



## ***Committee on International Justice and Peace***

3211 FOURTH STREET NE • WASHINGTON DC 20017-1194 • 202-541-3160

WEBSITE: WWW.USCCB.ORG/JPHD • FAX 202-541-3339

April 10, 2018

The Honorable James N. Mattis  
Secretary of Defense  
Pentagon

Dear Secretary Mattis:

In January, President Donald Trump signed an executive order reversing the closure of the detention facilities at Guantanamo Bay, indicating that our nation “may transport additional detainees” there. The President asked that you, in consultation with others, recommend policies regarding “the disposition of individuals captured in connection with an armed conflict, including policies governing transfer of individuals to U.S. Naval Station Guantanamo Bay.”

As Chair of the Committee on International Justice and Peace of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, I am concerned about indefinite detention and that expanded use of the prison at Guantanamo may lead to more prisoners being subjected to indefinite detention without trial. From my visits there, I am aware of the efforts to respect the prisoners, but also of the stress on the military assigned to guard them.

Keeping our national MIA experience in mind, you would agree that holding prisoners in indefinite detention without trial is inhumane. Pope Francis, in remarks to the International Association of Penal Law in 2014, spoke against detaining “unsentenced prisoners,” calling it an attack “against the dignity and integrity of the human person.” St. John Paul II, in a March 2000 address to the National Association of Magistrates, said “Justice, moreover, must make every effort to ensure that trials are conducted swiftly: their excessive length is becoming intolerable for citizens and results in a real injustice.”

At present there are only 41 detainees at Guantanamo, including five recommended for release, who are being held there at a cost of millions per detainee. As you develop your policy recommendations, I urge you to consider transferring detainees who have been cleared, preventing the assignment of any new detainees to Guantanamo, and amending the military tribunal system to resolve the fate of the remaining detainees thus ending their indefinite detention without trial.

Sincerely yours,

Most Reverend Timothy P. Broglio  
Archbishop for the Military Services, USA  
Chair, Committee on International Justice and Peace