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Europeans 'more likely to be freed'

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PRISONERS held by the US government at Guantanamo Bay are 30 times more likely to be released if they are European than Arab, according to human rights activists fighting for their freedom.

They say over 90 percent of detainees holding European nationality have already been sent home, as compared to just 3 percent of those with Arab citizenship.

So far, just 11 of the 357 Arab nationals held at Guantanamo Bay have left the high-security facility, lawyer Clive Stafford-Smith told the GDN.

However, he is expecting the last remaining Europeans to be sent home at any time and accuses the US government of showing bias towards Western detainees.

"Soon 100pc of the European detainees will have been released when the French go home," said Mr Stafford-Smith, who is coordinating legal efforts to free the Guantanamo Bay detainees.

"That compares to 3pc of the Arabs and tells you something important.

"First, the US is being racist and, secondly, Middle East governments are not doing nearly enough.

"This is what we predicted from the beginning - it should anger people, but it should not surprise anyone."

Mr Stafford-Smith also accused the US government of releasing detainees from Pakistan and Afghanistan as a favour to the respective regimes. "It is hard to see how these are the least likely to go back to fighting," he said.

"But there is a reason for that and it is politics."

Meanwhile, US authorities have been accused of psychologically torturing one of six Bahraini detainees, Juma Mohammed Al Dossary, by wrapping him in an Israeli flag.

This follows earlier allegations that he was beaten, made to walk barefoot over broken glass and had his head pushed into the glass before being interrogated.

It is also alleged that he was shocked with an electrical device on his head and back and had boiling liquid, possibly tea, poured over his head.

The latest allegation came to light after notes taken by his lawyer during an interview with Al Dossary were deemed unclassified by US authorities.

"This was also confirmed by an FBI agent," said Bahraini human rights activist Nabeel Rajab, who sits on a committee formed in Yemen last April to support detainees from the region.

Mr Rajab is now in the US and has met lawyers acting on behalf of detainees.

He criticised Arab governments for not doing enough to secure the release of their citizens.

"The charges faced by the European detainees are bigger and more dangerous than those faced by the Arab detainees, who are still in Guantanamo," said Mr Rajab, who is coordinating between lawyers and detainees' families from Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Syria, Libya and Egypt.

"The lawyers feel there are Bahraini detainees who do not have strong enough charges against them to warrant their detention - such as Salah Abdul Rasool Al Balooshi and Shaikh Salman bin Ebrahim Al Khalifa."