

PRESS RELEASE

October 31, 2005

Bahrain Asks US to Investigate Torture at Guantanamo

Washington, Oct 30 (Prensa Latina) The Bahrain Embassy in the United States has formally requested the US to open an investigation into alleged torture of a Bahraini prisoner at Guantanamo, a Bahraini foreign ministry source revealed Friday.

At the urging of his lawyers, Juma Mohammed Abdul Latif Al Dossary, a Bahraini citizen held at the illegal US Naval base on Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, wrote a letter protesting his innocence and detailing appalling and repeated abuses at the hands of US personnel.

His letter was sent to the Bahrain Center for Human Rights that reported his torture, citing supporting testimony by three recently-released British detainees at Guantanamo. A summary of his experiences was published in the Bahrain Daily News.

The US alleges Al Dossary was in Afghanistan in November 2001, is a member of Al Qaeda, and was present at Tora Bora, where the US thought Osama bin Laden may have been hiding. The military says that Al Dossary crossed the border into Pakistan illegally in December 2001 and surrendered to Pakistani authorities.

Al Dossary maintains he is innocent, that he was on his way to the Bahraini Embassy in Pakistan after leaving Afghanistan in late 2001 and was tricked by the Pakistani military who told him he could go to his country's embassy and instead moved him from prison to prison, beat him and, with promises to meet with a human rights organization instead put him on a plane to Kandahar where he was delivered, "sold" he says, to the US military.

Al Dossary and the hundreds of other detainees at Guantanamo have not been charged with any crime and have never been to court to test the allegations for which they have been held at Guantanamo for years.

In July, Guantanamo prisoners went on their first hunger strike protesting their imprisonment and maltreatment. They ended it when Michael Bumgarner, guard commander, promised changes. The prison reneged on the pledge and another hunger strike began.

Reportedly, the number of detainees needing acute medical attention overwhelmed the camp infirmary and critically ill detainees were left on cots in the interrogation area.

<http://www.cageprisoners.com/articles.php?id=10276>

SOURCE: Plenglish.com

US Judge Orders Release of Guantánamo Hunger Strikers' Medical Records

By Tom Carter

A federal judge ruled on October 26 that the Bush administration and the US military must provide information to defense attorneys about the conditions of detainees in Guantánamo Bay. The lawyers are representing detainees from Qatar, Yemen, Saudi Arabia and Afghanistan who have been participating in a hunger strike for more than three months to protest their incarceration and treatment at the US detention camp.

Federal District Judge Gladys Kessler ordered the US military to release to lawyers the medical records of the prisoners they are representing—records that are currently classified. The government must also notify a lawyer representing a detainee within 24 hours of a force-feeding by Guantánamo authorities, a brutal practice that is prohibited by international medical standards and has been denounced by civil liberties advocates. Kessler rejected another demand by the attorneys that they be put in regular telephone contact with their clients. The US government may appeal the judge's decision.

Julia Tarver, an attorney with the Center for Constitutional Rights who recently visited the hunger strikers, found that the medical practice of force-feeding has become a new form of torture at Guantánamo Bay. Many of the strikers had trouble speaking to her because of throat lesions caused by having finger-width feeding tubes shoved through their noses.

A 2004 Supreme Court ruling permits lawyers to travel to Cuba to meet their detainees in person. Before that, lawyers had no contact whatsoever with the inmates. Lawyers still may not make contact with their clients in writing or over the phone, and all information regarding the reasons for the detainees' incarceration, as well as any statements made by the detainees themselves, are withheld as classified.

In an interview with "Democracy Now!," Tarver delivered a chilling account of her recent visit. "What we found is that the situation at Guantánamo has deteriorated drastically, even since our previous visit at the end of July. The level of hopelessness in the camp has reached a point where our clients are literally vowing they have no other choice but to die. The treatment they are receiving from the guards and the medical staff at Guantánamo is very, very disturbing... [T]he guards and the medical staff are using intervention, medical intervention, to actually inflict forms of torture on our clients."

Multiple detainees reported to Tarver the same behavior on the part of the military personnel. Feeding tubes were moved from one detainee to another without any sanitization, "with the bile and the blood still on the tube from the previous detainee," according to Tarver.

She said that she was told that "no doctor was present" for many of these incidents, which sometimes simply consisted of "six men holding one client down while someone inserts a tube up their nose and into their stomach."

Guards also routinely taunt the gravely ill hunger strikers. "This is what your religion has brought you," the soldiers jeer, and prevent the detainees from sleeping. "We had independent interviews with more than one client, who had had no way to contact each other in between, who told us precisely the same horrific tales," Tarver said.

According to an October 27 article in the New York Times, detainee Yousef Al-Shehri reported that a feeding tube had been so roughly inserted into his throat through his nose that he spat up blood.

The US military has denied that the force-feeding is being used to intentionally inflict pain on the detainees. Dr. John Edmondson, who administrates the medical facility at Guantánamo, contends that anesthetic and lubricants are always used, and that only doctors and nurses had been involved in the force-feeding.

Even if these assertions were accepted, the practice of force-feeding in this situation is expressly forbidden by international medical standards. Article 5 of the 1975 Tokyo Declaration of World Medical Association, which has been accepted by the American Medical Association, instructs doctors that if a prisoner goes on a hunger strike to protest torture and abuse, it is the doctor's responsibility not to intervene in the hunger strike by force-feeding the prisoner, thereby readying the prisoner for more torture.

