
Transfer of 17 Detainees Would Show Obama Serious About Closing Gitmo - Rights Group

WASHINGTON, December 18 (Sputnik) - President Barack Obama should move 17 detainees out of the Guantanamo Bay detention center to show his commitment to shutting it down, Amnesty International USA Security and Human Rights Program Director Naureen Shah said in a statement. "The transfer of 17 detainees from Guantánamo would be a leap forward, considering the snail's pace of past transfers," Shah stated on Thursday. "It would also signal that President Obama is serious about closing Guantánamo on his watch." Defense Secretary Ashton Carter has given approval to Congress of the transfer of 17 Guantanamo Bay detainees, according to US media reports. Obama repeatedly promised to close the detention facility, known for its use of torture and other forms of mistreatment, but the prison continues to remain open. Shah noted that the Guantanamo Bay facility has been a blight on the US human rights record for nearly fourteen years, and the push to close it is long overdue. "We're encouraged by the latest news and strongly urge the administration to move ahead with the transfer of all eligible detainees, without delay." The United States has leased Guantanamo Bay from Cuba, where a US naval base is located, since 1903. In 2002, the Guantanamo Bay detention facility was opened within the naval base in the wake of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States.