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Lawyers level Guantanamo torture charges

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ASSOCIATED PRESS
February 10, 2005

TORONTO -- Attorneys representing an 18-year-old Canadian detainee at Guantanamo Bay - accused of killing an American soldier - claimed he was tortured by U.S. interrogators Wednesday, while his weeping mother pleaded for his release.

Toronto-born Omar Khadr is accused of tossing a grenade that killed a U.S. Special Forces medic while fighting with the Taliban in Afghanistan, planting mines to target U.S. convoys and gathering surveillance. He was 15 when captured and 16 when he arrived at the U.S. naval base prison in Cuba in 2002. He has not been charged.

"We have evidence that one of Canada's children has been tortured by the United States," said Khadr's American lawyer Muneer Ahmad.

Ahmad said U.S. military police short-shackled Khadr and chained his hands and feet to a bolt in the floor, laughing while they forced him into painful and degrading positions and kept him that way for hours. At one point, Khadr urinated on himself and the floor.

Ahmad said Khadr told him the military police then poured cleaning fluid on the floor and while he was still shackled, they dragged him through the liquid.

"They used him as a human mop to clean up the urine," Ahmad said. "How could the United States do something so barbaric to a child?"

Ahmad, who met Khadr in November, said military police had threatened to send Khadr to Israel, Egypt or Afghanistan where they told him he could be tortured or raped.

Khadr's mother and grandmother, both dressed in traditional white chadors wept and embraced at a news conference where Ahmad gave details of the alleged torture.

"As a mother, I beg every Canadian mother and father to help me get justice for my son and bring him home," Maha Elsamnak Khadr said in statement read out by one of her son's lawyers.

"Canadians always stood for justice and I ask them to demand our government to stand up for our children and demand the Americans send my son home."

The U.S. government has denied using torture, but multiple investigations into abuse at detention camps in Afghanistan and Guantanamo are under way.

Khadr's Canadian attorneys demanded Canada intervene to have Khadr sent back to Canada to stand trial. They filed a motion in a Canadian federal court Tuesday seeking an injunction against further interrogations.

Ottawa has acknowledged that Khadr was visited by officials from the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Canadian Security Intelligence Service and the foreign affairs ministry.

Rodney Moore, a Foreign Affairs spokesman, told The Associated Press that Ottawa had raised the issue of abuse with the U.S. State Department several times, including again on Wednesday. He said Canada had requested to see Khadr and asked for an independent tribunal.

In a documentary by the Canadian Broadcasting Corp., one of Khadr's brothers, Abdurahman Khadr, acknowledged his Egyptian-born father, Ahmed Said Khadr, and some of his brothers had fought for al-Qaida and even stayed with the terrorist group's mastermind, bin Laden.

The elder Khadr was killed in Pakistan in 2003 when a Pakistani Cobra helicopter shelled the house where he was staying with senior al-Qaida operatives.

The boys' mother and sister, interviewed for the same documentary in Pakistan, said they were proud of their family's connection to the terrorists behind the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks on the United States.