

# Military Families Speak Out

April 2021

## Troops Home Now!

### Editorials from MFSO members:

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Today marks 18 years since that fateful March 27, 2003 day when 3 soldiers came to my house to tell me that my son Jesus had died a hero on Iraq's land from an enemy bullet, information which later corroborated that it was a lie, and that my son died from a fragmentation bomb from his same American army- an illegal weapon according to the Geneva Convention.

In these 18 years, many things have happened in my life that changed me totally; my son's mom and I divorced, the family excluded me, arguing that I profited with the death of Jesus, and many people hidden in the streets shouted "Traitor" at me for my simple act of speaking out against the illegal invasion of American troops on the Iraqi people.

But I also found wonderful people who lent me handfuls of love and helped me not fall, helped me carry my pain through the world in a peaceful way, denouncing lies, discrimination, abuse, and I give thanks to Jorge Marshal, Christian Ramirez, Jeeni Crizenso, Chuck Lowery, Martin Eder, Consuelo Martinez, Lynn Gonzales, Juan del Rio, Fernando Syrian, to my entire Military Families Speak Out family, and to so many more that it would be impossible to name them to everyone here.

I have traveled to many countries. I speak in schools, on street and park benches, in theaters, in universities, in a cafeteria, at the subway stops, in the markets, anywhere where youth would like to listen to me, I try to convince them that violence and militarism will never be the solution to problems, but tolerance, respect and education are the best weapons against social injustice. And today, over the years I realize that some of those young people have been here in the USA, Venezuela, Colombia, Iraq, Spain, Italy, Germany, in so many places. Many young people have heard my message and today are people fighting for peace and social justice!!

It's 18 years that I've been without the smile of my son, without his caresses, but it's been 18 years that his love feeds me every day and that his memory strengthens me as a human being. His example of life has been the engine for me to change the way I see the world, injustice and death. Today, because of the death of my son, I think I'm a better human being than I was 18 years ago.

I want to thank my wife Adriana for her tolerance and sacrifice to have to endure my travels, my lack of financial resources because I want to talk to the young and travel to where they invite me. I also thank those friends who, for the time, walked away but that I have not forgotten. I want to thank Camilo Mejía, Pablo Paredes, Agustín Aguayo and their families for giving me the opportunity to live with them during a difficult part of their lives and because they are my big family today.

Thanks to all my Facebook friends for putting up with me and being tolerant of me. But most of all, thank you to my son for his sacrifice to make this imperfect father a better person.

Today, in the middle of the pandemic, in difficult times for millions of human beings, in times of overflowing migration, I see with a local war in the USA on minorities led by white extremists. So the fight must continue. Today more than ever before, it is time to redouble our efforts to combat war, and to join the fight for social justice efforts for immigration reform and create a way to citizenship for millions of human beings who still live in the shadows. Without the help of all, we will not be able to make this world be a better place to live. We have an obligation to fight for a better world for our children and grandchildren- a better world for future generations. That is my obligation; that is the task that my son's sacrifice bequeathed to me.

Jesus A. Suarez del Solar, The Aztec Warrior, PRESENTE!!

## **In the News:**

**Iraq Requests New Round of Talks with US over Troop Presence** Early this month Iraq sent a formal request to Pres. Joe Biden's administration for a date to resume strategic talks on bilateral relations and the withdrawal of the remaining U.S. combat forces. Biden officials said they support an Iraq withdrawal, but will the Pentagon keep using the so called "ISIS threat" as an excuse to stall? [Link to article](#)

**On Getting out of Afghanistan- Former US Marine who served in Afghanistan Calls for withdrawal by May 1.** Meeting the withdrawal deadline is an opportunity to stop endless war and avoid more casualties if we don't renege on the peace treaty. [Link to article](#)

**Afghanistan's interior Minister Says Afghan Forces Can Hold Their Own:** "The Afghan security forces are fully capable of defending the capital and the cities and the territories that we are present in right now," he said. "... Afghan security forces this year have proven to the Taliban that they will not be able to gain territory." Though not a call for a May 1 withdrawal, why is the Pentagon saying the opposite? [Link to article](#)

**U.S. Has 1,000 More Troops in Afghanistan Than It Disclosed** Although a common practice, declaring troops levels "classified" hides true US force numbers. These "off the books" troops include Special Operation Forces, some of them elite Army Rangers working under the Pentagon and CIA. Troops in Afghanistan are stationed at 12 bases advising Afghan units and serve as flight and support crews for aircraft. [Link to article](#)

**In Syria, US Commanders Hold the Line-** Out of sight and out of mind -around 900 U.S. troops from Louisiana's 256<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade Combat Team holding land in a mostly forgotten war with a low-level Security- so why do we remain there? Lt. General Commander claims it's not for Syrian oil.. [Link](#)

## **News from the MFSO Board:**

- Find out more about this month's national campaign "Leave No One Behind" mural project to culminate in DC. Get your community involved in bringing all of our deported veterans home with new legislation HR 5383, the New Way Forward Act and calls for executive action
- Still no meeting! Rep. Vela still refuses to meet with veteran and whistleblower Reality Winner's parents! Help make that happen by calling him at 202-544-8352 standwithreality.org. Demand he meet with them now
- MFSO member LA Times op-ed- [Dump the AUMF](#)
- Squeaky Wheel Campaign- VFP, MFSO and GSFSO are united in getting that second meeting with the Biden White House staff and we're rattling every cage we can find.

## **From Jeff's desk**

It's starting to look like not only Congress but the Defense Department wants to stay in Afghanistan. NDAA spending law slows down troop withdrawal (see page 534, section 1215) and DoD never wrote support contracts to ensure Afghan's would have full maintenance responsibilities for Afghan Air Craft and vehicle maintenance. [Link](#) This was pointed out back in 2018 by the Defense Department Inspector General. [Link](#) Maybe that was the plan all along.

**Note:** The opinions above and in future editorials do not reflect any official stance approved by the MFSO board, which meets monthly and posts official positions decided by the board on our website. Your responses and opinions are welcome. If you would like to send your own editorial on any MFSO related issue, please send to [mfsooc@earthlink.net](mailto:mfsooc@earthlink.net)

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**4,586 American Troops killed in Iraq; 2,452 American Troops killed in Afghanistan**