According to the Center for Constitutional Rights, about 200 prisoners have been involved in the rolling hunger strike, which has been coordinated across multiple complexes with some prisoners refusing food for as many as 60 days (See "Guantánamo Bay hunger strike enters third month").

The Guantánamo detainees are protesting widespread torture and humiliation, religious persecution, sexual abuse, lack of shelter, and the denial of their most basic legal rights. The victims' families have often not heard from their loved ones since they were first swept up in Afghanistan and other locations and carried away by US soldiers.

Most of the detainees were taken into US custody in early 2002, and have spent almost four years at Guantánamo without any criminal charges being brought against them, and without any of the basic rights and protections guaranteed to prisoners of war by the Geneva Conventions. There are no court dates set for any of the prisoners. Flouting its disregard for international law, the Bush administration has coined the phrase "enemy combatant" in an attempt to create new legal circumstances whereby detainees can be denied their most basic democratic rights.

<http://www.cageprisoners.com/articles.php?id=10273>

SOURCE: World Socialist Website

November 01, 2005

Hunger Strike in Support of Guantanamo Detainees Begins

Australians are taking part in an international day of fasting in support of detainees being held in the US military's Guantanamo Bay prison.

The New York-based Constitutional Rights Centre, which initiated the action, says it is in support of what it estimates to be 250 prisoners on a hunger strike within the prison in Cuba.

A spokesman for Justice Action, Brett Collins, says the Australians participating in the day are supported by groups including the Australian Muslim Civil Rights Advocacy Network and the New South Wales Council for Civil Liberties.

"Thousands of Australians will be fasting for the day in support, we've had messages coming out from some of the jails, we've had a number of leading organisations concerned with social justice say that they've vowed support for the fast today," he said

<http://www.cageprisoners.com/articles.php?id=10299>

SOURCE: ABC Australia

Inquiry Into Hicks Claims

Australian officials met Guantanamo Bay detainee David Hicks on several occasions and at no time did he raise allegations he had been sexually abused, Foreign Minister Alexander Downer says.

Mr Downer said a claim the Australian had been abused while in US custody would be investigated but needed to be tested before he took it too seriously.

"Our officials have had many meetings with him ... and on no occasion has he ever raised such a concern," he told ABC radio.

"(A) consul was down there fairly recently in Guantanamo Bay and David Hicks has never made such claims to Australian officials.

"Look, we've had claims that he was tortured. We've had two American teams investigate those claims and they have come back with nil returns."

On ABC TV's Four Corners program on Monday, Hicks's father Terry said David Hicks was sexually abused during two, 10-hour beatings by attackers aboard a US warship.

Mr Hicks has been in US custody since he was captured alongside Taliban forces in Afghanistan in late 2001 and has spent most of that time since at the Guantanamo Bay military prison in Cuba.

A former Guantanamo Bay detainee Martin Munbanga told Four Corners that Mr Hicks revealed to him how he had been blindfolded, beaten, spat upon, sexually abused and assaulted.

UN envoys

Meanwhile three United Nations human rights investigators say they can only accept a US invitation to visit Guantanamo prison camp in Cuba if they are permitted to interview detainees.

Nearly four years after the visits were first requested, Washington said on Friday the three envoys, including the UN rapporteur on torture, could visit foreign terrorism suspects because it had "nothing to hide".

However while the UN investigators could question US military officials, they would not be allowed to speak to any of the 505 detainees, the Pentagon said, adding that, that was the role of the International Committee of the Red Cross.

In a statement, the three envoys said; "We cannot accept the exclusion of private interviews with detainees...this would not only contravene the terms of reference for fact-finding missions ... but also undermine the purpose of an objective and fair assessment."

Human rights activists have criticised the United States for the indefinite detention without trial of the detainees.

The invitations were extended to Austria's Manfred Nowak, special investigator for the United Nations on torture, Pakistan's Asma Jahangir, who focuses on religious freedom, and Algeria's Leila Zerrougui, who looks into arbitrary detention.

Criticism by human rights groups has escalated in recent weeks with the US military's disclosure that it was force-feeding Guantanamo detainees who were staging a hunger strike over their conditions and lack of legal rights.

The Pentagon has defended its treatment of prisoners and denied that torture has occurred at the prison camp, which opened in January 2002, just months after the September 11, 2001, attacks on the US.

<http://www.cageprisoners.com/articles.php?id=10298>

SOURCE: SBS

UN Rights Envoys Want To Quiz Guantanamo Prisoners

By Irwin Arief

UNITED NATIONS, Oct 31 (Reuters) - Three U.N. human rights investigators said on Monday they would turn down a long-awaited U.S. invitation to visit Guantanamo prison camp in Cuba unless they were permitted to interview the detainees.

Nearly four years after the visits were first requested, Washington said on Friday the three envoys, including the U.N. expert on torture, could visit foreign terrorism suspects because it had "nothing to hide."

But although they could question U.S. military officials, the envoys would not be allowed to speak to any of the more than 500 detainees because that is the role of the International Committee of the Red Cross, the Pentagon said.

Leila Zerrougui of Algeria, a U.N. expert on arbitrary detention, and Austrian Manfred Nowak, who investigates torture for the world body, said they proposed a Dec. 6 visit but would go only if the Pentagon let them talk to the prisoners.

"We have never agreed to have a supervised meeting or visit a place where we cannot have full access to all detainees," Zerrougui told a news conference at U.N. headquarters.

