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## **Afghans Held In US Custody To Be Sent Back To Afghanistan**

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KABUL -- Afghans held in U.S. custody at Guantanamo Bay and elsewhere will be sent back to Afghanistan to be detained here, a joint U.S. and Afghan statement said Thursday.

Hundreds of Afghans are thought to be held at the U.S. military prison at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and at other American detention facilities.

Afghanistan's U.S.-backed President Hamid Karzai has long urged Washington to send them home.

"Afghanistan and the United States reached an understanding that will allow for the gradual transfer of Afghan detainees to the exclusive custody and control of the Afghan government," the statement said. "The government of Afghanistan will accept responsibility for the returning Afghan citizens and will work to ensure that they do not pose a continuing threat."

An official at the U.S. Embassy in the Afghan capital, Kabul, said the statement was referring to detainees held at Guantanamo and at other facilities.