

Afghan and Iraqi prisoners detail abuse by US torturers

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8 March 2005

The American Civil Liberties Union and Human Rights First have sued US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld in federal court for putting into practice interrogation methods resulting in torture. The case was filed March 1 in Chicago on behalf of eight detainees—four Afghans and four Iraqis. [See “Federal suit charges Rumsfeld authorized detainee torture”]

The four Afghan plaintiffs are Meeboob Ahmad, Said Nabbi Siddiqi, Mohammed Karim Shirullah and Haji Abdul Rahman; the four Iraqi plaintiffs are Arkan Mohammed Ali, Thahe Mohammed Sabar, Sherzad Kamal Kaleed and Ali H. Taken as a whole, their accounts of abuse illustrate a widespread pattern of torture of detainees at the hands of the US military.

According to the complaint, all the plaintiffs “are and were non-combatant civilians who pose no threat to the United States, were not engaged in hostilities against the United States, were not prosecuted for criminal violations and were released by the U.S. military after being brutally abused and tortured” as a result of Rumsfeld’s “policy, pattern or practice of torture or other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment.”

Ahmad, age 35, was detained from June to November 2003 at the US Air Base at Bagram. He was placed in positions and restraints calculated to inflict pain (including suspension from the ceiling by his limbs from a chain); intimidation by a vicious dog; questioning while naked; sexual assault such as anal probing; threats, including rape, directed at his wife and family; sensory deprivation, including wearing for a month light-blocking goggles and sound blocking earphones; and weeks of outdoor exposure with no protection from the elements.

Siddiqi, age 48, was detained at Bagram from August to September 2003. He was subjected to beatings, positions calculated to inflict pain, stones thrown at him

when he used an open bucket toilet, handcuffing and blindfolding for two week straight, verbal abuse of a sexual nature, humiliation by being photographed naked, extreme denial of water and necessary medication, prolonged exposure to dangerous temperature extremes, and sleep deprivation by throwing stones and dousing with water.

Shirullah, age 45, was detained from December 2003 to June 2004. He was subjected to beatings that ruptured his eardrum, positions calculated to inflict pain, humiliation by being interrogated and photographed naked, prolonged exposure to dangerous temperature extremes, sensory deprivation such as wearing opaque goggles for two weeks, solitary confinement in a room for over a month, banning his talking to other detainees for other six months, dousing him with cold water and sleep deprivation.

Rahman, age 48, was detained from December 2003 to May 2004 at Bagram. He was subjected to intense pain such as jerking his arms and shoulders by pushing objects through his handcuffs, sexual abuse such as anal probings, humiliation by being interrogated and photographed naked, sensory deprivation and solitary confinement for six weeks, and sleep deprivation by the use of loud noises and bright lights.

Ali, age 26, was detained at various Iraqi locations from July 2003 to June 2004. He was subjected to beatings with hands, feet and chains to the point of unconsciousness, stabbing, burning, shocks and mutilation, isolation while naked and hooded in a coffin-like box, prolonged sleep deprivation enforced by beatings and being dragged face-down on the ground, desecration of the Koran, soldiers urinating on him, extreme deprivation of food and water, mock executions and threats of death and transfer to Guantanamo or other countries.

Sabbar, age 36, was detained from July 2003 to January 2004. He was subjected to severe beatings including in the genitals; beatings while running a gauntlet of soldiers; sexual assault and humiliation, including male and female soldiers inserting their fingers in his anus, fondling his genitalia and making moaning and mocking sounds; intentional prolonged exposure to dangerously high temperatures over 120 degrees Fahrenheit (50 Celsius) without water while his hands were chained to a fence behind him; prolonged sleep deprivation enforced by beatings; denial of use of the toilet while shackled so he soiled himself; deprivation of food and water; staging of mock executions with a mock firing squad and death threats.

Khalid, age 38, was detained from July to September 2003. He was subjected to frequent severe beatings, including beating while running a gauntlet and stepping on his head; sexual assault including threats of anal rape and humiliation; and intentional exposure to dangerously high temperatures and denial of toilet use, in the same fashion as Sabbar.

Ali H., age 18, was detained from August to September 2003. He was subjected to intentional infliction of pain by surgical removal of bullets without anesthetic, denial of food, water and pain medication, and dragging him from one location to another on his wounded abdomen and forcibly ripping away his wound dressing, intentionally exposing him to infection and leaking of pus.

All the plaintiffs seek monetary damages to compensate them for their physical, psychological and emotional injuries.

The torture suffered by the eight plaintiffs may be reviewed in detail by going to <http://www.aclu.org/SafeandFree/SafeandFree.cfm?ID=17572&c=206> and clicking on "Plaintiffs involved" under the heading "Bios".



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