"The only condition that we did not accept was that we would have no access to detainees and I am very confident that since we accepted the invitation in the spirit of compromise, the United States will compromise," Nowak said.

But an official hinted the Pentagon might not be in a compromising mood.

"It is the view of the U.S. government that United Nations special rapporteurs' mandates do not extend to matters of the status and treatment of persons captured during armed conflict," said U.S. Army Lt. Col. Mark Ballesteros, a Pentagon spokesman.

The third U.N. investigator to be invited was Pakistan's Asma Jahangir, who focuses on religious freedom. The three, known formally as special rapporteurs, are named by the Geneva-based U.N. Human Rights Commission but operate with considerable autonomy

The three, in a statement, expressed disappointment that two other U.N. investigators -- Leandro Despouy, special investigator on the independence of judges and lawyers, and Paul Hunt, special rapporteur on mental and physical health -- had not been included.

They also said the one day granted them by the Pentagon for the visit was insufficient.

Human rights activists have criticized the United States for the indefinite detention without trial of the detainees at the U.S. naval base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

That criticism has escalated in recent weeks with the U.S. military's disclosure that it was force-feeding Guantanamo detainees staging an hunger strike because of their conditions and lack of legal rights.

The Pentagon has defended its treatment of prisoners and denied that torture has occurred at the Guantanamo facility, which opened in January 2002, just months after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks on the United States. Most of the detainees were seized in Afghanistan. (Additional reporting by Richard Waddington in Geneva and Will Dunham at the Pentagon)

Nowak said he and two other human rights officials invited to Guantanamo Bay, where about 520 suspected terrorists are being held, hoped that the U.S. would lift the restriction before their scheduled visit on Dec. 6. The UN, which sought a three-day visit, agreed to a U.S. limit of one day, he said.

There has been no agreement with the U.S. authorities on a visit to facilities in Afghanistan or Iraq, Nowak said.

Nowak said China has given the UN permission to conduct private interviews during a visit next month.

``We cannot accept lower standards for the U.S. than China," Nowak said. ``We won't go to Guantanamo for the sort of guided tour given to members of Congress and the media."

<http://www.cageprisoners.com/articles.php?id=10294>

SOURCE: Reuters and Bloomberg

As Gitmo Hunger Strike Continues, Lawyers Step Up Fight for Access

by Saadia Iqbal

As the "torturous" force-feeding of hunger strikers at Guantanamo Bay continues, detainees' advocates say captors are no longer just violating US and international law but also medical ethics.

Washington, DC, Oct 31 - Attorneys representing a disputed number of inmates engaged in a months-long hunger strike at the US-run prison camp in Guantánamo Bay are slamming the Pentagon's handling of the protest. Instead of meeting the desperate demands of the more than 200 prisoners who lawyers claim have been engaged in the act of civil disobedience, the military's response has been to deny the attorneys access to their clients' medical records and to force-feed the striking detainees in violation of international medical standards.

Inmates at the Guantánamo camps have intermittently engaged in hunger strikes since 2002, the year the detention center was established, but this latest protest, which began in August 2005, is the most widespread and prolonged.

Tina Foster, an attorney with the Center for Constitutional Rights (CCR), a nonprofit legal organization that represents many of the detainees held at Guantánamo, told The NewStandard that the Department of Defense has "allowed the situation to become so dire that detainees are now under the impression that the only thing that will get world attention is their death."

CCR says that at least 200 prisoners have been involved in this hunger strike, but that delays in the information released from the detention center make it difficult to pinpoint the exact number.

Lieutenant Colonel Jeremy M. Martin, director of public affairs of the Joint Task Force at Guantánamo Bay, said the highest number of prisoners to have taken part in the hunger strike was 131, with 26 currently still not eating. He told TNS that medical personnel at the prison are providing "enteral nutrition," or tube-feeding, to 22 of the strikers.

Last week, Julia Tarver, an attorney representing ten detainees at Guantánamo, obtained judicial permission to publicly release her clients' statements. She said her clients who are currently hunger striking described the conditions under which they were force-fed as "torture." They said their captors physically restrained them from head to toe and forcibly shoved large tubes up their noses and down into their stomachs without providing anesthesia or sedative. According to Tarver's statement, the detainees said they vomited blood as a result of the force-feeding.

According to Tarver's notes, in the presence of Guantánamo physicians, prison guards took tubes from one detainee and "with no sanitization whatsoever, reinserted it into the nose of a different detainee. When these tubes were reinserted, the detainees could see the blood and stomach bile from other detainees remaining on the tubes."

In her statement, Tarver added, "Detainees complying with the nasal tube-feeding were doing so only because they believed it had been ordered by a US court – a belief that is simply untrue."

Where a prisoner refuses nourishment and is considered by the physician as capable of forming an unimpaired and rational judgment concerning the consequences of such a voluntary refusal of nourishment, he or she shall not be fed artificially. -- World Medical Association

In fact, in a Wednesday ruling that resulted from an emergency petition by attorneys of Guantánamo detainees, US District Court Judge Gladys Kessler ordered that the government inform counsel at least 24 hours before force-feeding inmates.

Lt. Col. Martin denies that the captives are being abused. "Detainees are treated humanely and are provided with excellent medical care," he said. "Prevention of unnecessary loss of life of detainees through standard medical intervention – including involuntary medical nutrition and hydration to overcome a detainee's desire to harm themselves, using means that are clinically appropriate – is consistent with [Department of Defense] policy."

