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Little girl fights to free her father from Guantanamo bay

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A two-year-old girl has become the focus of attempts to free Guantanamo detainees who are being held by the US authorities since October 2001.

"I want to meet my daddy," says two-year-old Fatma Al Kandari as she hands out yellow ribbons to other campaigners. Fatma has never seen her father Abdullah Kamal Al Kandari who has been in prison in Guantanamo since before she was born. Mr. Al Kandari was a relief worker picked up by US authorities as he was trying to help refugees at the Afghanistan-Pakistan border.

She is supported in her cause by the Kuwaiti Family Committee, an organisation formed by relatives of the Kuwaiti Guantanamo detainees, an organization that has lobbied tirelessly to win a fair trial for the detainees.

"At that time all Arab citizens were wanted, whether they were warriors or members of relief agencies." Mr. Al Kandari told his family members in October 2001, just before he was abducted by US authorities. "The Arabs gathered in places where they thought they would be safe and tried to seek assistance of villagers on their way back across the borders. Unfortunately the villagers sold them and handed them over to the Pakistani authorities who in turn handed them over to the Americans."

"We are willing to sell everything just to get him back." his brother Mansoor said. "We think about my brother more than anything else. We all live in one house with our parents and we are very, very close now. So losing a member of our family like this is too much. It's like a part of the house is missing."

"According to the High Court, the right of due process covers U.S. citizens and non-citizens," explained Tom Wilner, the U.S. attorney representing the Kuwaiti prisoners.

"The Court ruled that, even if Guantanamo Bay may be viewed as foreign soil, all rights still apply there as well. The Bush administration has no legal ground to stand on."

The families said that they are worried by recent reports of torture by US authorities at Guantanamo bay.

Last week lawyers representing six Bosnian detainees made shocking new allegations of torture by U.S. forces against detainees, including severe beatings resulting in facial paralysis for one prisoner, chemical irritant gassing, near suffocation by repeatedly ramming a prisoner's head into a toilet, and religious persecution by forced removal of clothing required for prayer.