

Guantanamo: Afghan National Released After 15 Years in Detention Without Charge

Assadullah Haroon Gul was returned to his home country of Afghanistan after the US complied with a court order that ruled his detention unlawful

By [Middle East Eye](#)

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An Afghan prisoner who was held in US custody for nearly 15 years without charge was released from the [Guantanamo Bay](#) detention centre on Friday and returned to his home country of [Afghanistan](#).

Assadullah Haroon Gul, held at Guantanamo under the name Haroon al-Afghani, departed the prison and flew on a US Air Force plane to [Qatar](#), which for years has served as an interlocutor between the Taliban and the US.

Qatari officials then handed him over to Taliban government representatives in Doha, a senior US official told The New York Times.

Soon after this, Afghan government media released photos of Gul meeting with Taliban officials in Qatar.

As a result of IEA’s efforts, today, we are witnessing the release of Assadullah Haroon from Guantanamo prison and his reunion with his family years later. We would also like to thank our brother country Qatar for paving the

ground in this regard. 4/4

Zabihullah Mujahid pic.twitter.com/fSWmhwVTtD

— Zabihullah (ذبيح الله م.) (@Zabehulah_M33) [June 24, 2022](#)

Gul's release was also announced by Zabihullah Mujahid, the Taliban-appointed deputy culture and information minister, who wrote on Twitter that Gul was one of the last two Afghan prisoners held at Guantanamo Bay.

Gul was sent to Guantanamo in 2007, after the US accused him of being a member of Hezbe-Islami (HIA), a militia that fought against the allied invasion of Afghanistan. HIA entered into a peace agreement with the then-US-backed Afghan government in 2016.

Following a decision to clear him for transfer out of the prison, a federal court ruled last October that his continued detention at Guantanamo was unlawful, the first time a Guantanamo detainee's imprisonment has been ruled as such in a decade. The US on Friday complied with the court order, allowing his release.

"After 15 years imprisoned without charge or trial and after a Federal judge declared his detention illegal, Asad is finally free," Mark Maher, Gul's lawyer with the organisation Reprieve, said in a statement.

"Asad missed his daughter's entire childhood and he will never get back what has been taken from him, but he is now at least able to rebuild his life with his family, who have waited so long to see him.

Gul's departure from the prison leaves it with a population of 36 detainees, 19 of whom have been recommended for transfer but are waiting to be released.

"The Biden administration needs to take more urgent actions to actually put an end to this extralegal and abhorrent prison and system," Hina Shamsi, director of the ACLU's National Security Project, said in a statement welcoming Gul's release.

The Biden administration has stated it intends to close the detention facilities at Guantanamo Bay, but it continues to remain open more than two decades after it was created.

Earlier this month, Majid Khan, who completed a 10-year-sentence at the notorious detention centre, filed a federal suit against the [US](#) for keeping him in custody months after his scheduled release.

Middle East Eye [reported](#) earlier this week that at least four detainees had tested positive for Covid-19, creating concerns about the safety of the lives of Guantanamo's ageing population.

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