He also said the hunger-strike tactic is "consistent with Al-Qaeda training [techniques] and reflects the detainees' attempts to elicit media attention and bring pressure on the United States government."

But Foster said the inmates had every reason to object to their conditions. "They have a very valid point," she said. "Prisoners are being treated like animals there. They are protesting... the fact that they have been denied access to justice since their incarceration four years ago."

Foster added that the detainees had no spiritual guidance or communication with the outside world. "These are people who have been subject to severe psychological and physical abuse since the last four years," she said. "They are making these decisions in a vacuum."

Simon Schorno, press spokesperson for the International Committee of the Red Cross said ICRC representatives had visited the camp two weeks ago in relation to the hunger strike. "We don't comment publicly on the findings," he said, adding that the Red Cross does have an ongoing relationship with the US government over the broader issue of the detention facility.

"ICRC, as an independent and neutral organization," Schorno added, "explains to the detainees what the medical consequences of their actions are and shares with authorities its position on force feeding, which is prohibited according to the World Medical Association guidelines."

The American Medical Association's stance on force-feeding is in keeping with international standards. AMA representatives visited the Guantánamo Bay facility on October 19.

Audiey Kao, vice president of the AMA Ethics Group, told The NewStandard in a written statement that her organization was unable to assess the quality of treatment the striking detainees are receiving because the AMA was denied access to the prisoners. But Kao said the AMA has shared its position on feeding individuals against their will with US military officials. Specifically, Kao said, the AMA endorses the World Medical Association's Declaration of Tokyo, which states:

Where a prisoner refuses nourishment and is considered by the physician as capable of forming an unimpaired and rational judgment concerning the consequences of such a voluntary refusal of nourishment, he or she shall not be fed artificially. The decision as to the capacity of the prisoner to form such a judgment should be confirmed by at least one other independent physician. The consequences of the refusal of nourishment shall be explained by the physician to the prisoner.

Foster of the CCR said the US has other ways to prevent the prisoners from dying, other than force-feeding. "There are so many things that could have been done until now," she said, "such as giving them access to their families, at least via telephone."

Attorneys with CCR call it ironic that the detainees are going to such desperate lengths to demand fair hearings and the ability to challenge the conditions of confinement, given that the Supreme Court has already afforded the rights they are now seeking through protest. In June 2004, the Court upheld the detainees' right to have their cases heard in US civilian courts. The Bush administration has sought to block most such attempts since, in cases that are making their way back up to the Supreme Court.

Tomorrow, CCR lawyers, in collaboration with other organizations, will participate in a one-day solidarity fast to protest their clients' treatment. The fast falls within Ramadan, the Muslim month of fasting. The groups will also hold vigils in Washington, DC and New York City to protest the captives' conditions and demand that prisoners of the US "war on terror" receive humane treatment and access to fair hearings.

<http://www.cageprisoners.com/articles.php?id=10289>

SOURCE: Newstandardnews.net

October 02, 2005

40 Pakistanis Remain in Guantanamo: Reports

By Anwar Iqbal

WASHINGTON, Nov 1: At least 40 Pakistani citizens are still detained in US prisons in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and some of them are participating in a hunger strike that started on the fourth anniversary of 9/11, according to human rights groups and media reports.

The Washington Post published a fresh list of detainees on Tuesday which has 434 names and 62 of them are Pakistani nationals. According to the newspaper, 21 of these 62 Pakistani prisoners have so far been released but 41 are still there.

The Pakistan embassy in Washington says that there is only one Pakistani prisoner in Guantanamo.

During a recent visit to Guantanamo, the US commander of the prison facilities, Maj-Gen Jay W. Hood, told this correspondent that 'some' Pakistani prisoners were still there but declined to say how many.

A US-based human rights group, Constitutional Rights Centre, said at least 250 prisoners were on hunger strike in the Guantanamo prison. Other human rights groups have reported recent suicide attempts by the prisoners.

In a 2,000-word front-page report published on Tuesday, the Post also reported recent suicide attempts by some of the detainees.

Lt-Col Jeremy Martin, spokesman for Joint Task Force Guantanamo, told this correspondent during a recent visit to the camp that there had been a total of 36 suicide attempts by 22 detainees.

But he told the Post on Monday that at least three of these attempts were made in the past 20 months.

<http://www.cageprisoners.com/articles.php?id=10322>

SOURCE: Dawn

Lawyers Protest Over Guantanamo Detention Conditions

Lawyers for detainees at Guantanamo Bay in Cuba have stepped up protests over detention conditions as a newspaper reported that one prisoner tried to commit suicide as his legal representative made a rare visit.

The Washington Post says the attempted suicide last month by a Bahraini detainee was a sign of the increasing desperation of the 500-plus inmates held at the controversial camp on a US navy base in Cuba.

Jumah al-Dossari, who was seized in late 2001 in Pakistan, slashed his arm and hung himself from the ceiling during a bathroom break from talks with his US lawyer on October 15, the newspaper reports.

While suicide attempts have been reported before at Guantanamo, it was the first to be witnessed by an outsider, the newspaper says, adding that lawyers believe 32-year-old Dossari had become increasingly desperate after nearly two years of solitary confinement.

Amnesty International says Dossari has undergone frequent beatings, torture and long stretches of solitary confinement.

Hicks

The father of South Australian detainee, David Hicks, has alleged his son was sexually abused at Guantanamo.

