



CONTACT: Jen Nessel, 212.614.6449, [jnessel@ccrjustice.org](mailto:jnessel@ccrjustice.org)

## D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals Decision Authorizes Continued Illegal Detention of 17 Wrongly-Detained Guantánamo Detainees

*February 18, 2009, Washington, DC* – The Center for Constitutional Rights (CCR) issued a statement today in response to the court of appeals reversal of D.C. District Court Judge Ricardo Urbina’s October 2008 decision ordering the U.S. government to release 17 wrongly-imprisoned Guantánamo detainees into the United States. The men, Uighurs from China, have been imprisoned without charge for over seven years. The U.S. government has acknowledged it neither has the authority to detain them nor can it release them to China because of a risk of torture. Yet, in the decision today, the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals held that the indefinite detention of the men could continue.

“The court has acknowledged that the detention of these men is illegal but has refused to do anything about it. This is indefensible,” said **Emi MacLean**, staff attorney at the Center for Constitutional Rights. “The new administration must act quickly to remedy the failings of the old. If President Obama is committed to closing Guantánamo, he must allow these stranded Uighurs into the United States. We are not in a position to ask for the support of other countries in accepting detainees from Guantánamo if we cannot share the burden ourselves. Freedom for these men is long overdue.”

CCR has led the legal battle over Guantanamo for the last six years – sending the first ever habeas attorney to the base and sending the first attorney to meet with a former CIA “ghost detainee” there. CCR has been responsible for organizing and coordinating more than 500 pro bono lawyers across the country in order to represent the men at Guantanamo, ensuring that nearly all have the option of legal representation. In addition, CCR has been working to resettle the approximately 60 men who remain at Guantánamo because they cannot return to their country of origin for fear of persecution and torture.

The Center for Constitutional Rights is dedicated to advancing and protecting the rights guaranteed by the United States Constitution and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Founded in 1966 by attorneys who represented civil rights movements in the South, CCR is a non-profit legal and educational organization committed to the creative use of law as a positive force for social change. Visit [www.ccrjustice.org](http://www.ccrjustice.org).

