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## **Judge blocks Guantanamo detainees' transfer**

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WASHINGTON (AP) -- A federal judge has blocked the government from transferring 13 Yemenis from the U.S. detention center for terrorism suspects at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, until a hearing is held on concerns the detainees may be mistreated in another country.

The judge's ruling temporarily blocks any plans by the government to transfer the detainees to prisons in other countries.

Lawyers for the Yemenis are worried the government will try to move them from the Guantanamo Bay facility to another country in order to "warehouse them in a prison, provide them with no legal process and, in effect, avoid the American court process altogether," Marc Falkoff, an attorney for the detainees, said Sunday.

U.S. District Judge Rosemary Collyer's ruling Saturday on an emergency petition blocks any attempt to move the Yemenis until a hearing is held on their lawyers' request for at least 30 days notice if their clients are to be transferred.

"All we want is an opportunity to ask the court to review whether the U.S. government is acting properly to move our clients out of Guantanamo," Falkoff said. "We are not asking for a veto power over any transfer. All we want is notice so we can ask a judge to review the legality of the transfer. We don't want our clients to be tortured. We don't want them to be deprived of due process of law."

Barbara Olshansky, deputy director for litigation at the Center for Constitutional Rights, which is coordinating the detainees' legal representation, said she expects lawyers for hundreds of detainees to file for similar action soon.

"We know that where they are sending them is where horrible things happen to the detainees," she said.

Lawyers for Guantanamo detainees filed the petition in U.S. District Court on Friday night, following a New York Times report that the government is trying to transfer at least half of the roughly 550 detainees at the facility to prisons in their home countries.

A senior defense official said earlier that Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld wants the State Department to put more pressure on countries to take custody of some of their people who are held at Guantanamo Bay.

About 550 people from roughly 40 countries are being held there, many of them prisoners from the U.S.-led war in Afghanistan after the September 11, 2001, attacks.

Already, the military has released 211 detainees from Guantanamo, including 146 who were freed outright. The military has transferred 65 prisoners from the prison in Cuba to their home countries.

Falkoff, who has visited his clients on two weeklong visits to the detention facility, says he believes they are not terrorists.

"The government's evidence against them is the lowest quality, absolutely untrustworthy," he said. "My clients were in the wrong place at the wrong time."

Falkoff said one of his clients was threatened with being moved to either Egypt or Jordan, where he was told he would be tortured.