

# *Barack Obama Blasts U.S. Congress for Blocking Guantanamo Prison Closure*

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Washington, January 20 (RHC)-- Former U.S. President Barack Obama has condemned the Republican-dominated Congress for thwarting his plans to close the notorious U.S. military prison located at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

In a letter to the Republican leaders of Congress -- House Speaker Paul Ryan and Senate President Pro Tempore Orrin Hatch -- on Thursday, Obama said the prison "never should have been opened in the first place."

"There is simply no justification beyond politics for the Congress' insistence on keeping the facility open," he stated.

"Members of Congress who obstruct efforts to close the facility, given the stakes involved for our security, have abdicated their responsibility to the American people," Obama continued.

The closure of the Guantanamo prison was among the main campaign promises of Obama during the 2008 presidential election. Obama vowed to close it within a year when he came to office in January

2009. But his efforts had been continually blocked by Republican lawmakers in Congress.

The U.S. Senate has confirmed that prisoners were regularly tortured at the notorious facility, which was set up by former U.S. President George W. Bush after the September 11, 2001 attacks to hold suspected al-Qaeda and Taliban detainees.

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