PM Eastern (6:30 Central, 5:30 Mountain, 4:30pm Western) on November 18 to debrief. Page 4.
- Minor edits to Q&As on Uighurs and Military Commissions. Page 5.
- Fixed spelling of Jeh Johnson in Guantanamo Issue Brief.
- Added Q&A discussing the details of House and Senate Immigration Detention bills. And made some additional edits to wording in immigration detention sections.

. Part I: Timeline

Now	<p>Build your delegation Your delegation should consist of 3 – 5 members from your congressional district. (Although it is okay to go in alone). Contact your prospective delegation members, coordinate a time/place for the delegation's advance practice meeting, and collect any missing contact information. Send an email to the whole group confirming they are part of the delegation, and the date of the advance meeting.</p>
Now	<p>Call or fax your district office (or the legislator's Washington DC office) to ask to schedule a meeting. Let the office know that you want to ask your Senator or Representative to support rights for asylum seekers and immigrants in detention, you want their help in closing the detention center at Guantanamo Bay, (and for Senators only) that you want them to support the Treaty for the Rights of Women. Fax a copy of Amnesty International's Issue Briefs (in part IV of this guide).</p>
Week of October 26	<p>Online Training Log-in to our website (www.amnestyusa.org/lobby) to read the basics and watch a video about engaging your elected officials for human rights work. Never lobbied before? Watch our <i>Raise the Roof!</i> Video for tips: http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=-1743414647410019685&pl=true</p>
Week of October 26	<p>Finalize your advance meeting time and place with delegation members. Finalize your practice meeting time and place and remind your delegation members to attend the practice meeting.</p>
Week of November 1	<p>Meet to practice with members your delegation. During the meeting, assign roles to delegates. Make sure someone is taking notes! Debrief your practice. What went well? What might you improve?</p>
November 9	<p>Download updated materials Check the Amnesty International website, amnestyusa.org/lobby, to download updated materials to leave with your congressional office. If he or she has committed to our first request, you can thank his or her office during the meeting and ask the office to do one of the additional 'requests' that you will find at the end of this package.</p>
November 11-13	<p>Meet! Meet with the district offices (or Washington DC office) of your elected officials. Be accurate, brief, and courteous, as well as specific and persistent. Don't forget to schedule a good time to follow up.</p>
November 18	<p>Debrief Conference Call & Report back We'll hold a conference call at 7:30PM Eastern (6:30 Central, 5:30 Mountain, 4:30pm Western) on November 18 to debrief. We will email delegation leaders information about how to join this call. Please also let us know about how your meeting went! Report on your meeting at http://www.amnestyusa.org/debrief</p> <p>Celebrate! Thanks for helping to press for human rights with your elected officials!</p>

Part II: Background Information

For your meetings with elected officials we are asking that you raise two issues with your Representative's offices, and three issues for your Senators' offices. Here is what we would like you to ask:

Ask your Representatives:

- 1) To support the closure of Guantanamo Bay Detention Center
- 2) To support immigrants' rights

Ask your Senators:

- 1) To support the closure of Guantanamo Bay Detention Center
- 2) To support immigrants' rights
- 3) To support ratification of the Treaty for the Rights of Women.

General Questions and Answers

What specifically am I asking my U.S. Representative to do?

Amnesty International is calling on Members of Congress in the House of Representatives to cosponsor and pass the Lawful Interrogation and Detention Act (H.R. 374) to close the detention facility at Guantanamo Bay and to cosponsor and support the passage of the Immigration Oversight and Fairness Act (HR 1215).

What specifically am I asking my U.S. Senator to do?

Amnesty International is calling on Senators to cosponsor and pass the Lawful Interrogation and Detention Act (S. 147) to close the detention facility at Guantanamo Bay and to cosponsor and pass the Protect Citizens and Residents from Unlawful Detention Act (S. 1549), and the Strong STANDARDS Act (S. 1550). And to support the ratification of the Treaty for the Rights of Women also known as the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)..

Is it okay if I meet with my elected official if I don't have additional individuals coming to the meeting with me?

Yes. It's perfectly all-right for the meeting to be just you and the elected official, or the elected official's staff person.

I'm just getting started and I haven't scheduled a meeting yet with my elected official. Can I still meet?

Yes. It's fine to go ahead and schedule a meeting with your Representative and/or Senators now. If you are meeting your elected official after November 13, you can ask him or her to do one of the items listed on the page that you'll find at the end of this guide entitled "Additional Ways Elected Officials Can Help".

What is Amnesty International?

Amnesty International (AI) is a global movement of 2.2 million people in more than 150 countries and territories who campaign to end grave abuses of human rights. We are independent of any government, political ideology, economic interest, or religion. Join us at amnestyusa.org.

Questions and Answers about Closing Guantanamo Bay Detention Center

The President has issued an Executive Order so isn't the detention center at Guantanamo Bay Cuba going to close?

The President on his second day in office issued three executive orders: the first of which was to close the US detention facility at Guantanamo, Cuba, by January 22, 2010.

In the 2008 election, closing Guantanamo (GTMO) enjoyed support from both Republicans and Democrats. Senator John McCain said he would move all the detainees to Fort Leavenworth immediately. Unfortunately, due to over-reaching political reaction to closure, and the complex legal issues involved, the closure has become more controversial than many anticipated. As the Attorney General has said, this probably means that the timeline to close Guantanamo could slide past January. For that reason, it is important for Amnesty International members to meet with elected officials to help ensure that the detention center is closed as soon as possible.

Why can't the US release those who are cleared?

There are around 241 inmates currently at Guantanamo. Of these detainees, around 90 have been cleared for release. Unfortunately the US is finding it difficult to find places to take the detainees, exacerbated by the US refusal to take any detainees itself - such as the Uighurs. Around 20 detainees have been taken by countries in the last few months.

