

# Press Release

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## Guantanamo: Commissioner Hammarberg appeals to European governments to co-operate with President Obama for the closure of the camp

Strasbourg, 09.06.2009 – Following a visit to Washington DC on 1 and 2 June, Commissioner Hammarberg addressed a [letter](#) to all Council of Europe member states calling upon them to follow the example already provided by certain member states and welcome "cleared" ex-detainees in need of international protection.

During the visit, the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights also pressed for the US to offer "cleared" prisoners residence in the country and made clear his position that "detainees for whom there is evidence of criminal activities should be tried in accordance with international human rights law standards. The others should be released in full respect of the principle of presumption of innocence. Reparation for all those unlawfully detained should also be provided."

The Commissioner remains concerned about the fact that "a number of those to be released may not be repatriated because of a real risk of ill-treatment. Some of those released so far have suffered human rights violations in their country of origin."

"Those 'cleared' detainees who cannot be repatriated and have no wish to stay in the US should be offered an alternative" continued the Commissioner. "This requires a process during which the views of the detainees themselves should be sought on where they wish to go. Possible family ties is a factor to be seriously considered in this context. This is where European governments could give a very important contribution - which might be crucial to facilitate the final closing of the Guantanamo camp."

In the course of his visit Commissioner Hammarberg met with several US authorities including the Special Envoy for Closure of the Guantanamo Detainee Facility, State Department, and representatives of the National Security Council, White House, and of the Department of Defence.

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