

# *Activists urge protest actions to demand closure of Guantánamo naval base*

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Havana, Feb 22 (RHC)-- Various initiatives are planned around the world to mark February 23th, the 115th anniversary of the illegal occupation of a portion of Cuban territory in Guantánamo by a U.S. naval base.

Pacifist groups in several countries plan to hold major protests to demand the closure of the military base, turned into a notorious incarceration and torture center after the 9/11 attacks in the U.S.

Planned activities include mobilizations, messages in alternative and, where possible, more traditional media outlets, public concerts and other cultural actions --all aimed at calling public attention to the issue, especially in the United States.

One of the actions will be to use Twitter to share clear messages under the hashtags: #ReturnGuantanamoCubaNow; #USOutOfGuanatamo; #EEUUFueradeGuantanamo; #DevuelvanGuantanamoaCubaYa!; including tagging the twitter account of President Donald Trump @POTUS.

Friday's actions are part of a far broader protest agenda agreed upon at a recent international conference at the University of Baltimore in the U.S. state of Maryland, organized by the Coalition Against U.S. Foreign Military Bases. It addressed the need to close all U.S. military bases abroad.

At the conference, U.S. and foreign pacifists approved a resolution on the Guantánamo Naval Base. It reads: "the Coalition Against U.S. Foreign Bases unanimously calls upon the global peace movement to organize, on or around February 23, 2018, actions calling for the United States to promptly withdraw all its forces and personnel from Guantánamo Bay and immediately declare all agreements ceding Cuban control of Guantánamo Bay to the U.S. null and void."

In statements to Radio Havana Cuba, Graciela Ramírez, coordinator of the International Committee for Peace Justice and Peoples' Dignity, termed as very important the resolution on the Guantánamo naval base adopted at the conference in Baltimore.

"It is a very important action, because it calls on the U.S. to withdraw from the enclave and return it back to Cuba. In requesting this, we have the support of the world solidarity movement, which is accompanying our protest actions against U.S. military presence around the world."

Among world personalities, who support this cause is Argentine Nobel Peace Prize laureate Adolfo Pérez Esquivel. He charged that Guantánamo must be returned to its legitimate owners --the Cuban people. Pérez Esquivel also called for the closure of the U.S. prison at the enclave, which critics and human rights organizations call a concentration camp, where prisoners are held illegally without charge or trial.

It is common knowledge that prisoners at Guantánamo are subjected to brutal abuses routinely. There are reports of prisoners, who committed suicide at the camp.

Torture, desolation and injustice-- all prevail at the prison center in the U.S. naval base in Guantánamo.

"We had hoped, based on the campaign promises of former U.S. President Barack Obama that this whole situation would come to an end, that the prison center would be closed and Guantánamo returned to Cuba, once and for all," said Graciela. She insisted though that Obama didn't keep his promise. "That's what they do, imperialism always deceives the people."

Activities to demand the closure of all U.S. military bases abroad will continue throughout the year, as outlined on the website of the Coalition Against U.S. Foreign Bases: [www.NoForeignBases.org](http://www.NoForeignBases.org).

The group notes that the U.S. has 860 military bases in 144 countries around the world. These facilities were created under the false pretext of guaranteeing security and/or fighting drug and human trafficking.

In fact, critics charge, the U.S. military bases have been very effective in crushing attempts at social change in countries that distance themselves from capitalism and Washington's hegemonic interests.

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