Why can't we bring the Uighurs to the US?

The US was on track to bring some of the Uighurs to the US, but the political firestorm stymied the move. For example, Congressman Frank Wolf, stopped any movement of Uighurs to Northern Virginia.

What will happen to the remaining inmates?

Around 45 are set for trial, either in US federal court or military commissions. The administration is set to make this determination by November 16. The remainder could well be set for indefinite detention. It is not clear where they will be held or under what authority. Some may be returned to Afghanistan and be held

close to the battlefield, at Bagram or another new facility

Who is supposed to be running this policy at the White House?

Peter Rouse has been named the new coordinator for GTMO detention center closure policy at the White House. He replaces the White House Counsel, Greg Craig who shaped the drafting of the Executive Orders. Among the other influential advisers are the White House Chief of Staff, and David Axelrod. Part of the problem has been the lack of daily engagement on this issue at a senior level, to keep pressure on a priority issue.

What can we do about this?

Call, write, and meet with your Representative and Senators urging them to support the Obama administration's goal to close Guantanamo. Ask Representatives to cosponsor and pass H.R. 374 the Lawful Interrogation and Detention Act and Senators to cosponsor and pass S 147 the Lawful Interrogation and Detention Act to close the detention facility at Guantanamo Bay. Guantanamo has become an international recruiting tool for Al Qaeda and a symbol of a failed policy which lost its moral compass. We urge elected officials to support the closure of the prison, bring the detainees to the United States for trial and free those who pose no threat to the US and are cleared for release. Keeping GTMO open only serves as a recruiting tool for Al Qaeda and extremism.

Will the Guantanamo Bay Detention Center close?

We hope and believe GTMO will close, but the January deadline is under attack and will probably be missed, unless we act.

Are the military commissions over?

Congress just revamped the procedures, as part of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010. The government is going to make a determination by November 16 as to where the detainee cases will be tried. Some may still go to military commissions.

The changes to the Military Commissions in the National Defense Authorization Act are a significant improvement, but they still do not meet international or even domestic standards for fair trials.

Questions and Answers about Immigration Detention

AIUSA states that tens of thousands of immigrants are needlessly held in immigration detention every day. Clearly the U.S. government wouldn't do this without good reason. Aren't most of these people dangerous or here illegally?

If the government can demonstrate that a person is a danger to the community or a flight risk, and that less restrictive measures would not be sufficient to address these concerns, then the person may be detained. Amnesty International's concern arises because tens of thousands of people are being arbitrarily detained without any hearing to determine whether their detention is warranted.

The people who are detained represent more than undocumented immigrants. They are lawful permanent residents of the United States, asylum seekers, and victims of torture or human trafficking. Dozens are actually U.S. citizens or people with strong citizenship claims. While it is true that some are being deported because they have committed serious crimes, many pose no threat to society whatsoever and cannot be deported. According to a recent Associated Press investigation, nearly 60 percent of immigrants in detention on January 25, 2009 had no criminal conviction. Their arbitrary detentions cannot be justified under international law or standards.

Are people really held for months and years? According to ICE these people are held on average for about 30 days.

While ICE reported an average detention stay of 30 days in 2007, Amnesty International found that immigrants and asylum seekers may be detained for months or even years as they go through deportation procedures that will determine whether or not they are eligible to remain in the United States. Amnesty International has documented several cases in which individuals were detained for four years and finally released when they proved they were not deportable at all. According to a 2003 study, asylum seekers who were eventually granted asylum spent an average of 10 months in detention with the longest reported period being

3.5 years. According to the Associated Press investigation, nearly 10,000 – or a third of those detained -- had been in custody longer than 31 days.

You say that more than 30,000 immigrants are detained each day and that 300,000 are detained each year. Can you explain the difference?

The number of individuals in *detention* each day -- not the number of people apprehended each day -- is more than 30,000. The average stay in detention in 2007 was 37 days. So the 300,000 statistic includes the vast majority of individuals who were removed within a few days, as well as a large number of people who remain in detention for months or even years while trying to fight to remain in the U.S.

So what are the alternatives to detention? If you don't detain people, how do you know they won't flee just to escape deportation?

If a person is considered a flight risk and less restrictive alternative measures – such as payment of a financial bond or reporting requirements – would not be sufficient to address this concern, an immigration judge may make the decision not to release a detainee. But many detained people have lived in the U.S. for a long time and are well established – with families, businesses and community ties. These people are unlikely to leave their loved ones behind and disappear.

In fact, studies have shown that the vast majority of immigrants do not flee when they are presented with viable alternatives to detention, such as paying a bond and/or some form of supervision by Immigration and Custom Enforcement's (ICE) which includes curfews and other probation-like provisions. These studies have demonstrated that over 90% of immigrants successfully appear for their immigration hearings.

It is worth noting that the average cost of detaining an immigrant is \$95 per person, per day. Alternatives to detention are significantly cheaper, with some programs costing as little as \$12 per day.

Why are immigration judges refusing to set bond in so many cases?

It is not known why immigration judges are

declining to set bond, but what is clear is that every year immigrants are less and less likely to be released on bond. Amnesty International wants comprehensive and accurate data to be collected and made public regarding this issue.

Even when immigration judges are authorized to conduct bond hearings, there is also confusion regarding their overall authority. While there is nothing that would preclude immigration judges from releasing individuals without a monetary bond -- and in fact the regulations make clear this is possible -- a number of immigration judges expressed confusion to Amnesty International about whether or not they had the authority to release someone without monetary bond. Advocates indicated that in some locations immigration judges never release someone without a bond, but the Executive Office for Immigration Review confirmed that immigration judges released 3,066 people on their own recognizance in 2007. It is important that immigration judges across the United States immediately consider immigrants for release on their own recognizance, consistent with immigration regulations.

