

Department of Justice

Office of Public Affairs

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United States Transfers a Guantanamo Bay Detainee to France

WASHINGTON — The Department of Justice today announced that a detainee has been transferred from the detention facility at Guantanamo Bay to the control of the government of France.

As directed by the President's Jan. 22, 2009 Executive Order, the interagency Guantanamo Review Task Force conducted a comprehensive review of this case. As a result of that review, the detainee was approved for transfer from Guantanamo Bay. In accordance with Congressionally-mandated reporting requirements, the Administration informed Congress of its intent to transfer the detainee at least 15 days before his transfer.

Late last night, Sabir Lahmar, a native of Algeria, was transferred to the government of France. On Nov. 20, 2008, a federal court ruled that Lahmar may no longer be detained under the Authorization for the Use of Military Force and ordered the government to take all necessary and appropriate diplomatic steps to facilitate his release from detention at Guantanamo Bay. The United States is grateful to the government of France for helping achieve President Obama's directive to close the Guantanamo Bay detention facility.

This transfer was carried out under an arrangement between the United States and the government of France. The United States has coordinated with the government of France to ensure the transfer takes place under appropriate security measures and will continue to consult with the government of France regarding this individual.

Since 2002, more than 550 detainees have departed Guantanamo Bay for other destinations, including Albania, Algeria, Afghanistan, Australia, Bangladesh, Bahrain, Belgium, Bermuda, Chad, Denmark, Egypt, France, Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jordan, Kuwait, Libya, Maldives, Mauritania, Morocco, Pakistan, Palau, Portugal, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Sweden, Sudan, Tajikistan, Turkey, Uganda, United Kingdom and Yemen.