**Press Release**

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**Amnesty International USA Launches Campaign on President Obama’s Last 100 Days**

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**(NEW YORK, NY)** - Amnesty International USA (AIUSA) is launching a new campaign calling on President Obama to prioritize human rights during his last 100 days in office by accomplishing three outstanding tasks before he leaves office: close the prison at Guantánamo Bay, stop selling arms to countries that use them to commit war crimes and human rights violations, and grant protection to those fleeing violence in Central America. Amnesty International USA has sent a [letter](http://bit.ly/AIUSA100days) to the president to formally call on him to achieve these goals and is encouraging its 1.2 million supporters in the U.S. to join the campaign by signing an email petition.

“President Obama has an ever-narrowing window of opportunity to make good on some of the promises he made when he was inaugurated, and elevate human rights as a priority before his departure,” said Margaret Huang, executive director of Amnesty International USA. “Each of the actions Amnesty is asking President Obama to take are achievable and would bolster the U.S.’s global leadership on human rights in a world rife with conflicts and crises. The president’s legacy must be one of resolute action on behalf of the most vulnerable.”

**Closing Guantánamo:** Though the Obama administration has made significant headway this year in transferring detainees from the prison at Guantánamo Bay, 61 still remain. Many of these detainees have not been charged with a crime despite being held for as many as 14 years. If President Obama fails to close Guantánamo, it is all too likely that the island prison will remain open indefinitely, perhaps even taking new detainees captured in a forever, global “war” in which the entire world is treated as battlefield.

“If President Obama does not close Guantánamo before he leaves office, it may never close,” said Huang. “Guantánamo has become a symbol of systematic violations of international human rights that continue to this day. Allowing the prison to remain open and allowing detainees to languish without charge or fair trial sets a dangerous standard for future administrations.”

**Protect Asylum-Seekers and Refugees:** Stark homicide rates, ineffective legal structures, and corrupt law enforcement officials have forced many people to flee their homes in the “Northern Triangle” countries of Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras to seek refuge in Mexico and the U.S. However, not only does the U.S. deny the asylum claims of many people seeking refuge, the government then sends them back directly to the countries from which they fled. President Obama has the power to protect women, men, and children who have fled unimaginable violence -- and he must take action urgently, by ensuring that people who have fled Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras are treated with compassion as they try to rebuild their lives safely. He can do that with a stroke of the pen, by designating all three countries for Temporary Protective Status, which would protect these men, women and children from being returned to ongoing humanitarian crises.

“While the president must also honor existing international commitments aimed at alleviating the global refugee crisis, he must not leave office without addressing the crisis on our own doorstep,” said Huang. “It is not enough to trust the safety of thousands of people to the next president. President Obama must give refuge to those fleeing violence and grant temporary protection to those already here.”

**Deny Arms to Human Rights Abusers:** The U.S. has continued to sell weapons and provide military assistance to Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Israel, and other U.S. allies in the Middle East despite evidence that such arms and aid have been used to commit violations of international human rights and humanitarian law. Recently, the U.S. announced the sale of more than $2 billion in arms to Saudi Arabia, despite the Saudi-led coalition's widespread bombing of civilians in Yemen in what are likely war crimes and other serious violations of international law. The president must impose stronger human rights conditionality on all U.S. arms sales, transfers, and military aid, which should be the first step towards an arms embargo on all countries where U.S. arms bear a substantial risk of being used to commit or facilitate war crimes or other serious violations.

“U. S. arms and military aid have been used against civilians in the Middle East for far too long,” said Huang. “President Obama can ensure that this stops with his administration by imposing stricter conditions on military aid, with the aim of ultimately imposing an arms embargo on any country where U.S. arms have been used to violate human rights.”