How are U.S. detention practices in violation of domestic and human rights law?

What makes the U.S. detention so shocking is that, for the most part, the system is authorized by U.S. law. Unlike the criminal justice system, it is legal to apprehend an individual without any warrant or warning and lock him up for months or years on end. It is legal to jail someone without ever providing a hearing as to whether he is a flight risk or a danger to his community. It is legal to detain someone for months or even years while she is seeking asylum.

Sometimes ICE is, however, in violation of its own policies. Amnesty International documented: lack of access to law libraries, which often have few resources to begin with; failure to provide immigration detainee handbooks; inadequate access to telephones; lack of translation and interpretation services; inadequate access to healthcare including mental health services; and inadequate access to exercise for ICE detainees -- all in contravention of ICE detention standards. Problems related to conditions of detention have also been documented by U.S. government agencies, including the Department of Homeland Security's Office of the Inspector

General and the U.S. Government Accountability Office.

In terms of international law, the United States is party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which clearly includes the right to be free from arbitrary detention. This means that detention is only appropriate when authorities can demonstrate in each individual case that it is necessary. The UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention has called on governments to ensure that "alternative and noncustodial measures, such as reporting requirements, should always be considered before resorting to detention." In the U.S., many immigrants in detention have no right whatsoever to a hearing on the appropriateness and necessity of it. Others have access to a hearing, but are subjected to requirements including exorbitant bonds, that undermine their ability to secure release.

You say these people get no hearings, but that's not correct, is it? Everyone gets a hearing before an immigration judge.

Everyone gets a hearing regarding whether they are entitled to remain in the United States. Not everyone has the right to a custody hearing to determine whether or not their detention is warranted while deportation proceedings are ongoing. Deportation proceedings can take months or years during which time many languish in detention. Amnesty International is concerned that these people are being denied due process in violation of international law, and that some are giving up and taking deportation orders, even if they are not deportable at all. Not everyone in deportation proceedings is deportable. The government makes mistakes and many people are eligible for relief from deportation because of, for example, U.S. citizenship, family ties, long periods of residence in the U.S., or a well-founded fear of persecution.

Why did you pick these three pieces of legislation?

We have chosen to advocate on behalf of H.R. 1215: Immigration Oversight and Fairness Act in the House and S.1549: Protect Citizens and Residents from Unlawful Detention Act and S. 1550: Strong STANDARDS Act in the Senate because these bills best reflect the recommendations of our campaign. More specifically H.R. 1215 would create enforceable

standards of treatment for detainees as well as expand the use of alternative to detention. S.1550 would also create detention standards to ensure that all persons detained are treated humanely. S.1549 clarifies the due process rights of immigrants in detention and expands screening safeguards for vulnerable populations. S. 1549 would also create the position of an Immigration and Customs Enforcement Ombudsman to be responsible for oversight of and complaints from immigrants in detention.

Questions and Answers about the Treaty for the Rights of Women

What is the treaty for the rights of women?

The Treaty for the Rights of Women is the most complete international agreement on basic rights for women. The Treaty is officially known as the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1979. As of October 2009, 185 countries have ratified the Treaty for the Rights of Women.

What does the Treaty for the rights of women do?

The Treaty for the Rights of Women addresses basic human rights of women. It can be an effective tool to reduce violence and discrimination against women and girls, ensure girls and women receive the same access as boys and men to education and health care, and secure basic legal recourse to women and girls against violations and abuses of their human rights.

How have women used the treaty?

Women around the world have used the treaty to achieve important reforms in their country that reduce violence and discrimination. Measures have been taken against sex slavery, domestic violence and trafficking of women; millions of girls are now receiving primary education that were previously denied access; women's health care services have improved, saving lives during pregnancy and childbirth; and millions of women have secured essential loans and the basic right to own or inherit property. Treaty ratification commits nations to take concrete action to improve the status of women.

What do ratifying countries commit to?

Ratifying countries commit to:

- Take measures to ensure women can enjoy basic human rights and fundamental freedoms.
- Establish judicial procedures to ensure the effective protection.
- Take appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women by persons, organizations or enterprises.
- Submit national reports every four years on measures they have taken to comply with the treaty to protect and promote the rights of women in their country.

What is the Treaty's Senate history?

The Treaty has always enjoyed bipartisan support in the United States, but has never come before the full Senate for a vote. The Senate Foreign Relations Committee has twice voted favorably – in 1994 and 2002 – with bipartisan support to send the Treaty to the Senate floor for ratification, but the Senate recessed each time before that occurred.

How have countries used the Treaty?

Women in countries that have ratified the Treaty for the Rights of Women have successfully acted to improve conditions:

Stopping violence against women:

In Uganda, the states and cities have now created programs and policies to campaign against domestic violence, using state funds for the purpose.

Promoting girls' education:

India universalized its Integrated Child Development Services program in 1997, after treaty ratification, and girls now account for nearly half of all pre-schoolers.

Ensuring women's legal rights:

Since 1989, legislation in China has highlighted equality between men and women. Women are now guaranteed joint ownership of marital property and equal inheritance.

Improving women's lives at work:

Germany, Guatemala, the Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Spain, and the United Kingdom are among countries that have improved maternity leave and child care for working women in accord with Treaty provisions.

