

China has criticized the United States' decision to transfer three Uighur inmates from the Guantanamo Bay prison to Slovakia.

The men were the last of 22 Uighur Muslims held at the controversial facility, which U.S. President Barack Obama has vowed to close.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Qin Gang said Thursday the men are dangerous and should have been returned to China.

"They are genuine terrorists. They not only threaten China's security, they will threaten the security of the country that receives them. China hopes the relevant country honors its international obligations, does not give asylum to terrorists, and sends them back to China as soon as possible," said Qin Gang.

Beijing says the men belong to the East Turkestan Islamic Movement, which it says is fighting for independence in western China's Xinjiang province.

Not terrorists

Uighurs, the largest ethnic group in Xinjiang, complain of discrimination. Many fear they will be tortured or sent back to prison if sent to China.

Alim Seytoff of the American Uighur Association welcomed the transfer of the men, telling VOA that they posed no risk.

"These Uighurs, as **cleared by the U.S. government**, were not terrorists, as described by the Chinese government. They have never posed a threat to any country or any people. The Chinese government described them as terrorists in order to justify the heavy-handed crackdown against the peaceful Uighur people since 9/11," said Alim Seytoff.

The men were arrested during the 2001 U.S.-led invasion of Afghanistan and held by the U.S. as alleged terrorists.

A U.S. judge ordered all 22 freed in 2008, but U.S. officials had trouble finding new home countries for all of them.

The 19 other Uighur prisoners have resettled in other countries.

Regime Slams US Transfer of Uighurs From Guantanamo

VOA -
