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News Flash

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The UK authorities must accept return of residents held at Guantánamo Bay

In response to the reports featured in *The Guardian* newspaper today that the USA has offered to return nearly all UK residents held at Guantánamo Bay, Amnesty International calls on the UK government to fulfil its obligations under domestic and international law and ensure the immediate return of all the men to the UK. So far, the UK authorities have agreed to petition their US counterparts to seek the release and return to the UK only of Bisher Al-Rawi.

"The UK government has obligations towards these men as some of them have been residents in the UK for a long time and have family members who are UK nationals. Others have refugee status in the UK," said Nicola Duckworth, Amnesty International's Europe and Central Asia Programme Director.

"In addition, UK authorities must ensure that a full independent and impartial investigation is held into the UK's involvement in the cases of Bisher Al-Rawi, a UK resident, and Jamil El-Banna, who has refugee status in the UK."

It has been alleged that the UK was involved in the arrest of both men in the Gambia and their eventual rendition to US custody. The investigation must establish whether UK security services were complicit in their detention and subsequent human rights violations.

"The UK authorities must also ensure that on return to the UK all UK residents are afforded at least the same status as they enjoyed before their unlawful detention at Guantánamo Bay, and are not subsequently sent anywhere where they would be at risk of torture or other ill-treatment," said Nicola Duckworth.

"If any of the UK residents currently held at Guantánamo Bay are reasonably suspected to have committed a recognizably criminal offence, they should be charged immediately and tried in fair proceedings."

Public Document

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