

Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Calls for Closure of Guantanamo



Brussels, November 11 (RHC)-- The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) has urged the United States to close the Guantanamo Bay prison -- located on illegally-occupied Cuban territory -- after either trying the remaining detainees or freeing them.

The OSCE's 280-page report, released Tuesday for the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), centers on the human rights situation of the prisoners at Guantanamo, further calling for the full investigation of past human rights violations, including torture and other inhuman treatments, as well as the prosecution of those responsible.

"No person should be subject to indefinite detention without trial. As one of the oldest democracies in the OSCE, the United States of America should lead by example, by making it crystal clear that everyone has the right to a fair trial. The detainees should either be charged or released," said Michael Georg Link, the director of ODIHR.

Link also hailed efforts by U.S. President Barack Obama to close the prison, although he has not managed to do it yet, given the U.S. Congress overwhelmingly passed a \$607 billion defense policy bill

that prohibits the transfer of detainees from the Guantanamo Bay military prison in Cuba to U.S. detention facilities.

"As director of ODIHR, I strongly welcome United States President Barack Obama administration's intention to develop a concrete plan to close down the detention facility at Guantanamo Bay."

In an attempt to provide a comprehensive analysis of the situation at Guantanamo, the report examines a broad range of human rights issues, identifies violations of commitments to OSCE and other international human rights standards, and offers recommendations to address them.

"There is a clear need for full transparency and accountability in addressing the violations of the human rights of detainees, including torture, that have occurred at the Guantanamo detention facility, and as part of the CIA rendition program," said Omer Fisher, a deputy head with the ODIHR. "Detainees have a right to redress, including access to justice, to compensation, and to medical rehabilitation."

The report is based on interviews with U.S. government officials, military and civilian lawyers, non-governmental organizations, and former detainees. ODIHR was not granted access by the U.S. government to interview detainees currently held at Guantanamo.

The Guantanamo Bay prison at the U.S. naval base in Cuba was opened in January 2002 to hold 'terror suspects' captured during the so-called war on terror. The U.S. itself has come under international pressure for using torture, including water-boarding and force-feeding detainees at the prison.

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