

Justice for the detainees in Belmarsh, Guantanamo & Abu Ghraib

**BELMARSH PRISON
IS BRITAIN'S
GUANTANAMO**

Public meeting and protest

JUSTICE DENIED: No to detention without trial

To no man will we deny or delay justice....

Magna Carta, Article 40, 1215 AD

The appeal hearings of nine detainees held without trial at Belmarsh and Woodhill prisons and Broadmoor High Security Hospital will start on Wednesday 7 July at the High Court, The Strand.

PUBLIC MEETING AGAINST INTERNMENT:

Moses Room, House of Lords, Parliament, on Tues 6 July, 6.30pm.

The meeting will be hosted by Lord Rea and is supported by Liberty and Haldane Society of Socialist Lawyers.

PUBLIC PROTEST OUTSIDE THE HIGH COURT:

Wed 7 July, 9-11am, Royal Courts of Justice, The Strand, London.

Speakers include **Tony Benn**, **Shami Chakrabarti** (Director of Liberty), **Liz Davies** (barrister, Haldane Society of Socialist Lawyers), **Lord Thomas of Gresford OBE, QC**, **Liz Fekete** (Deputy Director of Institute of Race Relations, author of the publication "Anti-terrorism and human rights), **Dr Siddiqui** (Leader of the Muslim Parliament UK) and **Azmat Begg** (father of Guantanamo detainee, Moazzem Begg).

For information contact: CAMPACC on 020 7586 5892 or 020 7250 1315;
estella24@tiscali.co.uk; www.cacc.org.uk

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Britain's Guantanamo: unjust detention and complicity in torture

There are still twelve detainees being held without trial at Belmarsh and Woodhill prisons and Broadmoor high security hospital under the Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act (ATCSA). This legislation was rushed through Parliament in the wake of September 11th 2001 after the government declared that the UK faced 'a state of emergency that threatened the life of the nation'.

The most extreme part of the legislation, Part IV, applies to any foreign national in the UK that the Home Secretary 'reasonably suspects' of terrorism. If such a person could not be deported - e.g., because they would face torture in their home country - then the person could be detained indefinitely. In order to pass this law, the government had to derogate from Article 5 of The European Convention on Human Rights, which guarantees the right to liberty. The UK is the only government in Europe to have done so.

The law gave powers to the Special Immigration Appeals Committee (SIAC), instead of a court, to hear secret evidence against anyone who challenges their own detention under the Act. The suspect or his lawyers are excluded from closed sittings and have no right to hear the full case against them.

Government officials acknowledged that such evidence could include 'information' extracted under torture and obtained in the oppressive conditions in Abu Ghraib, Guantanamo Bay, Bagram Airbase, or any other of the Coalition's holding centres for prisoners of the 'war on terror'. By allowing such evidence to be used against these men, the British government is complicit in this torture.

In February 2002 the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture visited the detainees in Belmarsh and published a report stating: "The belief that they [the detainees] had no means to contest the broad accusations made against them was a source of considerable distress, as was the indefinite nature of detention. The limited out-of-cell time and impoverished regime offered to them did little to alleviate the situation.

Campaign Against Criminalising Communities, 020 7586 5892 or 020 7250 1315, estella24@tiscali.co.uk; www.cacc.org.uk

"Further, at least two of the detainees had been diagnosed as suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder, and one had a psychiatric history, including attempted suicides and in-hospital treatment."

In December 2003 the Privy Counsellor Review Committee, chaired by Lord Newton, reported to Parliament on workings of the ATCSA. The committee felt the need to "strongly recommend that the Part IV powers which allow foreign nationals to be detained potentially indefinitely should be replaced as a matter of urgency."

This was backed by an Amnesty International report, entitled *Justice Perverted*, which came out at the same time, stating: "the organisation is alarmed at the SIAC's reliance on secret evidence, and at the SIAC's willingness to rely on evidence alleged to have been adduced as a result of torture, in reaching its judgments."

Despite these reports, last February Parliament voted to retain internment powers (Part IV) of the Act.

A glimmer of hope came in March when SIAC, against the wishes of the Home Secretary, rejected the detention of one detainee, known only as M for legal reasons. Speaking after his release, M alleged that several detainees had lost their minds in the prison: "Three or four have become mad. They are talking like they are crazy. It is because of this law."

His words were verified when SIAC then ruled another detainee, who had become mentally ill since being detained in Belmarsh, could be released on bail under strict house arrest, on grounds that unlimited detention was prolonging his mental illness.

Appeal hearings in the Court of Appeal of several detainees will begin on Wednesday 7th July challenging the SIAC rulings in their cases: challenging the lack of fair trial guarantees and the reliance on 'secret intelligence' which has now seen them imprisoned for over 2 years.

We, who are free, must keep fighting for the freedoms that they are denied.

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