Part III: Preparing for a Congressional office visit

In this section you will find:

1. A Sample letter to request a meeting with your legislator (or legislators). Be sure to edit the letter for your own use.
2. Primary talking points for your meetings with a Congressional district office.
3. The ABC's to remember when you are meeting with the offices of elected officials.
4. A check list to go over before heading to your meeting (or meetings!) with Congressional offices.
5. A 'Contacts sheet' to record contact information for your delegation participants

Sample email to an appointment secretary or scheduler

You can begin by calling the Capitol Hill Congressional Switchboard to connect with the office of your Representative or Senator at 202 224-3121. Once you are connected with your elected official's office, first ask for the name of the appointment secretary or scheduler for your elected official so that you can send a request for a meeting. You may then find it easiest to email your appointment request or to fax it to that individual. (Regular mail can be too slow.) To email most staffers you'd use the following: **first.last@mail.house.gov** for House staffers or **first_last@SenatorLast.senate.gov** for Senate staffers (Where "first" and "last" are the staffer's name, and "SenatorLast" is the Senator's last name, e.g.; **John.Smithe@mail.house.gov** or **Katie_Jones@McCain.senate.gov**)

[Your Address]

[Your Representative's/Senator's address]

[Date]

Dear Appointment Secretary/Scheduler:

I am writing to request a meeting at the district office to ask [Senator/Representative] [name] to talk about human rights concerns including: the rights of immigrants and asylum seekers in the United States, Guantanamo Bay Detention Center [for Senate meetings only: and the Treaty for the Rights of Women].

[I / we] would like to meet in your office with [name of Senator] or the appropriate staff person at [time of meeting] on [date]. Ideally, I would like to meet with [name of Senator/Representative] if she/he will be in the district during the congressional recess.

Please contact me to let me know if this meeting time will work for the [Senator/Representative] or if another time might be more suitable for your office. I look forward to speaking with you soon.

Sincerely,

[your name]
[your telephone]
[your email]

Activist Talking Points for Legislative Visit with a House Representative

- I am/we are members of Amnesty International, a Nobel Peace Prize winning human rights movement with over 2.2 million members worldwide. We've come here today to ask for the Representative, to support the closure of the detention center at Guantanamo Bay, and also to support human rights for immigrants and asylum seekers in the United States.
- **I/we would like Representative [Last Name] to cosponsor and help pass the Lawful Interrogation and Detention Act (HR 374) introduced by Congresswoman Jane Harman and take all appropriate steps to close the detention facility at Guantánamo Bay.**
 - Individuals have been captured by the United States and transported to Guantanamo, designated as "enemy combatants," and held indefinitely without charge or access to a fair trial, some since January 2002, and denied fundamental protections under international human rights and humanitarian law. Many are held in isolation in maximum security prison facilities with little human contact.
 - Guantanamo has come to symbolize US human rights violations committed in the name of the "war on terror." Those held in Guantanamo have been subjected to numerous human rights abuses. Some have first been rendered to countries that torture, others have been disappeared into secret prisons before their arrival at Guantanamo, and many have been subjected to torture or other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment while in US custody. Reports of forced feedings and religious intolerance have been commonplace. People held there have been subject to unfair trial proceedings and held without charge and without end.
 - People who continue to be detained in Guantanamo should be charged with a crime and given a fair trial in US federal court. Anyone who is not charged should be released immediately and unconditionally. No one should be returned to a country where they would face torture or other human rights violations.
- Could you let me/us know if you will cosponsor and support the passage of HR 374? Can I/we follow up with you next week on this request?
- **I/we would also like Representative [Last Name] to cosponsor and help pass the Immigration Oversight and Fairness Act (HR 1215) introduced in the House by Congresswoman Roybal-Allard.**
 - Tens of thousands of people languish in immigration detention in the United States every year without a court hearing to determine whether their detention is warranted.
 - More than 30,000 people were in detention every day in 2008 – up from 10,000 in 1996. Those detained include lawful permanent residents, undocumented immigrants, asylum seekers, torture survivors, children and even a number of U.S. citizens.
 - One man, born in Minnesota, was put in immigration detention in Florence, AZ, and therefore was unable to access documents proving that he was a U.S. citizen. He was released after working in the prison kitchen for a month to earn the \$30 needed to order a copy of his birth certificate.
 - Detention, which costs hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars per year, often violates international law and standards -- yet authorities are underutilizing effective, low-cost alternatives to detention.
 - International human rights standards dictate that alternatives to detention, such as regular meetings with immigration officials or payment of a bond, are used in all but a few situations. These alternatives work -- one program in New York was shown to be 91 percent effective. Still, the U.S. government detains immigrants at an average cost of \$95 per person, per day. Alternatives can cost as little as \$12 per day.
 - Mr. N, a Buddhist monk, was jailed and tortured in Tibet for his religious and political beliefs. He fled to the United States, where was immediately placed into immigration

detention. His attorney filed a parole application, including an affidavit from a member of the American Tibetan community who would ensure that Mr. N would come to his hearings. For 10 months the government didn't respond, and Mr. N was never given the chance to argue for his release before a judge. Ultimately he was granted permission to remain in the United States.

- Many detainees are housed in facilities where excessive shackling is the norm and medical needs can be ignored -- all in breach of international and US standards.
 - In addition to their own facilities, Immigrations and Customs Enforcement, or ICE, has contracts with approximately 350 state and county criminal jails to hold some 67 percent of detained immigrants. While these facilities are required to comply with ICE detention standards, these standards are not legally binding, which means there is little oversight or accountability. This can lead to disturbing practices, including failure to provide medical attention; a startling 105 people have died in detention during the last five years.
 - One 27-year-old immigrant from Afghanistan, who arrived in the United States with his refugee family at the age of seven, began urinating blood not long after his detention and was experiencing constant fatigue and pain. No doctor saw him for a month and a half, and after nine months he had yet to receive a diagnosis or treatment. He told AIUSA he was considering giving up his citizenship claim to return to Afghanistan in order to obtain medical care.
 - While the Obama administration has committed to improving the detention system, this is not enough. Congress needs to enact laws ensuring that every detained person is considered for an alternative to detention, and if detained, the person will have access to basic necessities including medical care, legal services, and family.
- Could you let me/us know if you will cosponsor and support the passage of HR 1215? Can I/we follow up with you next week on this request?

