

May 23, 2023

Dear President Biden,

We are the children of 9/11. We were young, some of us just infants, some unborn, when our parents and grandparents were killed on September 11, 2001. We have lived the majority of our lives without those loved ones. We have grown up hearing promise after promise from our government that the people most responsible for 9/11 would be brought to justice through a fair and public trial, and convictions, and every one of those promises has been broken. We do not want your administration to fail us, too.

As we came of age, we learned about the opening of the detention facilities at Guantanamo, indefinite detention, the CIA black sites, and torture. These actions were supposedly carried out on our behalf but ultimately without any benefit to us. Most significantly, we learned of the U.S. government's decision to forego trials in federal court and prosecute the five men allegedly responsible for the deaths of our parents and grandparents in an offshore military commission at Guantanamo.

It has been more than ten years since the five men accused of planning and supporting the 9/11 attacks were charged in a military commission, but we are no closer to an actual trial today than we were 10 years ago. Some of us have traveled to Guantanamo to bear witness to the pre-trial hearings in the 9/11 case. But over time it grew clear that the proceedings in the courtroom were a source of endless frustration. We were learning nothing about how and why the attacks were carried out, or who was responsible for exactly what.

It seemed hopeless.

When, in March of last year, the 9/11 prosecution team initiated negotiations to obtain guilty pleas from the defendants, we saw it as a breakthrough. We believe plea deals will finally provide answers we have sought for more than two decades because they would include admissions of responsibility and stipulations of fact from each defendant, and the requirement that the defendants answer family members' questions. Perhaps more importantly, plea deals would bring us finality: an end to the legal limbo with which we have lived our entire lives.

But after more than a year, plea negotiations have stalled because an "inter-agency review" of so-called "policy principles" that will dictate the terms of any deals appears to have gone nowhere. In fact, at a recent meeting with victim family members, the 9/11 prosecution team said that they planned to return to pre-trial litigation because senior administration officials have not addressed the "policy principles." The thought of going back to endless courtroom proceedings, when more than 10 years of litigation did not lead to a trial, is painful.

It is unfathomable to us, Mr. President, that you would allow one group of government officials to raise our hopes that this excruciating process might finally come to an end, only to have another group of government officials crush our hopes in the most disrespectful way—by ignoring what they were asked to do.

Mr. President, how much longer do we have to wait? We all paid a terrible price when we were so young, and we live every day missing some of the most special members of our families. It feels as if rectifying these failures to achieve justice, to honor the rule of law, and to respect human rights has now

fallen on us. Some of us are increasingly afraid that this burden could pass to *our* children. Only you can make sure that it does not.

Mr. President, you were not responsible for opening Guantanamo, for authorizing torture, or for creating the failed military commission system. But you can put an end to all of it. We want whatever justice can still be had for the parents and grandparents we lost, and it is clear that a plea agreement is the only way. We are imploring you not to let the process drag on any longer.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth L. Miller, Rachel Becker, Katherine Miller, Port Jervis, NY, daughters of FDNY firefighter Douglas C. Miller

Alexander M. Filipov, Concord, MA, and Sophia Elizabeth and Benjamin Max Alexander Filipov, Hamilton, MA, grandchildren of Alexander Milan Filipov

Cait Hynes, New York, NY, daughter of FDNY firefighter Walter G. Hynes

Olin and Magnus Morrissey, San Francisco, CA, and Robert Silas and Sasha Ruth, Rochester, NY, grandchildren of Robert G. LeBlanc

Leila and Jessica Murphy, New York, NY, daughters of Brian Murphy

Aidan Salamone, Brooklyn, NY, son of John Patrick Salamone