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Revelations of Detainee's Diary

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The Argus (Ireland)
September 15, 2005

Guantanamo Bay hunger striker Omar Deghayes has released an account of the horrors of life in the world's most notorious prison camp.

A month-long diary and transcriptions of discussions with his lawyer, declassified by the US government last week and published exclusively in The Argus today, reveal Mr Deghayes is starving himself in protest at the conditions in the camp.

His family and friends believe he could be dead within a fortnight if the hunger strike continues.

Mr Deghayes, 35, a law graduate from Saltdean, said: "We are dying a slow death in here. You have to remember we have not been charged with any crime. This suffering is continuous."

Mr Deghayes alleges maltreatment - including physical abuse and desecration of the Koran - by American guards.

He claims to have had an eye gouged by prison guards in a savage attack which left him blind. In his diary he makes allegations of savage abuse of his fellow prisoners.

He describes how guards deprived inmates of their prosthetic limbs, denied prisoners showers and only allowed them to out of their cells once every two weeks.

He also tells of guards' severe beatings and describes a prison camp teeming with scorpions, cockroaches and mosquitoes with blocked and overflowing toilets.

Mr Deghayes' family has pleaded with the British Government to intervene on his behalf.

His lawyer, Clive Stafford-Smith, said: "Omar is now so bereft of hope that it has come to this. Omar is so committed and determined that I am very fearful he will die in there."

Mr Deghayes and his family are refugees from north Africa who were granted asylum in the UK 15 years ago after their father was allegedly killed by the Libyan government.

Mr Deghayes completed a law degree in England and moved to Afghanistan to carry out humanitarian law work.

He married in Afghanistan then moved across the border before being captured in Pakistan in 2002.

According to his supporters, Mr Deghayes was picked up by bounty hunters and sold to the troops as someone with terrorist links.

He has not been charged with any offence and the only evidence produced against him is a video which the Americans allege links him with terrorism but which facial recognition experts have dismissed as a case of mistaken identity.

Mr Stafford-Smith, a celebrated international human rights lawyer, has described Mr Deghayes' case as one of the worst miscarriages of justice he has seen in 20 years working in the field.

Although the British Government intervened in the case of four other British prisoners who were released last January and returned to the UK, it says it cannot help Mr Deghayes because he is a refugee, not a British national.

It says it is up to the Libyan government to help.

US government representatives appeared before the US court of appeal last Thursday to stop legal bids on behalf of dozens of Guantanamo Bay detainees who say they are not being afforded an opportunity to challenge their status as enemy combatants.

The Pentagon says it is holding 505 prisoners at Guantanamo Bay.

A Pentagon spokesman said: "There are 76 detainees doing a voluntary fast at present.

"Nine are in hospital. They are listed as being in a stable condition and they are receiving nutrition."

Supporters of Mr Deghayes will stage a demonstration on the opening day of the Labour Party conference.

The Save Omar campaign has called for a protest outside the Brighton Centre at 4pm on Sunday, September 25.

This is the second time prisoners have taken to hunger strike since June. Mr Deghayes' diary details the first strike. He gave it to Mr Stafford-Smith when he visited last month. Here are extracts in Mr Deghayes' own words.

Sunday, July 3 - Jafallah Mari, the only Qatari prisoner, has fallen in the hunger strike. He was taken to hospital. His weight was 120 pounds, now reduced to 103 pounds.

Tuesday 5 - Khalid Hatair, a Kuwaiti, was found unconscious in his cell because of the hunger strike. He was taken to hospital.

Wednesday 6 - A detainee started to bleed from hunger strike. He is in the third week.

Friday 8 - Many people started to fall from hunger. A doctor and a translator were threatening people and shoving them. He says they will force people to take food.

Monday 11 - Jafallah is in hospital since last Friday. I heard the strike had spread everywhere. Camp V is still very determined even though we are in the fourth dangerous week.

Tuesday 12 - I am worried about the conditions of all detainees. But I found morale is very high and everyone is steadfast, they want to go on and continue whatever the costs. If the authorities don't do something fast to improve things, I think things are getting worse and it will go out of control.

Tuesday 19 - I am back alive. I was very sick and unable to write anything (in the) last few days, in much pain.

Wednesday 20 - Omar Khadr, the Canadian juvenile, is very sick. He is throwing up blood. I tidied my blanket and realised the dirt bad state it is in. Several months, if not a year, since I had a change. No facilities to wash it.

Thursday 21 - Abashi, who can hardly speak, decided alone to hold his plate against all advice. They refused to give him medicine. He is adding to our sorrow. We are still trying to convince him to take his plate. He is refusing. Just more to our sadness and misery to see him suffer.

Sunday 24 - Wrote the notes about democracy and a long letter to my family. Yesterday I started revision again.

Monday 25 - Stopped revision because I am very tired again from the strike. However I am at the last pages of Paxman's book. Very good book and provokes thoughts and reflection.

Clive, the Americans did not give me the other books you brought.

Wednesday 27 - We all decided to end the strike. The General promised to fulfil many conditions. The strike has stopped for one month, to give him the time he required to implement all of them.

He promised treatment under the Geneva convention, respect of Qur'an and rituals, religious book and others, better food and conditions and many other things, he said. We will see.

Thursday 28 - About 4am I received early morning food. It was very good. They changed it. It may cost the same price as before. But it was made this time for human beings. Before they intended to make detainees' lives miserable. It was not the cost of food or amount we were complaining about. But we wanted what they have now done - cooked it properly for human consumption.

Thursday 28 - Yesterday a prisoner came back from meeting his attorney. He said three bombs hit London. I am thinking who would put such bombs in London in this time? To whose benefit? The British people have supported the cause and plight of those mistreated in Guantanamo. The media, politicians and human rights lawyers and organisations are in the forefront in talking against Bush's policy. Who put those bombs there and why now? If Iraq was the reason it would have been done long ago. I do not see how such bombings in London can enhance any Islamic cause. Britain is the best country in the world in treating its Muslim minorities and provides refuge to many others persecuted in their own countries. The relatively fair justice and protection of rights, freedom and religious tolerance that exist is one of the best in world today. Even the Government's decision to join the war in Iraq, which was a very unwise one, can be changed through media and public awareness. I am sure the majority of (the) British public are against any war, regardless of the Bush crusades. Because of this I would conclude no true Islamic group would want to bomb London.

Friday 29 - They gave me a comb. I brushed my hair and beard for the first time since April 2002.

Monday, August 1 - Things are not going good. They changed the food for two days, made sure everyone ended the strike then went back as usual. They went back to previous food all the last days. Qhatani downstairs was not given level one clothes. We will all stand with him, if he is not given clothes like everybody else. The General promised that food will change, clean water will be given with meals, international laws would apply to everyone in detention. He went back on everything. It does seem very likely that the strike will restart again. I am very frustrated with these cunning officers and worthless men of no word. In Arabia we look down on such people.