

PUBLIC

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19 January 2007

Further information on UA 84/06 (AMR 51/067/2006, 11 April 2006) and follow-up (AMR 51/122/2006, 24 July 2006) - Health concern/ill-treatment

USA Jumah al-Dossari (m), Bahraini national

Bahraini national Jumah al-Dossari has now been detained in Guantánamo for over five years. According to the US military, he has attempted suicide at least 12 times during his detention. In a letter written to his lawyer and published in the Los Angeles Times newspaper on 11 January 2007, Jumah al-Dossari wrote, "I would rather die than stay here forever, and I have tried to commit suicide many times. The purpose of Guantánamo is to destroy people, and I have been destroyed. I am hopeless because our voices are not heard from the depths of the detention centre."

Jumah al-Dossari has been held in the mental health unit at Guantánamo for over a year in a windowless cell. Communication with other detainees is said to be limited due to the severe psychological problems suffered by many others held in the mental health unit. He is held in largely isolated, dark, cold conditions which he has described as being like living "in a hole in a mountain of snow and ice," as the air conditioning is always on a high setting and the light outside his cell is always turned off. Authorities at Guantánamo have reportedly told him that he will not leave the mental health unit for the duration of his detention.

According to Jumah al-Dossari's lawyers, he is receiving a questionable standard of mental health care. He is said to be visited by psychiatrists once a week for just a few minutes and they only ask him only basic questions. He has also told his lawyers that he does not trust the mental health care staff at Guantánamo due to their previous involvement in interrogations.

Since his last known suicide attempt in March 2006, Jumah al-Dossari is said to have suffered from a range of health problems. Due to various stomach complaints he is believed to be eating only bread and cheese, and has lost 20kg during his detention in Guantánamo. He now weighs 65kg and has been told by military doctors that he is anaemic and has very low blood pressure. Military doctors have also recommended that he have a colonoscopy – an inspection of the large intestine – as a result of abnormal blood test results. He has refused such a medical procedure as he says he does not trust the medical staff at Guantánamo.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Jumah al-Dossari was seized in Pakistan in late 2001 and held for several weeks by the Pakistani authorities. US agents then flew him to Kandahar airbase in Afghanistan, and took him from there to Guantánamo. Jumah al-Dossari claims that he has been tortured in custody. This has included beatings and death threats, prolonged isolation and exposure to extreme cold. Jumah al-Dossari's full account of his experiences can be read here: <http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGAMR511072005>

On 10 June 2006, three Guantánamo detainees (two Saudi Arabian nationals and one Yemeni national) were found dead in their cells after apparently committing suicide. Two days later, Jumah al-Dossari told his lawyer that his health condition and psychological state was very poor, and that he felt he was "almost in the throes of death". Amnesty International has received reports which suggest that conditions for some detainees at Guantánamo have deteriorated since the deaths.

Jumah al-Dossari is one of two Bahraini nationals still held in Guantánamo. The other is Isa al-Murbati. Four others have been returned to Bahrain, where they are now at liberty.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in English or your own language:

To the US authorities:

- expressing your continued concern at the conditions of detention of Jumah al-Dossari;
- urging that his conditions of detention be improved immediately and that he be given access to appropriate and independent medical care;
- urging that he be released if he is not to be charged and given a fair trial in accordance with international standards for fair trial;
- seeking assurances that all relevant people, including his lawyers and family, are kept fully informed of developments related to his health and continued detention.

To the Bahraini authorities:

- welcoming the efforts made by the Bahraini government to date on behalf of the two remaining Bahraini detainees in Guantánamo, and urging that they continue to make representations to US authorities on behalf of Juma al-Dossari and Isa al-Murbati;
- asking them to make specific representations concerning the conditions of detention of both men and to support Amnesty International's call for detainees to receive independent medical care;
- seeking assurances that the relatives of the detainees are being fully informed of developments in their cases and provided with information on their welfare;
- calling on them to support Amnesty International's call for the closure of the detention centre at Guantánamo and the fair trial or release of all those held there.

APPEALS TO:

US authorities

Charles D Stimson
Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Detainee Affairs
2500 Defense Pentagon 5E420,
Washington, DC 20301, USA

Fax: +1 703 697 6166

Salutation: Dear Deputy Assistant

The Honorable Robert M. Gates Secretary of Defence
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington DC 20301, USA

Fax: + 1 703 697 8339

Email via: <http://www.defenselink.mil/fag/comment.asp>

Salutation: Dear Secretary of Defense

Bahraini authorities

Shaikh Khalid bin Ahmed Al Khalifa
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
P.O. Box 547, al-Manama, Bahrain

Fax: + 973 17 225105

Salutation: Your Excellency

COPIES TO:

The Honorable Condoleezza Rice
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, N.W.
Washington DC 20520, USA

Fax: + 1 202 261 8577

E-mail via: <http://contact-us.state.gov/>

and to diplomatic representatives of the USA accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 2 March 2007.