



The Pakistani military is holding thousands of suspected militants in indefinite detention, arguing that the nation's dysfunctional civilian justice system cannot be trusted to prevent them from walking free, according to U.S. and Pakistani officials.

The majority of the detainees have been held for nearly a year and have been allowed no contact with family members, lawyers or humanitarian groups, the Pakistani officials and human rights advocates said.

Top U.S. officials have raised concern over the detentions with the Pakistani leadership, fearing the issue could undermine American domestic and congressional support for the U.S.-backed counterinsurgency campaign here and jeopardize billions of dollars in U.S. assistance.

Pakistani officials say they are aware of the problem, but that there is no clear solution: The nation lacks a military justice system, and even civilian officials concede their courts are not up to the task of handling such a large volume of complex terrorism cases. For most of the detainees, there is little forensic evidence, and witnesses are likely to be too scared to testify

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