Activist Talking Points for Legislative Visit with a Senator

- I am/we are members of Amnesty International, a Nobel Peace Prize winning human rights movement with over 2.2 million members worldwide. We've come here today to ask for the Representative, to support the closure of the detention center at Guantanamo Bay, and also to support human rights for immigrants and asylum seekers in the United States, and finally to support the ratification of the Treaty for the Rights of Women.
- **I/we would like Senator [Last Name] to cosponsor and help pass the Lawful Interrogation and Detention Act (S 147) introduced by Senator Diane Feinstein and to take all appropriate steps to close the detention facility at Guantánamo Bay.**
 - Individuals have been captured by the United States and transported to Guantanamo, designated as "enemy combatants," and held indefinitely without charge or access to a fair trial, some since January 2002, and denied fundamental protections under international human rights and humanitarian law. Many are held in isolation in maximum security prison facilities with little human contact.
 - Guantanamo has come to symbolize US human rights violations committed in the name of the "war on terror." Those held in Guantanamo have been subjected to numerous human rights abuses. Some have first been rendered to countries that torture, others have been disappeared into secret prisons before their arrival at Guantanamo, and many have been subjected to torture or other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment while in US custody. Reports of forced feedings and religious intolerance have been commonplace. People held there have been subject to unfair trial proceedings and held without charge and without end.
 - People who continue to be detained in Guantanamo should be charged with a crime and given a fair trial in US federal court. Anyone who is not charged should be released immediately and unconditionally. No one should be returned to a country where they would face torture or other human rights violations.
- Could you let me/us know if you will cosponsor and support the passage of S 147? Can I/we follow up with you next week on this request?
- **I/we would also like Senator [Last Name] to cosponsor and help pass the Protect Citizens and Residents from Unlawful Detention Act (S. 1549), and the Strong STANDARDS Act (S. 1550) introduced by Senator Menendez.**
 - Tens of thousands of people languish in immigration detention in the United States every year without a court hearing to determine whether their detention is warranted.
 - More than 30,000 people were in detention every day in 2008 – up from 10,000 in 1996. Those detained include lawful permanent residents, undocumented immigrants, asylum seekers, torture survivors, children and even a number of U.S. citizens.
 - One man, born in Minnesota, was put in immigration detention in Florence, AZ, and therefore was unable to access documents proving that he was a U.S. citizen. He was released after working in the prison kitchen for a month to earn the \$30 needed to order a copy of his birth certificate.
 - Detention, which costs hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars per year, often violates international law and standards -- yet authorities are underutilizing effective, low-cost alternatives to detention.
 - International human rights standards dictate that alternatives to detention, such as regular meetings with immigration officials or payment of a bond, are used in all but a few situations. These alternatives work -- one program in New York was shown to be 91 percent effective. Still, the U.S. government detains immigrants at an average cost of \$95 per person, per day. Alternatives can cost as little as \$12 per day.

- Mr. N, a Buddhist monk, was jailed and tortured in Tibet for his religious and political beliefs. He fled to the United States, where he was immediately placed into immigration detention. His attorney filed a parole application, including an affidavit from a member of the American Tibetan community who would ensure that Mr. N would come to his hearings. For 10 months the government didn't respond, and Mr. N was never given the chance to argue for his release before a judge. Ultimately he was granted permission to remain in the United States.
 - Many detainees are housed in facilities where excessive shackling is the norm and medical needs can be ignored -- all in breach of international and US standards.
 - In addition to their own facilities, Immigrations and Customs Enforcement, or ICE, has contracts with approximately 350 state and county criminal jails to hold some 67 percent of detained immigrants. While these facilities are required to comply with ICE detention standards, these standards are not legally binding, which means there is little oversight or accountability. This can lead to disturbing practices, including failure to provide medical attention; a startling 105 people have died in detention during the last five years.
 - One 27-year-old immigrant from Afghanistan, who arrived in the United States with his refugee family at the age of seven, began urinating blood not long after his detention and was experiencing constant fatigue and pain. No doctor saw him for a month and a half, and after nine months he had yet to receive a diagnosis or treatment. He told AIUSA he was considering giving up his citizenship claim to return to Afghanistan in order to obtain medical care.
 - While the Obama administration has committed to improving the detention system, this is not enough. Congress needs to enact laws ensuring that every detained person is considered for an alternative to detention, and if detained, the person will have access to basic necessities including medical care, legal services, and family.
- Could you let me/us know if you will cosponsor and support the passage of the Protect Citizens and Residents from Unlawful Detention Act (S. 1549), and the Strong STANDARDS Act (S. 1550)? Can I/we follow up with you next week on this request?
 - **Finally, I/we would like to ask you to support the ratification of the Treaty for the Rights of Women.**
 - I/we would like to urge the Senator to publicly support the Treaty for the Rights of Women and to ask the Senator to place a statement in the Congressional Record calling for U.S. ratification of this Treaty.
 - The Treaty for the Rights of Women (officially the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women or CEDAW), is the most complete international agreement for basic human rights of women.
 - The United States played an important role in drafting this Treaty, which 185 nations have ratified. But our country is now one of eight that have yet to ratify the Treaty, alongside Sudan, Somalia, Qatar, Iran, Nauru, Palau and Tonga.
 - The Treaty for the Rights of Women addresses basic human rights of women. It can be an effective tool in reducing violence and discrimination against women and girls, ensuring girls and women receive the same access as boys and men to education and health care, and securing basic legal recourse to women and girls against violations and abuses of their human rights.
 - As the leading superpower, U.S. ratification would lend weight to the Treaty and provide valuable support to women seeking reforms in countries around the world. Without the United States as a party to the Treaty, repressive governments can easily discount the Treaty's provisions.
 - The Treaty has always enjoyed bipartisan support in the United States, but has never come before the full Senate for a vote. The Senate Foreign Relations Committee has twice voted favorably – in 1994 and 2002 – with bipartisan support to send the Treaty to the Senate floor for ratification, but the Senate has recessed each time before that

occurred. It is time for Senators to stand together in support of women and ratify CEDAW.