Foreign Minister Alexander Downer says this will be investigated but that Hicks has never mentioned the accusations to Australian officials.

Terry Hicks told the ABC's Four Corners that his son had told him he was tortured by Americans during two 10-hour sessions shortly after being captured alongside Taliban forces in Afghanistan in late 2001.

David Hicks reportedly told his father he was anally penetrated with a number of objects.

Hicks, 30, is due to stand trial on November 18 before a US military tribunal on charges including attempted murder, aiding the enemy and training at Al-Qaeda-linked military camps.

He has denied the charges.

Protest

Lawyers staged a protest outside the US Justice Department in Washington to condemn conditions at Guantanamo, where most prisoners have been held for more than three years without charge.

Tina Foster of the Guantanamo Global Justice Initiative, part of the Centre for Constitutional Rights (CCR), which has organised legal representation for several detainees, denounced the lack of contact with prisoners.

She says there are "horrible, horrible abuses" at Guantanamo.

US military authorities say there have been 36 suicide attempts at the facility.

But up to 200 inmates are reported to have taken part in a rolling hunger strike since July to protest conditions at the prison.

The military says there are still 27 on a hunger strike and 24 are being force-fed.

Ms Foster says 130 men at the camp are on hunger strike.

CCR says some inmates have said they are ready to die.

UN request

The United States has turned down a request by the United Nations Commission on Human Rights to provide information about Guantanamo, as well as detention centres in Afghanistan and Iraq, a report says.

The committee, made up of 18 independent experts elected by the UN General Assembly, in July 2004 pressed the US for information about its overseas military detention centres.

The Bush administration has declined to include information on detention facilities outside US territory, and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights applies only to US territory.

The United States said last week it would invite three UN human rights experts to visit Guantanamo.

On Monday the experts, who are not part of the UN committee, said they would go on the proposed December 6 visit only if they have free access to the prisoners.

<http://www.cageprisoners.com/articles.php?id=10321>

SOURCE: ABC.net.au

Rumsfeld Defends Guantanamo Decision

US Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld has defended a decision not to allow UN investigators to meet foreign terror suspects at the Guantanamo Bay prison following allegations of torture and a hunger strike by some.

Rumsfeld also told a Pentagon news conference that the 27 hunger strikers, some of whom have been force-fed since they began fasting in August, were simply trying to attract media attention.

The three UN investigators, including one who focuses on torture, have turned down a Pentagon invitation to visit Guantanamo because US authorities were refusing to allow them to interview the detainees.

The invitation came nearly four years after the UN first asked Washington for permission to visit the base - where 505 terror suspects, including Australian David Hicks, are being held.

Hicks' family raised allegations of beatings and other torture this week.

In another development, the US is freeing five Kuwaiti detainees from Guantanamo.

The five will be transferred to the custody of the Kuwaitis within in the next two days, said Tom Wilner, the lead lawyer for 11 Kuwaitis at the detention camp.

"Hopefully the others will not be far behind," Wilner said.

The US government has not disclosed a reason for the release.

One of the detainees, Abdulazziz al-Shammari, has been on hunger strike since August 9 and is being force-fed at the base hospital and monitored by medical authorities.

Two of the other men had joined the hunger strike but have resumed eating, Wilner said.

They could face criminal proceedings in Kuwait, but prefer that to remaining at Guantanamo without being charged or tried, Wilner said.

"What they've always asked for is a chance to face charges, so this is a big victory," Wilner said.

Officials at Guantanamo didn't immediately return calls seeking comment.

In Washington, Rumsfeld said the US would not change its policy of granting prisoner access only the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), a neutral body that keeps its findings confidential.

Last year, though, the ICRC accused the US military of using tactics "tantamount to torture" on Guantanamo prisoners.

Rumsfeld said the ICRC had had access to detainees for years and "so we're not inclined to add (to) the number of people that would be given that extensive access."

The invitations for the UN went to Austria's Manfred Nowak, special investigator on torture, Pakistan's Asma Jahangir, who focuses on religious freedom, and Algeria's Leila Zerrougui, who looks into arbitrary detention.

The military has denied torture has occurred.

Asked about the motivation of the hunger strikers, Rumsfeld said: "Well, I suppose that what they're trying to do is to capture press attention, obviously, and they've succeeded."

"There are a number of people who go on a diet where they don't eat for a period and then go off of it at some point. And then they rotate and other people do that," he added.

US District Court Judge Gladys Kessler last week ordered the government to provide medical records on Guantanamo prisoners who are being force-fed and to notify their lawyers about forced feedings.

The judge said detainees' lawyers had presented "deeply troubling" allegations of US personnel violently shoving feeding tubes as thick as a finger through the men's noses and into their stomachs without anaesthesia or sedatives, with detainees vomiting blood as US personnel mocked them.

Rumsfeld appeared to distance himself from the decision to force-feed detainees.

"I'm not a doctor and I'm not the kind of a person who would be in a position to approve or disapprove," he said.

"It seems to me, looking at it from this distance, is that the responsible people are the combatant commanders. And the army is the executive agent for detainees."

<http://www.cageprisoners.com/articles.php?id=10308>

SOURCE: The Age

November 03, 2005

Five Kuwaitis Head Home From Guantanamo

By Haitham Haddadin

KUWAIT (Reuters) - Five Kuwaitis who had been held in Guantanamo Bay for three years were flying home where they will be tried in a local court, a representative of the detainees said on Thursday.

