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## **Gulf News: An Invitation That's Come Late.**

Gulf News  
October 31, 2005

US government should have asked UN officials to visit Guantanamo Bay earlier

The US government has for the first time extended an invitation to three United Nations human rights experts to visit the detention centre at Guantanamo Bay.

But would the visit really make any difference for the over 500 detainees who have been held without charges for more than three years?

The prison at Guantanamo has become synonymous with mistreatment, beatings, coerced confessions, hunger strikes and torture.

Last year, Amnesty International released a critical report that accused the US of "tolerating prisoner abuse" against people who are being detained across prisons in Iraq, Afghanistan and at Guantanamo.

The American government's facilitation for a visit by UN officials should have taken place a long time ago. As a matter of fact, the timing of the visit is indeed questionable.

Is it not reasonable to conclude that the US is attempting to improve its public image with regard to the issue of the Guantanamo prisoners?

The US Defence Department "strives for transparency" when it allows such visits, according to a recently issued Pentagon press release.

It is indeed high time that the conditions of the prisoners at Guantanamo are transparently disclosed and the protection of their human rights is addressed.