



Department of Justice

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Thursday, June 11, 2009
WWW.USDOJ.GOV

AG
(202) 514-2007
TDD (202) 514-1888

United States Resettles Four Uighur Detainees from Guantanamo Bay to the Government of Bermuda

Four detainees, Chinese nationals of Uighur ethnicity who had been held at the Guantanamo Bay detention facility, have been resettled in Bermuda. These detainees, who were subject to release as a result of court orders, had been cleared for release by the prior administration, which determined they would no longer treat them as enemy combatants. The detainees were again cleared for release this year after review by the interagency Guantanamo Review Task Force.

As directed by the President's January 22, 2009, Executive Order, the interagency Guantanamo Review Task Force conducted a comprehensive review of the four, including a threat evaluation, and approved them for resettlement. The detainees left Guantanamo Bay today pursuant to an arrangement between the United States and the Government of Bermuda.

The Uighurs are a Turkic Muslim minority from the Xinjiang province of far-west China. The Uighurs currently at Guantanamo Bay left China and made their way to Afghanistan, where most eventually settled in a camp with other Uighurs opposed to the Chinese government. After the United States conducted aerial strikes in the area in October 2001, the Uighurs from that camp fled to Pakistan and were later apprehended. According to available information, these individuals did not travel to Afghanistan with the intent to take any hostile action against the United States.

This marks the first time since 2006 that the U.S. government has successfully resettled any of the Guantanamo Uighur population. In 2006, five Uighurs were transferred to Albania; there have been no reports of post-resettlement engagement in criminal behavior or terrorist activities.

"By helping accomplish the President's objective of closing Guantanamo, the transfer of these detainees will make America safer," said Attorney General Eric Holder. "We are extremely grateful to the government of Bermuda for its assistance in the successful resettlement of these four detainees, and we commend the leadership they have demonstrated on this important issue."

Since 2002, more than 540 detainees have departed Guantanamo for other countries including Albania, Algeria, Afghanistan, Australia, Bangladesh, Bahrain, Belgium, Denmark, Egypt, France, Great Britain, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Libya, Maldives, Mauritania, Morocco, Pakistan, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Sweden, Sudan, Tajikistan, Turkey, Uganda, United Kingdom and Yemen.

###

09-574