NATIONAL CATHOLIC REPORTER
Published on *National Catholic Reporter* (http://ncronline.org)

Faith leaders tell Congress to close Gitmo

Angela Abbamonte Religion News Service | Nov. 13, 2009

More than 40 leaders of major faith groups sent a letter to Congress on Thursday (Nov. 12) urging the closing of the prison at Guantanamo Bay.

"Guantanamo is the symbol of our country's violation of our deepest values," the letter says. "Our government must close the detention center at Guantanamo Bay now to help us heal spiritually and to put an end to this dark and errant chapter in our history."

President Obama signed an executive order last January to close the prison, which houses suspected terrorists and prisoners of war.

His initial campaign promise was to close the facility within a year, but Congress has been raising impediments such as cutting the funds to move prisoners to U.S. soil, and asking Obama for a detailed plan before agreeing to move prisoners.

The religious leaders' letter was drafted by the National Religious Campaign Against Torture, an interfaith organization that claims the U.S. has tortured prisoners at Guantanamo.

"Our concern as a religious organization is with the `symbol' of torture," said the Rev. Richard Killmer, executive director of NRCAT. "We're very concerned about America's image."

The letter was signed by religious leaders such as Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) General Minister and President Sharon Watkins; National Council of Churches General Secretary Michael Kinnamon; United Methodist Church Council of Bishops President Gregory Vaughn Palmer; Mennonite Church USA Executive Director J. Ron Byler; and Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association President Yael Ridburg.

Source URL (retrieved on *08/28/2014 - 08:16*): http://ncronline.org/news/peace-justice/faith-leaders-tell-congress-close-gitmo