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## **Kuwaiti Accuses US Of Torturing Guantanamo Prisoners**

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KUWAIT CITY -- A Kuwaiti lobbying for the release of Kuwaitis held as suspected terrorists in Guantanamo Bay urged the U.S. Sunday not to torture prisoners.

Khaled al-Odah's comments follow the return to Kuwait of the first of 11 Kuwaitis being held at the U.S. Navy detention facility in Cuba. The Kuwaitis are among hundreds of prisoners taken in the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan after the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks.

The freed Kuwaiti, Nasser al-Mutairi, 27, was briefly reunited with his younger brother Sunday at an undisclosed Kuwaiti airport, before officials took him into custody for questioning about his detention and arrest in Afghanistan. It is unclear when he will be returned to his family.

Kuwait is one of the United States' closest Middle Eastern allies, but al-Odah heads a group that has been lobbying fiercely for the release of its citizens.

The group's campaign has been fueled by claims that some Guantanamo detainees have been mistreated by U.S. military personnel.

"Stop torturing our sons," al-Odah said during a press conference after al-Mutairi's release. "(How can) a country that considers itself a beacon for human rights, freedoms and human dignities do this."

Al-Odah, whose son Fawzi is among the remaining 10 Kuwaitis in U.S. custody, cited recently released FBI documents that cite numerous abuse allegations at Guantanamo. U.S. officials in Kuwait were not immediately available for comment.

The U.S. Army says it will investigate the allegations. The military maintains most incidents occurred in 2002 when the prison was just opening, and that some of the interrogation techniques labeled as "aggressive" are no longer in use.

The American Civil Liberties Union last month released e-mails in which the FBI accused interrogators of inserting cigarettes in prisoners' ears and shackling them into a fetal position for hours, forcing them to soil themselves.

"We believe that our sons have had their share of these barbaric actions ... by investigators and guards," al-Odah said without specify alleged abuses of Kuwaitis.

Tom Wilner, a lawyer appointed by al-Odah's group and the Kuwaiti government, said in a conference call from Washington that what he knows about prisoner mistreatment at Guantanamo makes him "terribly embarrassed and very ashamed" as a U.S. citizen.

"I can tell you that all of the prisoners at one time or another have been treated very badly," he said.

Al-Odah said he spoke briefly with al-Mutairi after his return and the former detainee told him the remaining Kuwaiti prisoners in Guantanamo were "well" and "comfortable."

Al-Mutairi's release was a "ray of hope" for the freeing of the others, said al-Odah.

Abdul-Rahman al-Haroun, the Kuwaiti lawyer for the prisoners, said al-Mutairi is being held at the Interior Ministry where he expects investigators will ask him about why he went to Afghanistan and how he was arrested.

Al-Mutairi's family insists he was teaching in Afghanistan's mosques and schools as a member of the apolitical Tableegh missionary group when he was detained after the U.S. -led war there began.

Some 550 detainees from more than 40 countries are held in the naval base as "enemy combatants." Some 200 men have been released, many who come from countries friendly to the United States, such as Kuwait. Some were ill.

The U.S. government had argued enemy combatants held on foreign soil were not entitled to hearings in U.S. courts. But it established military review tribunals after the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in June that prisoners can challenge their detention. Human rights advocates have called them a sham, partly because the U.S. doesn't allow the prisoners to have defense attorneys.