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Ghost Detainees Held

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WASHINGTON: Human Rights Watch expressed concern yesterday that the United States is secretly holding unacknowledged ghost detainees at its **Guantanamo Bay**, Cuba prison camp even as it identified hundreds of other detainees last week. Even though we now have names of some of the Guantanamo detainees, that is only a small piece of the picture and there are more people that are being held, HRW's Katherine Newell Bierman said. We believe that the United States is holding people that it has not confirmed it is holding . . . the so-called ghost detainees. The US refuses to confirm whether it holds these men or not, said Ms Newell Bierman, who follows terrorism-related issues for the US-based rights group. If you are going to detain someone at some point you have got to let people know you have them. These men have effectively disappeared. HRW and other rights groups believe the US Central Intelligence Agency is holding a number of unidentified and unacknowledged prisoners in secret locations.

These ghost detainees include for the most part high-level al-Qaeda officials, including Ramzi bin al-Shibh, believed to be one of the planners of the September 11, 2001 attacks on the United States, and Khalid Shaikh Muhammad, the former al-Qaeda number three. In recent months, US media have lifted a small corner of the curtain of secrecy surrounding the unknown detainees. Secret CIA detention camps have been identified at the Bagram air base in Afghanistan, Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean and at Guantanamo in a zone separate from the major Pentagon holding facility for war on terror detainees. On Friday, the Pentagon made public for the first time documents revealing the identities and nationalities of many of the some 490 prisoners it holds at Guantanamo, after being ordered to do so by a judge. However, Ms Newell Bierman pointed out: I think it is incredibly important that the names have come out.