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Kabul frees 129 Afghans held by US forces at Bagram

1/6/2013

“Up to 129 prisoners, who have been detained and held in Bagram prison over the last couple of years but there was no evidence to prove their involvement in the insurgency, were released and would join their families today (Saturday),” Gen. Mohammad Yar Barakzai, an Afghan Defense Ministry official in charge of prisons, said on Saturday in Kandahar.

“We are sure their release could further help the government efforts in bringing peace and will support the peace and reconciliation process in the country.”

On January 4, the government also freed 80 Afghan prisoners who were held at the US-built prison.

According to US military officials, the inmates had been captured in operations against the Taliban and other militant groups in the country.

The US military had previously held thousands of Afghan prisoners at its notorious Bagram prison, which lies within Bagram Air Base on the outskirts of Kabul.

Since March 2012, when Washington and Kabul reached an agreement to fully hand over the Bagram prison to the Afghan government, more than 3,000 detainees have either been handed over to the Afghan authorities or released.

In November 2012, President Hamid Karzai ordered Afghan forces to take control of the prison and accused US officials of failing to fully comply with the terms of the Memorandum of Understanding on Detentions.

The United States and its allies invaded Afghanistan in October 2001 as part of Washington's so-called war on terror. The offensive removed the Taliban from power, but after more than 11, insecurity remains in the country.