
Five Guantanamo detainees released, sent to Europe

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More specifically, four Yemeni men and one Tunisian had been cleared to leave Guantanamo since 2009, but their release was held up over instability and concern they would face torture or persecution upon returning. Three men will go to Georgia, and the remaining two to Slovakia. It is hoped the men will be given legal status, housing, rights to work, healthcare and access to education.

Since 2002, 500 Guantanamo detainees have been released, many to host countries. This is the first time since 2010 that any Yemenis have been released.

"We are very grateful to our partners for these generous humanitarian gestures," State Department envoy Cliff Sloan said in a statement to the Miami Herald. "We appreciate the strong support we are receiving from our friends and allies around the globe."

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Abd Al Hakim Ghalib Ahmad Alhag, one of the four Yemenis – and a client of the Center for Constitutional Rights – was released on the eve of a new lawsuit seeking an end to his indefinite detention.

"We are grateful to the Republic of Georgia for offering our client a new home where he can begin to rebuild his life after more than a decade in Guantánamo without charge or trial," Franck C. Tazzano and John C. Snodgrass said in a statement released by CCR.

Of the 143 men who remain at Guantánamo, 84 are from Yemen. Of those, 54 Yemenis are currently approved for transfer. CCR attorneys say they should not be held because of perceived instability in their home country.

"As we welcome Mr. Alhag's resettlement, we are reminded that the remaining Yemeni men should be sent home or resettled without further delay," Wells Dixon, a CCR Senior Attorney.

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According to Human Rights Watch, many of the detainees at Guantanamo were reportedly handed over to US forces by bounty hunters in Pakistan and Afghanistan, after the US distributed flyers in these countries offering substantial monetary awards for turning in "suspicious" people. Others were linked to relatives or acquaintances suspected of criminal activity, and were therefore considered "guilty" by association.

HRW said that the others held at Guantanamo include a man who had been Osama bin Laden's media secretary, six men awaiting death-penalty trials as alleged conspirators in Al-Qaeda's September 11 and USS Cole attacks, and an Iraqi man accused of leading Al-Qaeda's army in Afghanistan. The rest are kept as so-called "forever prisoners," ineligible for release but for whom there isn't any evidence to try them.

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