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Vow to Bring Bay Prisoners Home

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MAXIMUM efforts will be exerted to bring home the remaining Bahraini detainees held at Guantanamo Bay, government officials pledged yesterday.

The situation in the security camp is intolerable and pressure must be exerted on the US government for the release of the remaining three prisoners, it was agreed at a string of meetings held by lawyers of the detainees with government officials.

The meetings were held with Interior Ministry Under-Secretary Shaikh Daij bin Khalifa Al Khalifa, Justice Ministry general prosecutor Ali Al Buainian and Foreign Affairs Ministry assistant under-secretary Shaikh Abdulaziz bin Mubarak Al Khalifa.

New York lawyers Mark Sullivan, Joshua Colangelo-Bryan and Christopher Karagheuzoff urged the Bahraini authorities to arrange an official visit to the US prison camp in Cuba.

They briefed Shaikh Daij on the current status of litigation on behalf of Guantanamo Bay detainees in US courts as well as the condition of Isa Abdulla Al Murbati, 42, Salah Abdulrasool Al Blooshi, 24, and Juma Mohammed Al Dossary, 32.

The lawyers expressed hope that the Bahrain government would intervene and discuss with US authorities the means of improving conditions for the detainees.

They called on the government to send a diplomatic delegation, which should also include a doctor to assess the health condition of the three detainees.

"The Bahraini government will exert all efforts in the case of the three Bahraini detainees," Shaikh Daij said in a statement following the meeting.

"It is following up the latest developments related to the case, which is in line with its keenness to secure their release as soon as possible as well as in helping them overcome the obstacles they are facing now.

"There has been regular contact between the Interior Ministry and the US State Department to open diplomatic channels with the relevant American authorities to follow up the case of the detainees."

According to the lawyers, government officials were committed to take serious action to secure the release of the three Bahrainis.

"Everyone we spoke to expressed a firm belief that both we and the government should and will exert the maximum possible efforts to bring home our clients," legal team head Mr Colangelo-Bryan told the GDN.

"Everyone is in agreement that the situation at Guantanamo is not tolerable and that pressure should be brought onto the US, a close ally of Bahrain, to send the Bahraini citizens back home.

"We all agree that Bahrain should accept the return of its citizens under any circumstances, which would include pursuing proceedings in the courts of Bahrain if there is evidence to warrant such proceedings.

"Although, we have not seen any such evidence to date, after four years of detention.

"Considering the very grave danger that our clients are in, we look forward to working expeditiously to achieve our common goal.

"We understand that regular requests and inquiries are being made, but obviously we all need to continue to produce the results that we have not achieved so far."

The lawyers leave Bahrain today after a five-day visit, during which they met with detainees' families and released detainees as well as government officials.

They also worked with members of the now-dissolved Bahrain Centre for Human Rights (BCHR), which spearheaded the regional campaign to organise legal representation for Arab detainees by liaising with US-based lawyers.