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Two French Ex-Guantanamo Inmates Probed, One Freed

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PARIS - Two French citizens released by U.S. authorities at Guantanamo Bay have been placed under official investigation in France, and a third ex-prisoner was released without charges, a judicial source said Saturday.

Khaled ben Mustapha, 33, and Ridouane Khalid, 36, were placed under formal investigation for "criminal association with a terrorist enterprise" late on Friday, a prosecution source said. The measure is one step short of pressing charges.

A judge decided to release Khalid under judicial controls, while ben Mustapha remained in detention, the source said.

A third detainee, Moustak Ali Patel, who arrived back from the U.S. naval base in Cuba with the other two men on Monday, was released without any charges on Wednesday.

The three men, who were the last French prisoners to be held at Guantanamo Bay, were captured in 2001 or early 2002 after U.S.-led forces invaded Afghanistan to oust the Taliban government and its al Qaeda allies.

They were taken to the U.S. military camp at Guantanamo as suspected Islamist militants.

Their release from Guantanamo followed a visit to France last month by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice -- a trip aimed at repairing ties between the two countries strained over the U.S.-led Iraq war, which France strongly opposed.

Four other French citizens, captured in 2001 and 2002 in Afghanistan by the U.S. military, were released from Guantanamo Bay and returned to France last July. They remain in detention in France despite several release requests by their lawyers.