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## **Special plane to bring back Al-Mutairi US authorities to release Kuwaiti Gitmo detainee.**

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Associated Press

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico: US authorities are releasing one of 11 Kuwaiti detainees held at a military detention centre for terror suspects in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, according to a group of family members and a lawyer. Nasser Al-Mutairi is a 26-year-old employee of the Kuwaiti Education Ministry whose family says he was teaching English in Afghanistan when he was captured three years ago. He is expected home soon aboard a special plane sent by the Kuwaiti government, said Khalid Al-Odha, the father of another Kuwaiti detainee.

Al-Odha started Project Kuwait Freedom, a group that along with the Kuwait government hired a US law firm to fight for the men's release. US military officials declined to comment, citing Defence Department policy that requires a detainee to no longer be in US custody before his or her case can be discussed.

The lack of information about Al-Mutairi's apparently imminent release "demonstrates the arbitrariness of all the decisions made in Guantanamo ... this demonstrates the need for transparency," said Michael Ratner, a lawyer for the New York-based Centre for Constitutional Rights which is fighting in US courts for the detainees to be charged or free.

Some 550 men from more than 45 countries are held at Guantanamo Bay. Most were captured in Afghanistan and Pakistan after the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States. They are accused of ties to Al-Qaeda, the terrorist network blamed for the attacks, or Afghanistan's ousted Taliban regime that sheltered it.

Since the Guantanamo Bay detention mission started in January 2002, up to 750 men from more than 50 countries have been held there. The Defence Department and White House officials contended the men's location outside the United States precludes them access to the US justice system. But the US Supreme Court ruled in the summer that the prisoners have the right to contest their detention without charge, and dozens of cases are pending. Two hundred-and-two men have been released from Guantanamo Bay, a spokesman for the detention mission, Maj Michael Shavers, said in a telephone call from Cuba. He said he could not immediately say how many of those were set free when they reached their country of origin and how many were detained by local authorities. Many come from countries friendly to the United States, such as Britain, and some were ill. Human rights groups say some have been jailed in countries known for torturing prisoners.

The United States itself has been accused of interrogation techniques at Guantanamo that an FBI memorandum likened to torture. The US American Civil Liberties Union this week released e-mails obtained under the Freedom of Information Act in which the FBI accused military

interrogators of posing as FBI agents and humiliating and abusing detainees. Techniques included inserting lit cigarettes in prisoners' ears and shackling them into a foetal positions for up to 24 hours, forcing them to soil themselves. The ACLU said the e-mails suggested "inhumane interrogation methods" were approved by President George W Bush - a charge the White House vigorously denies. There have been dozens of suicide attempts among prisoners, though the US military has reported none this year.

Al-Odha said his wife has been unable to sleep or cook since the allegations surfaced: "My family, which has been in grief for a long time, is living a nightmare since we heard news of these abuses," he said. His son, Fawzi, had gone to Pakistan to teach in a poor border village as he did each summer, and had stayed on after the Sept 11 attacks to do charitable work with Afghan refugees, he said.

Tom Wilner, a lawyer hired by the Kuwaiti government to represent Kuwaiti detainees, said he did not understand why Al-Mutairi was being released, as opposed to other Kuwaiti detainees. He said some were being held because they wore Casio watches that have a compass -- something many Muslims have because it orients them toward Makkah, Islam's holiest city, which Muslims must face for prayers five times a day.