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## **U.N. Says U.S. Not Done Enough on Guantanamo**

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GENEVA (Reuters) - The United States has done too little to improve treatment of prisoners at its Guantanamo Bay naval base and risks doing more harm than good in the battle against terror, U.N. human rights investigators said Friday.

In a joint statement, six inspectors voiced fresh concern at reports of inhuman and degrading treatment of inmates at Guantanamo, saying the global fight against terrorism would be weakened if countries failed to uphold basic legal protections.

"The right and duty of all states to use all lawful means to protect their citizens against death and destruction brought about by terrorists must be exercised in conformity with international law, lest the whole cause of the international fight against terrorism be compromised," the U.N. experts said.

Recent moves, including the "Combatant Status Review Tribunals" created by the Pentagon last year following a Supreme Court rebuke and the release of four Britons and an Australian held as terrorism suspects, were "insufficient to dispel the serious concerns" over conditions, the inspectors added.

At Guantanamo, there was "the need to objectively assess the allegations of torture, and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, particularly in relation to methods of interrogation of detainees."

The statement noted that many Guantanamo inmates had been held virtually incommunicado for nearly three years, without legal advice or information about how long they were likely to remain incarcerated. Most did not know whether criminal charges would be laid against them.

More than 540 al Qaeda suspects and accused Taliban fighters are being held at the remote base on the southeastern tip of Cuba after the 2001 invasion of Afghanistan and from operations in the U.S. war on terrorism.

The United States long has faced international criticism for its treatment of Guantanamo prisoners, with even FBI memos made public accusing Pentagon interrogators of using "torture techniques."

The U.N. investigators said the legal basis for the prisoners' continued detention remained unclear, and that even the exact number and names of those detained was unknown.

A U.S. District judge ruled Monday that the "Combatant Status Review Tribunals" still violated the prisoners' constitutional rights because they did not have access to lawyers or secret evidence, including evidence that may have been obtained through torture or coercion.

Another federal judge in Washington recently came to the opposite conclusion, and the issue is still pending before the appeals courts.