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London Chef in Guantanamo Hunger Strike

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A LONDON chef being held at **Guantanamo Bay** is on hunger strike in protest at his detention.

Ahmed Errachidi - who is accused of being an al Qaeda militant by the US authorities - claims he is being tortured by being force-fed.

The 38-year-old has begun starving himself in protest at his treatment and the British Government's refusal to intervene on his behalf.

In a statement through his lawyer he says: 'Four years ago, the British came to see me in Bagram (Afghanistan) and promised they would investigate my situation and I would be free within weeks. I co-operated with them fully.

'Now, four years later, I am being tortured in Guantanamo. The Americans say I was in Afghanistan in July 2001 - when I was cooking eggs at the Westbury Hotel.

'Enough is enough. I have the right to protest, peacefully. I am not harming them [the Americans]. I must be allowed to demonstrate peacefully. I do not want to die. I want to live and I am not living here.'

Errachidi was born in Morocco but had been living in London for 18 years. He is accused of attending al Qaeda training courses at the Al Farouq camp near Kandahar.

It was at this camp that four of the 9/11 hijackers are alleged to have trained. Employment records show Errachidi was working in Mayfair as a chef at the time.

Of his decision to go on a hunger strike, he writes: 'I will not die, I will only strike until I can no longer stand under my own strength. But I will do it for 40, 50, 60, perhaps 70 days.

'I forbid the US military from forced 'torture feeding' on me. I urge them to leave me alone until I can no longer stand.'

He describes the indignities and ordeal of being force-fed and adds: 'Will the US military, and the world, allow me to protest peacefully, or will I be subjected to torture feeding?

'All I ask is for justice. This is a hunger strike to protect life, a struggle for the truth.'