- As women in the United States take on greater leadership roles and participate in record numbers in local and national elections, it is time for the U.S. government to show the international community that it stand unequivocally for the rights of women internationally by ratifying this Treaty.
- As your constituent/s, I/we encourage you to publicly support the Treaty for the Rights of Women and to place a statement in the Congressional Record calling for U.S. ratification of this Treaty. Can I/we follow up with you next week on this request?
- Thank you for taking the time to meet with me/us.

The ABCs of Contact with Members of Congress

Amnesty International activists are natural advocates because they are dedicated and well informed. By following a few simple rules, you can achieve great results, just as thousands of other Amnesty International activists like you have. But make no mistake, to change U.S. policy —to do battle with the bureaucracy and the high-priced lobbyists of foreign governments — is hard work. Don't be intimidated or discouraged.

THE ABCs OF CONGRESSIONAL CONTACTS

Once you know what you want your Members of Congress to do and are committed to following up until they do it, remember these ABCs:

Accurate: To build a working relationship and get action, you need to be a credible source of information. Never bluff. If you don't know something, just say so. Tell them you will find out and get back to them. Call Amnesty's Government Relations Program for help finding the answers (in this case, the best person to contact is Chris McGraw, at cmcgraw@aiusa.org or at 202.544.0200 ext. 230). This is a great opportunity to demonstrate to your legislator's staff person that you follow up!

Brief: Members of Congress and their staffs are incredibly busy and so are you. Most Members of Congress represent over 600,000 people. They appreciate it when you get to the point and respect their time. Because your meeting or call might be interrupted, get to your request in the first few minutes.

Courteous: Always, always be courteous. A "How are you?" after the initial hello works wonders! On the other hand, being abrasive is almost always counterproductive, and it provides a good excuse to ignore your request.

In addition to the above ABCs, remember the following:

GUAGE THEIR INTEREST

Make an effort to gauge your Representative's interest and to match your requests to their initial level of interest. For this visit, begin with the simple 'ask' listed at the end of this package. (Sometimes you may need to begin with casework. Ask them to write a letter, for example, about the case you are working on. If they do, write your own letter to the local papers saying how much you appreciated their efforts and call the staff aide to express your thanks. The next time you may be calling to ask them to vote your way on an important amendment.)

BE SPECIFIC

In your communications with Members of Congress, make a point to mention the specific ask(s).

BE PERSISTENT

If you find that the staff people you need to speak with are out of the office, leave a message for them with your name and number. If they don't return your call within two to three days, then call again. Keep track of your calls, but remember that they are very busy.

The ABCs of Follow-up

After meeting with a Member of Congress or an aide from his or her office, keep in mind the following ABCs

Appreciate: Thank your representatives for listening to your concerns, especially if they take action. Commend them publicly, including letters to the editor or items in newsletters. (Be sure to share them with their staff.)

Build a relationship: Get the name of the staff person you speak to and try to deal with the same person each time. Remember that if your representatives are helpful and you praise them publicly, next time they may help even more. The ultimate goal is to build a positive, long-term relationship for achieving human rights goals.

Coordinate: Work with other Amnesty International groups in your district (or throughout your state if you are contacting a Senate office) and with other non-governmental organizations as appropriate. Make sure to fill out an Amnesty International Member of Congress Meeting Debrief Form (<http://www.amnestyusa.org/debrief>) so that we know how your meeting went, and can help coordinate future efforts.

Check List To Go Over Before A Congressional Office Meeting

Be sure to remember the items listed below for your Congressional office meeting (or meetings!). We suggest you go over the list the night before a meeting and put all documents you are taking with you for the visit in one place so you do not forget anything.

What to take with you to your meeting (or meetings):

- Bring with you a couple of copies of the Amnesty International issue brief(s) included in Part IV of this guide.
- Bring with you a couple of copies of the document "Additional Ways Elected Officials can Help" included in Part IV of this guide.
- Take your camera with you to take pictures of your visit and send copies to Grassroots Advocacy at Amnesty International U.S.A at grassroots@aiusa.org or Grassroots Advocacy at Amnesty International, 600 Pennsylvania Ave SE, 5th Fl, Washington, DC, 20003.
- Bring with you a pen and pad of paper to take notes at your meeting. Be sure to get the contact information of the person with whom you meet so you can report that information back to Amnesty International.

Other items to keep in mind:

- If possible, dress in business attire for any office visit you make. This will create a more professional environment.
- Plan on introducing Amnesty International to the Senator or Representative or his or her staff at the beginning of the meeting. Amnesty International is a worldwide human rights movement of 2.2 million members worldwide and winner of the Nobel Peace Prize.
- Be sure to thank the person with whom you meet for taking time to see you. It is advisable to send a follow up hand written thank you letter, even if the meeting does not go well. This will help build your relationship with the office!
- Consider bringing copies of any meeting agenda you develop for your Congressional office visit (or visits) to keep everyone who is participating on track.
- Finally, once you have completed your meeting, please report it immediately at <http://www.amnestyusa.org/debrief>
- Leave your contact information with the office.



Suggested Meeting Agendas for Congressional District Office Visits

The agenda and structure of your meeting will depend on the amount of time you have been able to schedule with your legislator or one of their staff members. We recommend the following agendas for your meeting depending on the amount of time you have. We have also suggested approximate amounts of time to spend on each item in the agendas.

