

## General Convention of The Episcopal Church 2024 Archives' Research Report

**Resolution No.:** 2024-D028  
**Title:** Close Guantánamo Bay Prison  
**Proposer:** Sweeny-Bender, Mr. Tieran  
**Topic:** Criminal Justice, Public Policy

---

---

**Directly Related:** (Attached)

2006-D028 On the Topic of the Closure Guantanamo Prison (Rejected)

**Indirectly Related:** (Available in the [Acts of Convention](#) database, searchable by resolution number)

None

*In preparing this report, the Archives researched the resolutions in the Acts of Convention database for the period 1973 through 2022, selecting “direct” resolutions that have a substantive bearing on the proposed legislation. The “direct” resolutions are attached and “indirect” resolutions are available in the Acts of Convention database. Committee members who require other research assistance should contact the Archives through the [Research Request Form](#).*

# D028 - Close Guantánamo Bay Prison

---

**Final Status:** Not Yet Finalized

**Proposed by:** Sweeny-Bender, Mr. Tieran

**Endorsed by:** Lawton, Ms. Sarah, Russell, Ms. Laura

**Has Budget Implications:** No

**Cost:**

**Amends C&C or Rules of Order:** No

**Requests New Interim Body:** No

**Changes Mandate Of Existing Ib:** No

**Directs Dfms Staff:** No

**Directs Dioceses:** No

**Directs Executive Council:** No

**HiA:** No House Assigned

**Legislative Committee Currently Assigned:** No Committee Assigned

**Completion Status:** Incomplete

**Latest House Action:** N/A

**Supporting Documents:** Yes

---

## Resolution Text

*Resolved*, the House of \_\_\_\_\_ concurring,

That the Episcopal Church reaffirm and renew our call from March 2007 (in Executive Council Resolution EXC032007.31) to close and commit to never reopening the U.S. military detention facility at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, or any similar site, twenty-two years after the first of 780 Muslim men and boys were sent there as detainees, recognizing that indefinite military detention without access to a fair trial is deeply unjust, that the military base in Cuba was used for this purpose to avoid legal and constitutional constraints, and that the torture carried out on many of those who are still detained is a moral stain on the United States; we further recognize that there has been no justice for the victims or families of 9/11 due to this torture and the military commission process; we call upon the U.S. government to use all of their diplomatic leverage to transfer immediately the sixteen men who have already been cleared for transfer, and for justice to be served for the five men who have been charged in a way that offers closure for the 9/11 victims' families, and a swift, responsible, and lawful resolution of the cases of the remaining aging and increasingly ill men; and be it further

*Resolved*, that this Convention commend the work of The Episcopal Church's Office of Government Relations for continuing to shine a light on this issue even as prisoners continue to languish without trial, via their action alerts, public advocacy, and a recent

webinar hosted by the Office of Government Relations with Presiding Bishop Curry and the National Religious Campaign Against Torture.

## **Explanation**

On January 11, 2002, the United States sent the first of 780 detainees, all Muslim men and boys, to the Guantánamo Bay, Cuba detention facility to avoid legal constraints on treatment of prisoners and being able to hold them without trial. Many prisoners were subjected to torture, and few were charged with a crime; none had a fair trial. Twenty-two of the detainees were children at the time they arrived at Guantánamo. According the Center for Constitutional Rights, which has led the legal fight to represent these men and to close the prison, 86% of the detainees were sold to the United States for bounties at price of \$5,000 per person.

In 2004 and 2008, the Supreme Court established U.S. court jurisdiction over the prison and affirmed detainees' right to habeas corpus review. Military commissions today are ongoing but are proceeding very slowly. Of the remaining 30 detainees, 19 have not been charged with a crime; 16 are fully cleared for transfer but have not been released; 11 have active cases in the military commissions system; only one has actually been convicted of any crime. Over the course of 22 years since the facility opened, nine men have been convicted and an equal number have died while imprisoned. Because of the use of torture in their interrogations, and the increasing age and the physical and mental debilitation of the remaining prisoners, it will not be possible to provide a full and fair judicial resolution for all these cases. Guantánamo is the most expensive prison in the world, costing U.S. taxpayers \$540 million per year.

The Executive Council of The Episcopal Church passed a resolution in March, 2007 calling for the U.S. Government "to close the military prison at Guantanamo Bay" and "to oppose the use of secret detention centers around the world, and to cease the practice of 'extraordinary rendition,' in which terror suspects are sent without judicial review to nations where they may be tortured." 3 In 2009, President Obama signed an executive order limiting (though not ending completely) the CIA's authority to use extraordinary rendition and torture as counter-terrorism techniques. He also promised to close the Guantánamo detention center. Since that promise, many cases have been resolved, but the facility remains open for the last 30 prisoners, at a high cost in dollars and even more of a moral cost. No senior U.S. government official has ever been held accountable for the wrongful detention and torture of prisoners at Guantánamo.

Although we can rely on the 2007 statement of the Executive Council to advocate for the closure of this prison, after fourteen years it is time for the General Convention to reaffirm and renew this call seventeen years later, lest we forget.

Meanwhile, our Office of Government Relations has been diligent in advocating for justice in this matter, even as many advocates have moved to other issues, and the memory of Guantánamo is fading for many Americans, even though it remains open at such high cost both in dollars and as a moral wound.



**Resolution Number:** 2006-D028  
**Title:** On the Topic of the Closure Guantanamo Prison  
**Legislative Action Taken:** Rejected  
**Text of Resolution:**

*Resolved, the House of Deputies concurring, That the 75th General Convention call on the United States government to close the ~~for the U.S.~~ military prison at Guantánamo Bay ~~to be closed~~; and be it further Resolved, That the General Convention call on the United States government to oppose the use of secret detention centers around the world, and to cease the practice of “extraordinary rendition,” in which terror suspects are sent without judicial review to ~~states~~ nations where they may be tortured; and be it further Resolved, That the General Convention direct the Secretary of the General Convention to send copies of this resolution to the President of the United States and to appropriate members of the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives.*