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## **Guantánamo inmate tells of Libyan death threat**

Claim that US allowed Gadafy's agents to interrogate UK resident

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A British resident held by the US in Guantánamo Bay was directly threatened with murder by Libyan secret services while in captivity, it was claimed yesterday.

Omar Deghayes, 35, was born in Libya but fled to Britain as a child after his father was murdered by the Gadafy regime.

Mr Deghayes also alleges beatings and ill-treatment by the US that left him blinded in one eye after a soldier plunged his finger into it, and claims that he had human excrement smeared on his face.

Mr Deghayes grew up in Brighton and studied law at Wolverhampton University and then in Huddersfield. His family say he had given sermons in a mosque condemning terrorism and violence in the name of Islam.

Mr Deghayes alleges that the US allowed Libyan intelligence agents to interrogate him during which they threatened his life. He also claims that British and US intelligence services traded information about him with the Gadafy regime.

The US military had ordered that the claims he made to his lawyer, Clive Stafford-Smith, during a visit to Guantánamo, should be kept secret, but last week US censors declassified them.

The British government says it cannot help Mr Deghayes, who has held refugee status in the UK since 1987, even though the rest of his family are British citizens.

They say that under international law only the Gadafy regime which killed his father can intervene.

Mr Deghayes claims he was interrogated twice by Libyan agents in Guantánamo, on September 9 and 11 last year. He alleges that they insulted his dead father, and showed him pictures of badly beaten Libyan dissidents, which he took as a threat to do the same to him.

He says he was questioned the first time for three hours by Colonel Gadafy's men, who asked him numerous questions about members of the Libyan opposition.

During the second interrogation, Mr Deghayes says, he was asked about Libyan dissidents in Britain, then an agent said, "You will be brought to judgment in Libya", and another said, "In here I cannot do anything but if I meet you [later] I will kill you."

Mr Deghayes had visited Afghanistan, his family said, to judge the Taliban regime for himself, and then he and his Afghan-born wife fled to Pakistan after the US attacked the country to shut down al-Qaida training camps.

He is believed to have been arrested in Pakistan and held at Bagram airbase in Afghanistan. He claims that he became so ill he was barely able to eat for 40 days.

Mr Deghayes said Bagram "looked like the Nazi camps I saw in films", and he was punished for talking to another prisoner by being handcuffed with his hands above his head.

At night he could hear screams from other inmates, and he was repeatedly hooded, forced to his knees during questioning and threatened with torture and death.

The US says that al-Qaida tells its operatives to allege ill-treatment, though parts of Mr Deghayes' account are consistent with those from former detainees.

He also alleges that in March 2004 in Guantánamo he was blinded in one eye by soldiers as they put down protests by prisoners who objected to "sexual assaults" - hands being placed up their rectums as part of a search.

Mr Deghayes says he was first sprayed with mace and then a finger was plunged into his eye, which had been damaged since childhood.

He also alleges that a soldier smeared faeces on his face and that two soldiers kicked and punched him.

His brother Taher said: "He has been blinded. It is terrifying what he has been going through. I'm amazed at his strength."

"I fear for him, that he's tortured, losing his dignity, and the biggest fear is if they send him back to Libya."

Mr Deghayes says British agents interrogated him about visits to Chechnya, where he had never been.

A Spanish judge wants Mr Deghayes extradited from Guantánamo for alleged links to an Islamic group which is in turn alleged to have links which Osama bin Laden.

Edward Nally, the president of the Law Society, accused the government of abandoning Mr Deghayes. "Someone who lived in Britain since their teens should not fall into some black hole without any means of escape," he said. "It seems a very uncomfortable proposition to wash our hands of someone resident in this country for many years."

A Foreign Office spokesman said international law meant that Britain could only help its citizens.

He refused to comment on the alleged sharing of information about Mr Deghayes with the Libyan regime that murdered his father: "We do not comment on intelligence matters," the spokesman said.

The US has denied claims of prisoner abuse, but it opened an investigation of alleged mistreatment of prisoners which is now believed to have been completed.

· Two more Britons freed from Guantánamo have been refused passports, their lawyer confirmed last night. Moazzam Begg and Richard Belmar both had travel documents withdrawn .

Yesterday it emerged that Charles Clarke, the home secretary, had used the same Royal Prerogative powers to deny passports to two other former detainees, Martin Mubanga and Feroz Abbasi.