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TV records effects of purported U.S. abuse

7 volunteer for Guantanamo show

Thomas Wagner
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LONDON -- Two people vomited, two wet their pants, another suffered signs of hypothermia -- all for the cameras -- after volunteering to spend 48 hours locked up in cages and subjected to sexual humiliation, forced nudity and sleep deprivation allegedly like prisoners at Guantanamo Bay.

A British television station plans to air "The Guantanamo Guidebook," a program that re-creates some alleged techniques used at the U.S. prison camp for terrorist suspects.

Channel 4 says it wants to make the public aware of such abuses, but a human-rights group said Wednesday that the program violates United Nations conventions banning torture and shouldn't be shown.

"Your program may have undesirable effects of acclimatizing the audience to the use of torture. The real issue is, how do we make an end to impunity for torturers," said Brita Sydhoff of the International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims in Denmark. The group represents 200 rehabilitation centers for torture victims.

The show's producers say they have re-created some of the milder forms of alleged abuse used at the Navy base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

The methods used on seven volunteers included religious and sexual humiliation, forced nudity, sleep deprivation and extreme temperatures, Tim Carter, the show's producer and director, said Wednesday.

The volunteers were locked in a warehouse with cages, interrogation rooms and surveillance equipment for 48 hours. In the end, after getting sick or suffering symptoms of hypothermia, three of the seven volunteers quit before the 48 hours were over, Carter said.

"We made the program to show viewers how devastating even the milder techniques such as sleep deprivation and playing on personal phobias can be," said Carter, who made the program for the Twenty Twenty Television production company in London.

The Bush administration has denied using torture at the Guantanamo prison, where more than 500 detainees are held. Some detainees have said they were wrongly imprisoned and allege mistreatment, including beatings, forced nudity and sexual humiliation.

Tom Wilner, a lawyer for 11 Kuwaiti prisoners, recently said that most of his clients falsely confessed to belonging to Afghanistan's ousted Taliban regime or Al Qaeda as a way to stop alleged abuse.

Carter said many forms of purported abuse at Guantanamo have been publicly described by alleged victims, their lawyers and in memos and other documents released under the U.S. Freedom of Information Act.

A broadcast date for "The Guantanamo Guidebook" has not been announced, but Yad Luthra, a spokesman for Channel 4 in London, said it is one of four programs dealing with torture planned for a one-week period in the next month.

Carter said television stations in other countries have expressed interest in the show, but none has bought the rights.

The other programs include a documentary by Clive Stafford Smith, a lawyer for Guantanamo detainees, that explores the issue of whether torture ever works when used on terrorism suspects.