The five were among a dozen Kuwaitis imprisoned at the U.S. military base in Cuba during the 2001 U.S.-led war to oust al Qaeda from Afghanistan after the September 11 attacks.

Khaled al-Odah, Chairman of the Families of Kuwaiti Detainees at Guantanamo, said two of the five prisoners were in very bad health, adding that they were expected to arrive in Kuwait late on Thursday or early Friday.

They were identified as Adel al-Zamel, Mohammad al-Daihani, Abdullah al-Ajmi, Saad al-Azmi and Abdulaziz al-Shimmari.

"Shimmari is a walking skeleton and Ajmi is suffering a nervous breakdown due to his imprisonment. He has been shouting and out of control," Odah told Reuters.

Shimmari was among five Kuwaitis who joined a recent hunger strike by 200 inmates to protest their prolonged confinement without trial.

The official news agency KUNA said Kuwaiti authorities received the five on Thursday and that they were expected to be tried in a Kuwaiti court.

They are flying home on a plane sent by the government carrying medical and security teams, Odah said.

Interior Ministry sources said the detainees would be allowed to meet their families before being taken into custody, but Odah said relatives were yet to receive approval for access.

One former detainee Nasser al-Mutairi was freed last January but was later tried and acquitted of charges of undermining Kuwaiti security, weapons possession, joining al-Qaeda and fighting a friendly nation, a reference to the United States.

But on Wednesday, a Kuwaiti appeals court sentenced Mutairi, 28, to five years in prison for "participating in hostile activities against a friendly country", and offences ranging from weapons possession to hurting Kuwait's interests.

Odah said Kuwait would soon hold talks with U.S. officials about freeing the remaining six Kuwaitis held at Guantanamo.

They include his son Fawzi, 27, a religious studies teacher arrested in Pakistan near the Afghan border in late 2001.

Kuwait, a staunch U.S. ally, is a main transit route for American forces going to Iraq. It was a launchpad for the 2003 war on Iraq and up to 25,000 U.S. troops are based there.

(Additional reporting by Yara Bayoumy in Dubai)

<http://www.cageprisoners.com/articles.php?id=10332>

SOURCE: Reuters

Mark Thomas is Sickened By Guantanamo

Mark Thomas

Guantanamo prisoners describe the pain of force-feeding as unbearable: so do not read this while you are eating, writes Mark Thomas

A long time from now, after George Bush has left office, after the massed ranks of American forces have withdrawn from Iraq, way into the future, perhaps at a time when the US is not the most indebted nation on the planet, an enduring image of American power will remain in the minds of people all over the world. And that image will be an orange jumpsuit. No single image can conjure up America's abuse of human rights in quite the same way as a simple orange jumpsuit. The latest twists in the tale of Guantanamo Bay testify to this fact and once again throw Britain's "special relationship" with the US into doubt. For the American military has developed a new form of torture in Guantanamo Bay, and Jack Straw, Kim Howells and the rest of the Foreign Office have done little to stop it. By the way, if you are eating while reading this, now would be a good time to put your food to one side.

In June this year, an estimated 210 prisoners in Guantanamo Bay went on hunger strike, demanding to be either charged with a criminal offence or released, and that while in Guantanamo Bay they be treated in accordance with the Geneva conventions. The authorities, according to Binyam Mohammed (a UK resident held in Guantanamo Bay) and other prisoners, "promised that if we gave them ten days, they would bring the prison into compliance with the Geneva conventions. They said this had been approved by Donald Rumsfeld himself." The hunger strike ended on or around 28 July.

Within weeks, however, in early August, a second hunger strike had started as a result of broken promises by the US authorities. Faced with a second strike, the military authorities decided to take drastic action and force-feed prisoners. Julia Tarver, whose law firm represents prisoners in Guantanamo Bay, stated that at least two of their clients were being force-fed from tubes inserted through their noses into their stomachs. Without anaesthetic or sedative, Yousef al-Shehri was restrained by two soldiers, Tarver's testimony continued, "one holding his chin while the other held him back by his hair, and a medical staff member forcibly inserted the tube in his nose and down his throat". The result of the force-feeding was that he and others were vomiting up "substantial amounts of blood". At this point, dear reader, if you have not put down any food you might be consuming, now is the time to do so.

After two weeks of this treatment, Yousef and other prisoners were transferred from the hospital back to Camp Delta and placed in solitary cells. Here they were given no food or water for five days before the authorities resumed the force-feeding. This time the tubes were larger. According to Tarver's statements: "These tubes - the thickness of a finger, he estimated - were viewed by the detainees as objects of torture." After they were removed he fainted: "Yousef described the pain as unbearable."

The riot guards (Emergency Reaction Force - ERF) removed these "Nasal Gastric (NG) tubes by placing a foot on one end of the tube and yanking the detainee's head back by his hair, causing the tube to be painfully ejected from the detainee's nose. Then, in front of the Guantanamo physicians . . . the guards took NG tubes from one detainee, and with no sanitisation whatsoever, reinserted it into the nose of a different detainee. When these tubes were reinserted the detainees could see the blood and stomach bile from the other detainees remaining on the tubes." The head of the detainee hospital watched and made no attempt to intervene.

Another prisoner, Abdul-Rahman Shalabi, described similar incidents. "One Navy doctor came," Tarver's testimony states, "and put the tube in his nose and down his throat and then just kept moving the tube up and down, until finally Abdul-Rahman started violently throwing up blood."

