



MEDIA ADVISORY

North Carolina Stop Torture Now

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**Cleaning Up Johnston County:
Volunteers Adopt Highway Leading to Headquarters of “Torture Taxi” Firm**

SMITHFIELD, NC — On Jan. 5, 2013, in addition to gloves and boots, community volunteers will don orange jumpsuits like those worn by Guantánamo detainees. They will be “cleaning up the mess” along two miles of Swift Creek Road, the highway that services the Johnston County Airport and its controversial tenant, Aero Contractors.

Through the “Adopt-a-Highway” program, NC Department of Transportation has assigned responsibility to North Carolina Stop Torture Now for cleaning a section of Swift Creek Road that provides access to Aero Contractors. NC DOT posts signs at each end of the route recognizing the group's efforts.

The first of several events called “Cleaning Up Johnston County” is scheduled Saturday, Jan. 5 (rain/snow date of Jan. 12). Volunteers will gather at the Johnston County Airport for a safety briefing and then fan out in crews to pick up trash along the road for several hours.

Aero Contractors is a CIA-affiliated aviation company that has helped secretly transport detainees in the “war on terror” to overseas prisons where they were interrogated using torture. One of them, Khaled el-Masri, won a landmark judgment on Dec. 13, 2012, in the European Court of Human Rights. Mr. el-Masri had sued Macedonia for detaining and handing him over to the CIA, which then transported him to a secret prison in Afghanistan aboard a Boeing business jet operated by Aero Contractors.

“The dirty ‘secret’ has long been out,” said Allyson Caison, resident of Selma, NC, and a leader of NC Stop Torture Now. “The CIA and other government agencies can’t hide that they’ve used Johnston County for a global program of enforced disappearance and torture.”

“Torture has stained Johnston County and North Carolina,” Caison said. “It’s been well documented, and other countries are taking responsibility. Why can’t we?”

In Jan. 2012, the Immigration and Human Rights Policy Clinic of the UNC School of Law issued an internationally recognized report entitled “The North Carolina Connection to Extraordinary Rendition and Torture.” (<http://www.law.unc.edu/documents/clinicalprograms/finalrenditionreportweb.pdf>)

“The best way to clean house is to let the sun shine in,” said one of the report’s authors, Deborah Weissman, a professor of law at UNC-Chapel Hill. “We need a transparent investigation of how North Carolina came to be the transportation hub of a torture program that is both immoral and against international law.”

WHAT: North Carolinians will be picking up trash along Swift Creek Road, home of Johnston County torture-associated airline Aero Contractors.

WHEN: Saturday, Jan. 5, 2013. **Media are invited to the Johnston County Airport at 11 am for a short, visually oriented, "cleanup"- themed program** before volunteers pick up trash along the highway.

WHERE: Johnston County Airport, 3149 Swift Creek Road, Smithfield, NC