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## Reprieve Welcomes Announcement of Imminent Return from Guantánamo Bay of Clients Jamil El Banna, Omar Deghayes and Abdennour Sameur

Reprieve welcomes the announcement today by Foreign Secretary David Miliband that a final agreement has been reached with the United States to end years of incarceration in Guantánamo Bay of British residents Jamil El Banna, Omar Deghayes and Abdennour Sameur. Reprieve attorneys have represented the men before the United States courts for more than two years.

“I have seen the evidence against these men. Rest assured, they are not a threat to the British public. But if anyone has any proof they have done something wrong, let’s have a fair and open trial. It’s what any one of us would want if someone accused us of something. The Americans have given not one of them a day in court. They have been held for years, away from their families, away from their lives, with no hope for justice. Now, thanks to the efforts of the Foreign and Home Secretaries, that will soon change.” Zachary Katznelson, Reprieve Senior Counsel, stated.

“Any happiness we feel today is tempered by the fact that other British residents remain in Guantánamo. Binyam Mohamed, who suffered horrific treatment at the hands of CIA lackies in Morocco, is not yet coming home. The only evidence against him was extracted by razor blades slicing his genitalia. The British Government must do all it can to end his nightmare.” Clive Stafford Smith, Legal Director of Reprieve, stated.

Clive Stafford Smith, Legal Director of Reprieve, continued: “Ahmed Belbacha lived in Bournemouth for years, but the British government has refused to intervene on his behalf, as his immigration status had not been regularised. Ahmed worked at the Labour Party Conference in Bournemouth cleaning Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott’s room. Mr. Prescott thought so highly of him, he left a personal note of thanks and a large tip. The British Government can save him from a gruesome fate – return to Algeria where abuse and torture await – if they intervene now.”

### **Note to Editors:**

Jamil El Banna is a father of five who received asylum from Jordan in 1997. Jamil was arrested at an airport in the Gambia while on a business trip in November 2002, based on what is now known to have been false intelligence. Jamil has never met his youngest daughter, as his wife was pregnant when he left on his ill-fated business trip.

Omar Deghayes is a long-time Brighton native who fled Libya as a child after his father was murdered by Colonel Muammar Gaddafi. Omar received asylum in the UK in 1987. Omar has been blinded in his right eye by US forces in Guantánamo, which maced him repeatedly and gouged his eye.

Abdenmour Sameur received asylum from Algeria in 2000. He fled his native country after he was ordered by military superiors to kill innocent civilians. He of course found this reprehensible and refused, but was forced to abandon Algeria to avoid punishment for doing the right thing.

For more information, contact Reprieve at 0207 353 4640.

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