The British doctor and campaigner David Nicholl demonstrated how violent this procedure could be when he had a tube inserted into himself by a fellow doctor outside the US embassy a few weeks ago. Dr Nicholl said: "It is fundamental to a doctor's responsibilities in dealing with a hunger strike that the detainee has the right, as any other patient would, to refuse treatment." The US military, he said, "defies this clear ethical obligation. The detainees are restrained with shackles on their arms, legs, waist, chest, knees and head; are not anaesthetised or sedated; and are subject to this practice as a further means of torture."

The UK charity Reprieve believes that between six and nine of the British prisoners in Guantanamo are on hunger strike. Among them is Omar Deghayes, who lived in Brighton. Omar's family fled to Britain as refugees after his father, Amer, was tortured and killed by the Gaddafi regime. Because Omar is not officially a UK citizen, Straw has not even replied to his lawyer, Clive Stafford Smith, who wrote alerting him to the hunger strike and requesting action. There are currently nine men in Guantanamo who are residents or refugees in Britain. For whom Straw has done precisely jack shit. The US authorities, according to prisoners, want simply to break the hunger strike. But as one prisoner has said: "There is no law here, only injustice." The Americans should know that while this remains the case, there will be no simple PR fixes.

<http://www.cageprisoners.com/articles.php?id=10330>

SOURCE: New Statesman

November 05, 2005

Agony for Guantanamo Bahraini Families

By KANWAL HAMEED

THE families of the three Bahrainis left behind at Guantanamo Bay were heartbroken by the news that they were not coming home. Juma Al Dossary's mother collapsed and had to be taken to hospital. His brother Khalid said their world had been "turned upside down."

Essa Al Murbati's wife Elham Ibrahim Khalil and her children were heartbroken - and angry at being let down once again.

Salah Abdul Rasool Al Blooshi's father Abdul Rasool will wake up this morning to shattering news.

He went to bed last night not knowing whether his son was coming home or not.

Mr Al Blooshi asked me to send him a text message once there was confirmation either way, so he would "see it in the morning".

He will breakfast over the news that his son is still in the cages of Guantanamo.

Salah was just 20 when his family last saw him nearly five years ago and when news broke last Sunday that some of the detainees were to be freed, his father was happy, but wary.

"It's almost entering the fifth year since I saw my son and it feels like you can't believe it, until you see them here," he said.

Salah was allegedly captured during ground sweeps by Pakistani authorities, whilst fleeing Afghanistan.

He has been accused of travelling to Afghanistan via Pakistan in August 2001 and spending two weeks in Kandahar, in a guest house belonging to a suspected Al Qaeda recruiter.

Khalid Al Dossary heard that his brother would not be coming home, even before the government released the names last night.

He said that he felt like the world had "turned upside down" and his family was in despair, but he was still happy for the families of those detainees returning home today.

"This is very terrible news. I don't know what to say, I feel like the world has turned upside down. This is very difficult to accept," he said.

"I called my mother and tried to explain to her. I said that maybe it was because he was sick, but she collapsed so I had to take her to the hospital.

"They gave her medication for her blood pressure and she went to sleep for a while. When she woke up she started crying and crying.

"I felt like my heart had stopped, I thought that's it."

But in the midst of his misery, he still felt glad for the families of those coming home.

"At the same time, I do feel happy for the other detainees families," said Mr Al Dossary.

All he can do now for Juma, is pray.

I'll just keep praying that we will see him, at least by the end of this year," he said.

The family's agony has been increased by tales of horror in Juma's own words, penned in a diary of life in the camp, which he wrote in July and handed to lawyers during their last visit in October.

News broke just a few days ago that Juma apparently tried to kill himself last month during the visit, by US lawyer Joshua Colangelo-Bryan.

Juma asked to go to the lavatory and was found hanging from the mesh wall of his cell, blood pouring from a wound to his arm.

He has been kept in virtual solitary confinement for two years, say lawyers.

Juma was arrested in Pakistan in December 2001 and US authorities claim he crossed the border from Afghanistan, after travelling there as a member of Al Qaeda. The 30-year-old prisoner has an 11-year-old daughter, Norah, waiting for him in Bahrain.

Essa Al Murbati's wife Elham had prayed that this would be the Eid that would restore happiness to her children's lives.

She had told earlier how their 16-year-old daughter wept behind her closed bedroom door, after hearing that her 40-year-old father was wasting away on hunger strike in the notorious US camp.

When the family heard that he may be freed, they were happy, but "scared" that it may not be true.

That fear became a reality last night, leaving the 40-year-old mother and her five children, aged nine to 16, hurt and angry.

She said the children, three sons and two daughters, were angry at being let down, having been told before that their father would be coming home.

"I know that my husband will not be coming back. And I feel sad. My older children didn't say anything, but they are angry," she said.

"Now I will just pray for him, and all of the other Bahrainis at Guantanamo - and all of the people there."

But even with her heart broken she still felt for others, saying she would liked to have contacted the Al Blooshi family, but couldn't yet as it would make her feel "too sad".

Mr Al Murbati was arrested in Pakistan in 2001, after travelling there on a medical visa.

US authorities claim he travelled to Afghanistan on November 2, 2001, via Pakistan, after being told he would become a better person and would have a BD15,000 debt forgiven.

It is alleged that he first went to Kandahar and then Kabul, for weapons training.

