



A guard tower is visible behind a razor-wire fence, at the detention camp at Guantanamo Bay

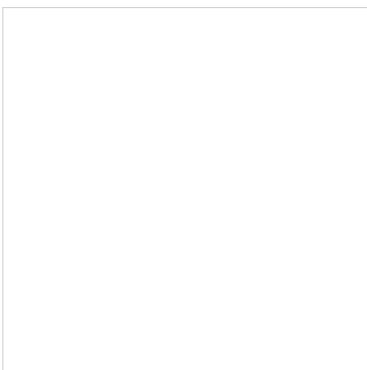
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Researchers urge Obama to set up Guantanamo review

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WASHINGTON (AFP) — Researchers studying the US war-on-terror military jail at Guantanamo Bay are urging US president-elect Barack Obama to set up a commission to shed light on controversial practices there.

The study published Wednesday, for which 62 former detainees at the camp in Cuba were interviewed, found that even once the prisoners are set free, those held there suffered from a stigma attached to their detention.

The report detailed the lives of detainees who were beaten, tied for hours in uncomfortable positions, locked in isolation cells for years, humiliated and then unable to rebuild their lives after their release.

Obama has promised to shut down the prison, which still holds 250 inmates, although he has not said how he proposes to do so.

"We cannot sweep this dark chapter of our nation's history under the rug by simply closing the Guantanamo detention camp. The new administration must investigate what went wrong and who should be accountable," Eric Stover, a University of California, Berkeley researcher told reporters.

Stover said "what we saw is an accumulative effect of exposure to shackling, prolonged confinement, sexual humiliations, exposure to extreme cold.

"These things happened overtime, repeatedly, and we raise the question -- and that we believe should be investigated further -- whether this accumulative effect could in fact in many cases arise to the level of torture.

"The nightmare of Guantanamo did not end with the detainees' release. Men never convicted of crimes or given the opportunity to clear their names are suffering from a lasting 'Guantanamo stigma' and are unable to find work," added co-author Laurel Fletcher.

The two, who were supported by the Center for Constitutional Rights which has defended many detainees, argued that what is now needed is "an independent and non partisan commission to lift the shroud of secrecy from Guantanamo and other detention sites."

They also urged that there be no pardons or amnesties for anyone in the George W. Bush administration found guilty of giving orders for potentially illegal acts at the camp.