Witnessing Guantanamo: Amy Goodman Speaks With Former Detainees

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May 31, Saturday -- Via videoconference from Sudan, three former Guantanamo Bay detainees will talk for the first time to a U.S. audience about their prison experiences at a May 31 benefit for the Guantanamo Testimonials Project, a UC Davis-based effort to catalog accounts of prisoner abuse from print and broadcast sources around the world.

The event will take place at 8 p.m. in the Sciences Lecture Hall at UC Davis. Tickets are $10.

The former detainees -- Adel Hasan Hamad, Salim Adam and Hammad Ali Amno Gad Allah -- will be interviewed by Amy Goodman, executive producer and host of the independent news program "Democracy Now!" Goodman has won numerous journalism awards, including the Robert F. Kennedy Prize for International Reporting.

Hamad was a hospital administrator in Sudan when he was arrested and imprisoned at Guantanamo, according to Almerindo Ojeda, a professor of linguistics at UC Davis and principal investigator of the Guantanamo Testimonials Project. Adam and Gad Allah were working for the Revival of Islamic Heritage Society, which U.S. officials alleged was affiliated with terrorist activity. All three men were classified and detained as enemy combatants, but they were released without explanation by 2007.

The event is organized by the UC Davis Center for the Study of Human Rights in the Americas and is co-sponsored by the UC Davis Hemispheric Institute on the Americas, the UC Davis School of Law, the UC Davis Muslim Student Association, the UC Davis Middle East/South Asia Studies Program and the American Civil Liberties Union of Yolo County. The former detainees' participation in the videoconference was arranged by Isma'il Kushkush, a UC Davis graduate who is now working as a journalist for Islam Online.

In addition to detainee accounts, the Guantanamo Testimonials Project has also collected accounts of the Guantanamo experiences of FBI agents, interrogators, military physicians and lawyers as related in e-mails, memos, letters, media interviews and other documents and sources. The project's goal is to provide a scholarly assessment of the impact of the "war on terror" on human rights in the Americas. The accounts are available at http://humanrights.ucdavis.edu.

Seating is limited, so those planning to attend are encouraged to buy tickets early. Tickets can be purchased online at http://tickets.com/, over the phone at (530) 752-1915 and in person at the Freeborn Hall box office on the UC Davis campus or the Davis Farmers Market.

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