

Guantanamo Hunger Striker Withering Away as Transfer Stalls



Washington, September 10 (RHC)-- A Syrian prisoner cleared for release months ago from the notorious U.S. prison in Guantanamo Bay is withering away because of hunger strike. Forty-three-year-old Abu Wa'el Dhiab started his hunger strike 18 months ago to protest his indefinite confinement without charge.

In July, the Pentagon gave Congress a 30-day notice, saying it intended to transfer Dhiab and five other Guantanamo prisoners, three Syrians, a Tunisian and a Palestinian to Uruguay. The country has offered to accept them as a humanitarian gesture.

Last week, Uruguay presidential spokesman Diego Canepa, said aspects of the transfer haven't been finalized yet and the transfer will not happen in the next two to three months. U.S. officials claim they cannot send Dhiab to his war-torn home country Syria, where he used to be a honey salesman, and have thus opted for a third country instead.

Dhiab, who has been fed through a nasal tube to prevent starvation, is challenging some of the abusive tactics used by the U.S. military to deal with prisoners on hunger strike, according to documents filed in a federal court in Washington.

Out of the 149 prisoners held in Guantanamo, some 70 have been cleared for release but have not been released due to "difficulties" in "repatriating" them.

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