

The following text may be printed, copy/pasted, or downloaded and emailed.

Guantanamo prisoners front tribunal

January 19, 2005
The Age (Australia)

Two prisoners with alleged ties to Afghanistan's ousted Taliban regime have attended military review tribunals in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, an official has said.

The first prisoner, a 46-year-old, was accused of meeting with a Taliban airfield commander to coordinate weapons movement for attacks against US coalition forces and the government of Afghan President Hamid Karzai, said Navy Lieutenant Terry Green, a tribunal spokesman in Guantanamo.

The detainee was captured at his home in January 2003 while he and the commander were allegedly planning the attacks.

A Taliban-led insurgency persists in Afghanistan, four years after the US-led bombing campaign that ousted the hardline regime.

The second detainee, a 43-year-old, was arrested in the company of a recruiter for a Pashtun commander who conducted attacks against US coalition forces, Green said. Coalition forces came under fire during the detainee's capture, he said.

The unclassified allegations, however, do not provide details of the detainee's activities as an "enemy combatant".

Advertisement

The military had not provided transcripts of testimonies during the Combatant Status Review Tribunals, which were meant to determine whether more than 550 detainees at the US naval outpost were properly detained as enemy combatants or should be freed.

At least 11 detainees have also gone through Administrative Review Boards, new hearings that could free enemy combatants who no longer pose a threat to the United States, said Navy Lieutenant Commander Daryl Borgquist, a Pentagon spokesman.

The military, however, refused to release details on those hearings, saying it was still determining media policy. No press have attended the proceedings.

Only six review tribunals are left, Green said. So far, they had ordered two prisoners freed or transferred off the base as "non-enemy combatants". Another 254 were ordered to remain in custody, while rulings on some 300 other completed cases were pending.

No lawyers were present during the tribunals, and the detainees were only told unclassified portions of the allegations against them.