None of the Bahrainis have ever been charged or given the chance of a trial, in the four years they have been detained.

<http://www.cageprisoners.com/articles.php?id=10382>

SOURCE: Gulf Daily News

Three Bahrainis Released from Guantanamo

FREE AT LAST!

By **KANWAL HAMEED**

MANAMA

MANAMA: Three Bahrainis released from the notorious US camp at Guantanamo Bay were flying into Bahrain aboard a military plane early today. They are Adel Kamel Hajee, Abdulla Al Nuami and Shaikh Salman bin Ibrahim Al Khalifa, who were among six Bahrainis held at the camp without charge or trial for four years.

Those left behind are Essa Al Murbati, Salah Abdul Rasool Al Blooshi and Juma Al Dossary, whose families were shattered by the news that they were not coming home.

Relatives of those released were summoned to the Foreign Ministry last night to be told that they were on their way home.

There they met Foreign Minister Shaikh Khalid bin Ahmed Al Khalifa, other ministry officials, Shura Council members and MPs involved in campaigning for the detainees' release.

It is understood that the freed men were arriving aboard a military flight, due to land at Bahrain International Airport early today.

Sources said they were being taken straight to the BDF Hospital for medical checks and would be reunited with their families later in the day. But it is understood that the men will not be going home with their families straight away. Relatives refused to comment, saying they had been told by authorities not to speak to the Press.

The detainees' release and pending arrival was officially announced late last night in a statement by Information Minister and Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Dr Mohammed Abdul Ghaffar.

He said His Majesty King Hamad intervened personally to help secure the detainees' release, by bringing up their cases with the US administration during his visits to the US.

Bahrain will continue to work for the release of the remaining three Bahrainis, still held at the US camp, said Dr Abdul Ghaffar.

He said the freed detainees would undergo a rehabilitation and social integration programme. Their case will be reviewed by the General Prosecution and appropriate action taken, said Dr Abdul Ghaffar.

<http://www.cageprisoners.com/articles.php?id=10381>

SOURCE: Gulf Daily News

Attorneys for Suicidal Gitmo Detainee File for Immediate Access to Client

NEW YORK - November 4 - Attorneys for Jumah Al Dossari, the Bahraini national who made a desperate suicide attempt during a visit with his attorney two weeks ago, have filed papers asking for, among other things, immediate access to Mr. Al Dossari. Mr. Al Dossari is represented by the firm of Dorsey & Whitney and the Center for Constitutional Rights (CCR), the legal group which spearheads the litigating efforts on behalf of the 500 plus men at Guantánamo.

On October 15th, 2005, during a visit with his attorney, Joshua Colangelo-Bryan, Mr. Al Dossari asked to use the bathroom. After a few moments, Colangelo-Bryan opened the door to check on his client (after hearing the toilet flush). He saw Mr. Al Dossari, hanging by his neck from the upper part of the mesh wall that separates the cell area from the meeting area. He had cut his arm and was bleeding. He was unresponsive. Mr. Colangelo-Bryan called for help; Mr. Al Dossari was taken by U.S. Military personnel to the hospital at Guantánamo. Colangelo-Bryan has not heard from nor seen Jumah since he was taken from his cell on a stretcher. He has only been informed that Mr. Al Dossari was taken to the Naval Hospital where he had surgery on his arm.

According to his attorneys, Mr. Al Dossari has been held at Guantánamo for nearly four years even though he has not been charged with a crime. For almost two years, the military has held him in near complete isolation and has subjected him to abusive interrogations, threatening his life and family and humiliating him sexually. "Given these inhumane conditions, how could anyone be surprised that Jumah and others like him have decided that it is better to end their lives than live as they do?" said Colangelo-Bryan.

In light of these disturbing events, Mr. Al Dossari's attorneys today filed a motion in federal court in Washington, D.C., seeking the following:

A face to face meeting with Mr. Al Dossari as soon as possible, regardless of whether he remains hospitalized;
Independent medical professionals to assess the psychological condition of Mr. Al Dossari;
Copies of all medical records relating to Mr. Al Dossari's recent suicide attempt;
That Mr. Al Dossari be permitted to have bi-weekly telephone calls with a member of his family and counsel as contemplated by the Revised Procedures for Counsel Access, VIII(A), in the case of "special circumstances";
Permission for Mr. Al Dossari to view a DVD to be prepared by his family containing personal greetings and expressions of concern;
Permission to receive English-language children's books, introductory English/Arabic textbooks, traditional religious texts, and Arabic-language novels, following appropriate review by authorities at Guantánamo;
No less than an hour of exercise per day; * For the lights in Mr. Al Dossari's cell to be turned off, or at least dimmed, during sleeping hours; and
For Mr. Al Dossari to be incarcerated under circumstances that permit regular interaction with other detainees.
The October 15th attempt to end his life was not Jumah's first. Former Guantánamo Military Intelligence interpreter and whistleblower Eric Saar detailed in his book, *Inside the Wire*, an attempt by a detainee to end his life while in the shower. That detainee was Jumah Al Dossari. Other detainees (current and former) have confirmed numerous instances of abuse Jumah has suffered in their accounts to press and attorneys.

Bill Goodman, Legal Director with the Center for Constitutional Rights stated, "This case illustrates yet again the outrageous, illegal and immoral treatment of men who have not been charged with any crime. It's time for it to end."

<http://www.cageprisoners.com/articles.php?id=10385>

SOURCE: Common Dreams.org