



Guantanamo detainee sent home against his will

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WASHINGTON — US officials said Thursday an Algerian national who was held at Guantanamo and cleared of terror suspicions by a US judge more than a year ago was repatriated, despite his objections.

Saïid Farhi had contested the move, fearing reprisals in his home country.

The Pentagon said in a statement that President Barack Obama's administration "coordinated" with the Algerian government to "ensure the transfer took place under appropriate security and humane treatment measures."

It said the release came after a comprehensive review of Farhi's case.

Farhi had tried in vain to contest his repatriation before the US federal justice system, even turning to the Supreme Court, which declined to examine his case in July.

US District Court Judge Gladys Kessler ordered Farhi's release in November 2009, noting he had expressed fear of being charged, sentenced and executed if he returned to Algeria.

With Farhi's departure, 173 detainees remain at the special detention center at the US naval base in Cuba that will celebrate its ninth anniversary on Tuesday.

The Center for Constitutional Rights said Thursday it was "deeply concerned" for Farhi's safety in Algeria, "including the threat of persecution by private terrorist groups against whom the Algerian government cannot assure his protection."

The human rights group also urged the Algerian government to "immediately" disclose information on Farhi's whereabouts and well-being.

It was the second forcible repatriation to Algeria after Abdul Aziz Naji in July last year, which was similarly critiqued by human rights advocates. The New York Times at the time called the transfer "an act of cruelty that seems to defy explanation."

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