30 Minute Meeting:

- Introduction: briefly introduce members of the delegation, organizations represented (5 minutes)
- Introduce the issue: we strongly suggest you use the talking points Amnesty International provides you (10 minutes)
- Make the request: Again, refer to the talking points Amnesty International provides you (3 minutes)
- Allow time for questions (10 minutes)
- Thank-you and schedule a time to follow up if needed (2 minutes)

15 Minute Meeting:

- Introduction: briefly introduce members of the delegation (2 minutes)
- Introduce the issue: we strongly suggest you select a few of the talking points Amnesty International provides you (8 minutes)
- Make the request: Again, refer to the talking points (3 minutes)
- Thank-you and schedule a time to follow up if needed (2 minutes)

Keep in mind that these are suggested meeting agendas to optimize your time. Feel free to modify them as you please.

Part IV: Materials to leave with your Representative or Senators

When you meet with your Representative or Senators' offices it is a good idea to leave behind some concise materials. Leave a copy of the following pages with your elected official or his or her staff. Note the Issue Brief on the Treaty for the Rights of Women is for your Senators only (not your Representative).



CLOSE THE DETENTION FACILITIES AT GUANTÁNAMO BAY NAVAL BASE

In one of his first acts in office, President Obama signed an Executive order stating that the Guantánamo detention facility “shall be closed as soon as practicable” and at the very latest within one year. The order also required the US Attorney General Eric Holder to coordinate an “immediate review of all Guantánamo detentions”, with the “full cooperation and participation” of other officials, including the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Homeland Security, the Director of National Intelligence, and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Amnesty International welcomes President Obama’s commitment to end detentions at Guantánamo. However, the organization notes that the facility is not closed yet and that the fair trial or release of the more than 200 detainees still held at Guantánamo is already years overdue. In July, the Task Forces asked for an extension to consider the questions of detainee policy and disposition as well as interrogation policy going forward. In recent statements the General Counsel for the Defense Department, Jeh Johnson, has said that it may be harder to reach the January deadline than they had anticipated, paving the way for a possible delay in closing the facility. The President also stated in his speech at the National Archives, he believes that there will be some detainees tried in federal court, some by revamped Military Commissions, some cleared for release, and as yet an unstated number who will remain in preventative detention.

There are currently three broad areas which remain strong concerns: the closure timetable; the disposition of the detainees; and the resulting system. There are less than five months to the President’s deadline and we urge the administration to hold to the Executive Order and not be cowed by political pressure. Amnesty opposes the administration’s decision to support the Congressional revision of the Military Commissions legislation, part of the National Defense Authorization Act of 2010, as an inappropriate forum for bringing detainee cases. Amnesty believes the detainees should be charged in the federal court system and opposes indefinite detention without charge. The revamped Military Commissions still fail to bear any resemblance to a regularly constituted court, or whose procedures reflect the standards upheld by Article 3 courts. Amnesty opposes any plan to introduce detention without charge. The administration is currently considering plans for the relocation of detainees to the United States and several venues have been noted, including the maximum security facility at Standish, Michigan and Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. The Congressional overreaction has been widely condemned by many, including by the Secretary of Defense, Robert Gates, who called it “scaremongering”. The notion that detainees pose an inherent risk, or that the US cannot find a place to detain terrorists in the US, has been ridiculed as “not rational” by Senator Lindsey Graham.

As retired General Paul Eaton recently noted, there is no way to buff up and shine Guantánamo, it remains a potent symbol of a policy which has lost its moral bearings, and serves as a recruiting agent for Al Qaeda and enemies of the U.S. Five former U.S. Secretaries of State and Admiral Mullen, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, have all called for its closure. A growing number of other high-ranking U.S. officials from both political parties, allied governments, and the United Nations have also issued calls for the prison’s closure.

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL USA’S RECOMMENDATIONS

- ✓ Amnesty International supports the Obama administration’s goal to close the detention facility at Guantánamo Bay by January 22, 2010.
- ✓ Senators and Representatives should cosponsor and pass the Lawful Interrogation and Detention Act (S. 147 /HR 374) and take all appropriate steps to close the detention facility at Guantánamo Bay.
- ✓ Amnesty International opposes the use of Military Commissions to try detainees. Detainees should be charged in U.S. federal court.
- ✓ Amnesty International opposes indefinite detention without charge. The closure of Guantánamo is not a question of geography, but the need to dismantle an unjust and self defeating system.

Amnesty International is a grassroots organization with 2.2 million members worldwide working to promote and defend human rights. For more information, contact Government Relations Director Geneve Mantri at 202-544-0200, or visit www.aiusa.org.



JAILED WITHOUT JUSTICE: IMMIGRATION DETENTION IN THE US

Amnesty International USA recently completed research in the United States for a report that investigated and documented the increased use and consequences of immigration detention. The number of immigrants subjected to detention has tripled in the past decade and some of those eligible for discretionary relief are denied bond pending removal proceedings. In 1996, immigration authorities had a daily detention capacity of less than 10,000. Today more than 30,000 immigrants are detained each night, and this number is likely to increase even further in 2009. They include asylum seekers, torture survivors, victims of human trafficking, long time lawful permanent residents and the parents of U.S. citizen children. While in detention, immigrants and asylum seekers are often unable to obtain the legal assistance necessary to present viable claims in an adversarial and complex court process. In addition, AI is concerned about violations of human rights related to conditions of detention, including physical and verbal abuse, use of restraints, restricted access to telephones, visits, and exercise.

The dramatic increase in the use of immigration detention has forced immigration authorities in the United States to contract with approximately 350 state and county criminal jails across the country to house these individuals pending removal proceedings. Approximately 67% of immigration detainees are held in these facilities with the remaining individuals being held in facilities operated by immigration authorities and private contractors. The average cost of detaining an immigrant is \$95 per person/ per day. Alternatives to detention, which generally involve some form of reporting, are significantly cheaper, with some programs costing as little as \$12 per day. These alternatives to detention have been shown to be effective with an estimated 91% appearance rate before the immigration courts. Despite the effectiveness of these less expensive and less restrictive alternatives to detention in ensuring compliance with immigration procedures, the use of immigration detention continues to rise at the expense of the United States' human rights obligations.

