

Group: U.S. mistreats child soldiers

by UPI

GUANTANAMO BAY, Cuba - Human Rights Watch accused the U.S. government Tuesday of misrepresenting its position on Omar Khadr, who has been held in Guantanamo since he was 15. Khadr, a Canadian citizen, has argued that U.S. military commissions do not have jurisdiction over child offenders. In a submission Monday, the U.S. Justice Department cited a court filing by a coalition that includes Human Rights Watch. The department said the coalition accepted Khadr's trial by a commission because it did not explicitly oppose it. "Not only is this position wrong, it's absurd," said Clive Baldwin, senior legal adviser at Human Rights Watch. "Human Rights Watch has called the military commissions fundamentally unfair from the start -- and even more egregious that Khadr was a child when he allegedly committed the crimes." The coalition cited Khadr as an example of the United States' failure to treat child soldiers from Afghanistan appropriately. His case should either be dropped or moved to a civilian court, Baldwin said.

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