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## **Habib aims a suit right at the top**

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FORMER Guantanamo Bay inmate Mamdouh Habib is suing the Federal Government, ASIO Director-General Dennis Richardson and Federal Police Commissioner Mick Keelty for the alleged complicity of their officers in his kidnap, false imprisonment and torture at the hands of the US Government and other governments.

According to Mr Habib's statement of claim, filed in the High Court yesterday, Australian consular official Alastar Adams was present when he was tortured in Pakistan in October 2001.

Mr Habib, who is represented by prominent barristers Ian Barker, QC, and Clive Evatt, is seeking damages for his injuries and for "mental and psychological shock and distress".

Mr Habib asserts that, as he was an Australian citizen, the defendants had a duty to take all reasonable steps to ensure that he should not be "kidnapped, abducted, wrongfully arrested, assaulted, tortured, unlawfully interrogated or inhumanely treated" if detained without charge by a foreign government.

After spending two years in the US military prison in Guantanamo Bay without being charged, Mr Habib was released in January this year.

In his statement of claim, Mr Habib says he was arrested in Pakistan in October 2001. He claims that while imprisoned there Mr Adams, an officer from the Australian consulate in Pakistan, visited him in his cell.

According to Mr Habib, Mr Adams could see the bruises on his face. When he claimed he had been assaulted and held without charge, Mr Adams said he would never see his family again unless he co-operated.

Towards the end of October 2001, Mr Habib alleges he was taken to an airport where Americans assaulted him.

He says they returned wearing balaclavas, accompanied by Mr Adams, also in a balaclava.

Mr Habib claims that in Mr Adams' presence his clothes were cut off him and he was tortured and assaulted.

"Adams was present throughout and acquiesced in what was done to the plaintiff and gave him no assistance," Mr Habib says in his claim.

In Egypt, where he was again assaulted and tortured, Mr Habib claims to have been unlawfully interrogated by ASIO agents who told him his wife and children had been killed.

At Guantanamo Bay, Mr Habib claims he was visited by Australian officials who took no reasonable steps to secure his release.