



Amnesty International Lethbridge Action Circle

NEWS
For Immediate Release

2710 7 Avenue North
Lethbridge, Alberta T1H 0Z5
Phone: 403-327-8196
Email: amnestylethbridge@shaw.ca
www.ailethbridge.com

Lethbridge Action Circle Supports Amnesty International Call for End to Military Commissions

LETHBRIDGE – Members of the Amnesty International Lethbridge Action Circle have been supporting Amnesty International Canada's demand to end military tribunals and close Guantanamo Bay, and have been advocating for fair treatment for Omar Khadr, a Canadian citizen. It has been five years since Omar Khadr, then fifteen years old, was arrested and taken to Guantanamo Bay. He states that he has been tortured during this time, and has not seen his family or any consular officials. He is only the second person to be tried by a military commission since the Guantanamo prison was established – the first, David Hicks, is now serving nine months in an Australian prison under a plea agreement. The remaining prisoners continue to be detained without charge. Since the prison has been open, a number of children between 13 to 18 years of age have been incarcerated.

The ruling of Col. Brownback on June 4, 2007 dismissed the charges against Omar Khadr because the US government failed to establish jurisdiction over the case. According to Col. Brownback, Omar Khadr was not classified as an "unlawful enemy combatant" whose case could be heard at a military tribunal.

Once again, Amnesty International Lethbridge Action Circle supports Amnesty International Canada in calling upon the United States to abandon military commissions, which fall short of international standards for fair trials. Omar Khadr must be returned to Canada or brought to trial in a civilian court. The Canadian justice system is competent to adjudicate the appropriate legal consequences for Omar Khadr, bearing in mind Omar's age at the time the alleged acts occurred. He must receive the same procedural protection as any other person charged with a serious offence, no more, no less. An investigation into allegations of torture and ill treatment of Omar Khadr while in US custody must be undertaken. Finally, the detention facility at Guantanamo Bay must be closed.

For more information, or to schedule an interview, contact Mary Kosta at 403-327-8196.

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