

Performance Of Play in **Part of National Campaign to Bring Attention to Conditions** **at Guantánamo Bay**

[MAKE SURE TO INCLUDE CONTACT INFORMATION]

For release
[THE DATE]

[YOUR TOWN, YOUR STATE]- To highlight the Bush Administration's unlawful treatment of detainees at Guantánamo, people in cities and towns across the country will be performing readings of the play *GUANTANAMO: 'Honor Bound to Defend Freedom.'* The play tells the true story of four people detained by the Bush Administration at the Guantánamo prison camp through testimony and interviews. Chained and hooded, more than 600 "enemy combatants" have passed a sign above the entrance to the U.S. military base in Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, that reads, "Honor Bound to Defend Freedom." Exposed to abuse and denied a chance to defend themselves in a court of law, their stories have largely been ignored. An upcoming event in [NAME OF YOUR TOWN] on [DATE OF YOUR PRODUCTION] will put them center stage. [PLEASE INCLUDE THE DETAILS OF YOUR PRODUCTION HERE.]

This performance of the award winning play *GUANTÁNAMO: 'Honor Bound to Defend Freedom'* is part of a nationwide effort organized by the Center for Constitutional Rights and the Bill of Rights Defense Committee to have the play performed in communities around the country in order to highlight the situation at Guantánamo. The moving first-hand accounts recreated in the play put a human face on the legal struggle that CCR has been fighting to get the detainees their day in court. Showing the often horrific conditions the detainees have faced at Guantánamo, this production of the play also brings attention to the Bush Administration's flagrant disregard of the Supreme Court's decision which ruled that the detainees have the right to challenge their detention in U.S. courts. Further information about the Guantánamo Reading Project can be found at www.ccr-ny.org/gac.

GUANTANAMO: 'Honor Bound to Defend Freedom' is a play which tells the gripping true story of four detainees (three British citizens and one Iraqi national who had been living legally in the UK for 21 years prior to his detention), all of whom spent at least two years held in isolation in horrendous conditions at Guantánamo. It weaves together personal accounts from letters and interviews, legal opinion and political debate from the public record, including statements by U.K. and U.S. officials into a chilling account of life at Guantánamo Bay. At present, three of these detainees have been released without charges. One languishes in Guantánamo in political and legal limbo, as the British government refuses to represent him.

GUANTANAMO: 'Honor Bound to Defend Freedom', written by Victoria Brittain and Gillian Slovo, was first performed in London, where it received rave reviews. The play went on to run in New York and San Francisco where critics continued to praise the work. At the time of the play's New York debut, Ben Brantley of *The New York Times* wrote that the play "exerts an icy visceral charge" and is "deeply moving" in its portrayal of the situation at Guantánamo on a personal level. The first performance in the Guantánamo Reading Project series was held in Northampton Massachusetts and was organized by the Rosenberg Fund for Children.

Background

In the wake of September 2001, hundreds of non-U.S. citizens have been detained overseas, labeled by the U.S. as “enemy combatants,” then transported and imprisoned by the U.S. Government without charge or trial at the U.S. military base in Guantánamo Bay, Cuba and in other locations around the world. The prisoners have been held under inhumane conditions; many without the ability to see, speak or write to lawyers; without visits from family members; and without any charges specified against them. They face trial before a closed military tribunal with prosecution, defense and judge appointed by President Bush. If found guilty, they face indefinite detention.

The Bush Administration has sought to justify its actions by claiming that no alien held by the U.S. outside the country has any constitutional rights- not even the right to a hearing to challenge their detention. Beginning in 2002, the Center for Constitutional Rights (CCR) has led the legal challenge to this policy. After losing several rounds of litigation in the lower courts, CCR brought their appeal to the Supreme Court in April 2004. On June 28, 2004, the Supreme Court issued a ruling that the detainees had the right to file writs of habeas corpus with U.S. courts to test the legality of their detentions. (A writ of habeas corpus is the legal means by which a detained person can require the government to justify that detention.)

Although the Supreme Court ruling opened the door to the courthouse, it did not actually free any detainees. It will now be up to the lower courts to determine whether the administration has legally justified the detention of each of the detainees. As of August 2004, other law firms have stepped forward to join the CCR and cases have been filed on behalf of 58 detainees. The first and most immediate demand is for lawyers to see their clients and for doctors to see the detainees. The U.S. administration has, so far, been dragging its feet on allowing attorney access.

Meanwhile, though, the Government has been acting to limit the political and legal damage resulting from the Supreme Court ruling. It has begun to free detainees, clearly realizing that in any legitimate hearing on their detentions, it would have no evidence to justify their continued imprisonment. To date, of all the people released to their home countries, only a handful have been designated by their own governments for trial or continued detention. Most have simply been freed without facing any charges.

About the Organizers

Center for Constitutional Rights (www.ccr-ny.org)

The Center for Constitutional Rights (CCR) is a non-profit legal and educational organization dedicated to protecting and advancing the rights guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Founded in 1966 by attorneys who represented civil rights demonstrators in the South, CCR is committed to the creative use of law as a positive force for social change. Since its founding, CCR has consistently broken new legal ground in defense of human and civil rights while leading the legal battle against government misconduct.

CCR is on the forefront of the battle to preserve the Constitution and the rule of law in the fight against terrorism. Working with many other organizations, CCR is fighting some of the toughest and most important battles in the struggle against the Bush Administration's unprecedented trampling of civil and human rights both at home and around the world. CCR took the case of the Guantánamo detainees when no one else would and won the Supreme Court challenge on their behalf last summer. CCR is now coordinating hundreds of attorneys and law firms in the legal fight to make sure the detainees have their day in court.

Bill of Rights Defense Committee (www.bordc.org)

Founded in November 2001, the Bill of Rights Defense Committee (BORDC) is helping hundreds of communities across the country participate in an ongoing national debate about civil liberties and antiterrorism legislation that threatens liberties, such as the USA PATRIOT Act, Homeland Security Act, and several federal executive orders. The BORDC engaged in public education and debate about anti-terrorism legislation and the Bill of Rights and worked with the Northampton (MA) city council on a resolution to protect those rights, which the council passed unanimously. Its web site (www.bordc.org) documents similar efforts and provides information, materials, and assistance to other groups working on the grassroots level to restore the civil liberties guaranteed by the Bill of Rights. As of this writing, 372 local governments and the state legislatures of Hawaii, Alaska, Vermont, Maine and Montana have enacted resolutions or ordinances upholding Bill of Rights protections for their 57 million residents.

Throughout U.S. history, and especially in times of war and other stress, the U.S. government has curtailed the rights of foreigners and those who dissent. BORDC believes that this cycle can be broken and the targeting of groups ended by:

- ?? Education to know our rights
- ?? Staying vigilant to threats to our rights and to the rights of others
- ?? Organizing using protections guaranteed in the Bill of Rights to defend our rights.