

New limits proposed for Guantanamo lawyers

by UPI

WASHINGTON - Bush administration asked a federal court in Washington to set new limits on lawyers for detainees at the U.S. military prison at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

A U.S. Court of Appeals filing from the Justice Department said detainees' lawyers are causing unrest and serve as intermediaries between detainees and the news media, The New York Times reported Thursday.

Visits by civilian lawyers and mail between them and their clients have caused "intractable problems and threats to security at Guantanamo," the government said in the filing.

The Justice Department proposed limiting lawyers to three visits with an existing client, following a single visit in which a detainee could authorize a lawyer to handle a case. Also, intelligence officers and military lawyers not involved in the case would be authorized to read mail sent to a detainee by a lawyer, the Times reported.

Lawyers said the proposal would make it impossible for them to adequately defend their clients.

"These rules are an effort to restore Guantanamo to its prior status as a legal black hole," Jonathan Hafetz of the Brennan Center for Justice at New York University, told the Times.

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