

‘No vacancy’ for Gitmo inmates at Hotel EU

By [Global Research](#)

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The decision to shut down the US prison in Guantanamo Bay is turning into a challenge for Europe. Britain, which has accepted a number of former detainees, doesn't want to take more, claiming other countries are shirking their responsibilities.

Having pledged to provide shelter for up to 60 former detainees, the EU is now split over the issue, facing a thorny set of questions: where should they go, who pays, and – finally – is it safe to relocate them?

Hartmut Nassauer, a member of the European Parliament, said: “We have to make sure that potential terrorists do not step on to Europe's territory. And that's why security considerations have to be given primacy over any others.”

Spain, France, Italy and Portugal are among those nations offering to accept former detainees, while Germany, Britain and others are reluctant.

According to Britain's Foreign Office, 27 former Guantanamo inmates have been returned to the EU to date, 13 of them are now in the UK.

However, British Foreign Secretary David Miliband has made it clear that no additional terror suspects without links to the UK will be accepted. The UK, he says, has done its bit by taking in double the number of any other European country.

“We feel that is already a significant contribution. We are happy to offer our experience to other European countries as they think about what steps they want to make to help in the closure of Guantanamo Bay,” he said.

Meanwhile, human rights activists don't agree. They say with a special relationship comes special responsibility.

Chris Chang, an investigator on the Guantanamo team, Reprieve, said: “How can we offer advice or how can we advise others in Europe to take individuals in if we ourselves are not prepared to do that?”

According to human rights groups, all of the former Guantanamo prisoners resettled in Britain live peacefully in their communities. However, many argue that might not necessarily be the case with other detainees.

The Pentagon has recently released details of 61 former detainees it believes have “returned to terrorism” – another setback to Barack Obama's decision to shut the camp.

Andrew Tyrie, British MP and a representative of the All-Party Group on Extraordinary

Rendition said:

“The truth is that in Guantanamo there are some people who mean us harm. And we need to bear that very carefully in mind that we are dealing with the security of our countries. That said, it was the United States who made this colossal blunder to create a black hole offshore and the lion share of the burden will have to be borne by the United States because of that.”|

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