In September 2008, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) announced the publication of 41 new performance based detention standards which are to be implemented over 18 months and will take full effect in all facilities housing ICE detainees by January 2010. AI welcomes this step toward improving conditions in immigration detention, however, these guidelines are not legally enforceable. AI findings indicate that conditions of detention do not meet either international human rights standards or ICE guidelines. There is an urgent need to ensure that all facilities housing immigration detainees comply with the guidelines and international human rights law. Furthermore, ensuring that detention standards are legally binding, and creating a mechanism for independent oversight of their implementation, would better protect the human rights of immigrants in detention in the United States.

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL USA RECOMMENDATIONS

- ✓ U.S. Senators should co-sponsor and pass the Protect Citizens and Residents from Unlawful Detention Act (S. 1549), and the Strong STANDARDS Act (S. 1550).
- ✓ U.S. Representatives should co-sponsor and pass the Immigration Oversight and Fairness Act (H.R. 1215).

Amnesty International is a grassroots organization with 2.2 million members worldwide working to promote and defend human rights. For more information, contact Government Relations Director Sarah Burns at 202-544-0200, or visit www.aiusa.org.

Note: Because the Treaty for the Rights of Women (CEDAW) is a treaty (only taken up in the U.S. Senate) the Issue Brief on the following page is for Senators only and not for Representatives in the House.



RATIFY THE TREATY FOR THE RIGHTS OF WOMEN

The Treaty for the Rights of Women is the most complete international agreement on basic human rights for women. The Treaty is officially known as the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and was adopted by the U.N. General Assembly in 1979. The United States played an important role in drafting the Treaty, which 185 nations have ratified as of October 2009. The United States is now one of only eight countries that have yet to ratify CEDAW, alongside Sudan, Somalia, Qatar, Iran, Nauru, Palau and Tonga.

This Treaty has enormous support within the United States. Over 200 leading organizations representing millions of people across this country are united in support of U.S. ratification. The groups range from the AARP and Amnesty International, to Business and Professional Women USA and the American Association of University Women, to B'nai B'rith International and the American Bar Association.

The Treaty for the Rights of Women addresses basic human rights of women. It can be a useful tool to reduce violence and discrimination against women and girls, ensure girls and women receive the same access as boys and men to education and health care, and secure basic legal recourse for women and girls against violations and abuses of their human rights. Women around the world have used the Treaty to achieve important reforms in their country that reduce violence and discrimination. Measures have been taken against sex slavery, domestic violence, and trafficking of women; millions of girls are now receiving primary education that were previously denied access; women's health services have improved, saving lives during pregnancy and childbirth; and women have secured the right to own or inherit property.

The Treaty has always enjoyed bipartisan support in the United States, but has never come before the full Senate for a vote. The Senate Foreign Relations Committee (SFRC) has twice voted favorably – in 1994 and 2002 – with bipartisan support to send the Treaty to the Senate floor for ratification, but the Senate recessed each time before that occurred. In 2002, the Bush Administration stated that CEDAW was "generally desirable and should be approved." Later that year, then Attorney General John Ashcroft initiated another review of this Treaty, and in February 2007, the Bush Administration indicated that it was not pressing for ratification at the time. The Obama Administration has indicated its support for ratification. It is time for Senators to stand together in support of women and ratify CEDAW.

As the leading superpower, U.S. ratification would lend weight to the Treaty and provide valuable support to women seeking reforms in countries around the world. U.S. failure to ratify the treaty undermines the powerful principle that human rights of women are universal across all cultures, nations, and religions, and worthy of being guaranteed through international human rights standards. Without the United States as a party to the Treaty, repressive governments can easily discount the Treaty's provisions. As women in the United States take on greater leadership roles and participate in record numbers in local and national elections, it is time for the U.S. government to show the international community that it stands unequivocally for the rights of women internationally by ratifying this Treaty.

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL USA RECOMMENDATIONS:

- ✓ Senators should place statements in the Congressional Record supporting women's human rights and calling for ratification of the Treaty for the Rights of Women (CEDAW).
- ✓ The U.S. Senate should vote favorably to ratify the Treaty for the Rights of Women (CEDAW).
- ✓ The Obama Administration should support Senate ratification and use the Treaty to promote women's human rights worldwide.

Amnesty International is a grassroots organization with 2.2 million members worldwide working to promote and defend human rights. For more information, contact 202-544-0200, or visit www.aiusa.org.



Additional Ways Elected Officials Can Help

Close the detention center at Guantánamo Bay Naval Base

- Senators and Representatives should cosponsor and pass the Lawful Interrogation and Detention Act (S 147/HR 374) and take all appropriate steps to close the detention facility at Guantánamo Bay.

Address Human Rights Abuses Against Immigrants and Asylum Seekers

Elected officials should:

- Cosponsor and support the passage of the Immigration Oversight and Fairness Act (HR 1215) in the House and similar legislation in the Senate.
- U.S. Senators should co-sponsor and pass the Protect Citizens and Residents from Unlawful Detention Act (S. 1549), and the Strong STANDARDS Act (S. 1550).
- Urge the U.S. Attorney General and the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security to ensure a statutory presumption in law, policy, and practice against the administrative detention of immigrants and asylum seekers.
- Visit their local detention center. A complete list of federal and private detention centers in the U.S. can be found at detentionwatchnetwork.org.

Ratify the Treaty for the Rights of Women

- Senators and Representatives should place statements in the Congressional Record supporting women's human rights and calling for ratification of the Treaty for the Rights of Women (CEDAW).
- The U.S. Senate should vote favorably to ratify the Treaty for the Rights of Women (CEDAW).