

**PUBLIC**

**AI Index: AMR 51/164/2007**

**24 October 2007**

**UA 275/07**      **Health concern/Unlawful detention**

**USA**              **Abdul Hamid al-Ghizzawi (m), Libyan national**  
**(Guantánamo)**

---

Guantánamo detainee Abdul Hamid al-Ghizzawi has been diagnosed with hepatitis B and tuberculosis. Amnesty International fears that he may not have access to appropriate medical care to treat his illnesses.

Abdul Hamid al-Ghizzawi has told his lawyer that his health began to worsen during his first year of detention at Guantánamo and has steadily deteriorated over the five years of his detention. He learnt in September 2006 that doctors at the Guantánamo hospital had earlier diagnosed him with hepatitis B and tuberculosis.

After visiting Abdul Hamid al-Ghizzawi in May 2007, his lawyer described the condition of his health as "...alarming. His face was drawn and his skin looked both ashen and jaundiced. He had a difficult time focussing on anything...He was in constant visible pain...He was very weak and tired...[he] told me he could not walk more than a few feet before being overcome with fatigue." His lawyer most recently visited him in September 2007 and she has stated that he could barely walk and during the meeting was doubled over with pain. She has expressed fears for his life.

Amnesty International fears that Abdul Hamid al-Ghizzawi may not be receiving appropriate medical treatment. The Commander of the Guantánamo hospital and Joint-Task Force surgeon has previously stated that Abdul Hamid al-Ghizzawi does not want to be treated for his illnesses. However his lawyers have asserted that neither he nor they were informed of the diagnosis until September 2006 and that he has since requested treatment but has received none.

Abdul Hamid al-Ghizzawi was transferred to Guantánamo's Camp 6 in December 2006. At Camp 6, the harshest of the detention facilities at Guantánamo, detainees are confined in conditions of extreme isolation and sensory deprivation for a minimum of 22 hours a day in individual steel cells with no windows to the outside. Amnesty International is concerned that conditions in Camp 6 could have a serious adverse effect on the psychological and physical health of the detainees held there, exacerbating the stress inherent in their indefinite detention without trial or access to their families. In February 2007, during her first visit to Guantánamo since Abdul Hamid al-Ghizzawi had been transferred to Camp 6, his lawyer stated that he "...was stooping low to the floor and huddled against the wall when I entered. His arms were wrapped around his body as he tried to warm himself from the chill he has had for over two months, and his feet were shackled to the floor. He was shivering, his teeth were clenched and he would not look at me." During the visit he also stated that he was vomiting several times a day, had frequent headaches, itchy skin, pain in his back, abdomen, frequent nosebleeds and pain in his gums. The extreme isolation, punishment regime and other harsh conditions in Camp 6 are also reported to have had a severely adverse effect on his psychological health. He is reported to have begun talking to himself and has difficulty focussing or concentrating in conversation with his lawyer.

In November 2004, a Combatant Status Review Tribunal (CSRT) panel determined unanimously that Abdul Hamid al-Ghizzawi was not an 'enemy combatant' due to "the paucity and weakness of the information provided". However, a second panel, convened just two months later without the detainee's presence or knowledge, concluded that he was an 'enemy combatant'.

Abdul Hamid al-Ghizzawi was 39 years old when he was captured in Afghanistan by the Northern Alliance forces towards the end of 2001. He was sold to US forces and later transferred to Guantánamo via US-run

detention centres in Afghanistan. He had been living in Afghanistan since 1989 and is married to an Afghan woman. His daughter, now nearly six years old, was only six months old at the time of his capture.

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Approximately 330 detainees from over 30 countries remain detained without trial in Guantánamo. The majority of them are held in conditions of isolation in Camps 5, 6 and Camp Echo. Camp 6 was built to house 178 detainees. It is surrounded by high concrete walls. Contrary to international standards, the cells have no access to natural light or air, and are lit by fluorescent lighting which is on 24 hours a day and controlled by guards. The lighting is reportedly dimmed at night, although it is unclear by how much. The only source of air in the cells is from air-conditioning controlled by guards. Detainees are also subjected to "loss of privileges" punishment where basic provisions such as thermal shirts can be taken away as punishment. The lack of human contact in Camp 6 appears to be reinforced by other operating procedures. The cell doors are operated by remote control, and guards escorting the detainees to and from the exercise yard wear thick gloves. There is an opening in the door through which food is slotted so that detainees rarely come into direct contact with another human being. Guards are reportedly silent during most of their contact with detainees. Detainees are also escorted in shackles whenever they leave their cells. For further information, see *USA: Cruel and inhuman: conditions of isolation for detainees at Guantánamo Bay*, April 2007, <http://web.amnesty.org/library/index/engAMR510512007>.

There is a significant body of evidence in the USA and elsewhere that prolonged isolation can cause serious psychological and physical harm, particularly if accompanied by other deprivations such as conditions of reduced sensory stimulation, enforced idleness and confinement to an enclosed space.

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

- expressing your serious concern that Abdul Hamid al-Ghizzawi may not be receiving appropriate medical care for his illnesses;
- urging that Abdul Hamid al-Ghizzawi be given immediate access to a doctor, and to specialist medical attention if necessary as stipulated in the Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, 22 (2), so that he can be properly diagnosed and provided with all the necessary treatment he may require;
- urging that independent medical experts be allowed to visit him regularly in Guantánamo to assess his medical condition and treatment requirements;
- urging that he be removed from Camp 6 immediately and transferred to facilities which will not be further detrimental to his physical and psychological health;
- stating that he should be allowed contact with his family through regular mail, with opportunities for phone calls and visits;
- calling for the detention facility at Guantánamo Bay to be closed and for the detainees held there to be released unless they are to be promptly charged with recognizable criminal offences and brought to trial in ordinary civilian courts in full accordance with international standards, without recourse to the death penalty

### **APPEALS TO:**

Rear Adm. Mark H. Buzby, Commander Joint Task Force Guantánamo  
Department of Defense, Joint Task Force Guantánamo, Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, APO AE 09360

**Fax: +1 305 437 1241**

**Salutation: Dear Rear Admiral**

J. Alan Liotta, Principal Director, Office of Detainee Affairs  
Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense, 2900 Defense Pentagon, Washington DC 20301-2900, USA

**Email via: <http://www.defenselink.mil/faq/comment.html>**

**Salutation: Dear Director**

### **COPIES TO:**

Member of US Congress

Rep. Jan Schakowsky, 1027 Longworth House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515, USA

**Fax: + 1 202 226 6890**

and to diplomatic representatives of USA accredited to your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 5 December 2007.