

FOREIGN INTERROGATORS IN GUANTÁNAMO BAY

US Allows Security Forces from Brutal Human Rights Abusing Regimes into Guantanamo; Many Countries Complicit in Abuses at Guantánamo

Since as early as 2002, the United States has welcomed foreign interrogators from recognized human rights abusing regimes onto the U.S. military base at Guantánamo Bay and given them access to their citizens – and sometimes to non-citizens – detained there. Behind closed doors, the United States has allowed security officials from countries such as Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Libya, Jordan, China, and Tunisia to interrogate prisoners at the U.S. prison at Guantánamo. Detainees have been subjected to threats and abuse from these foreign interrogators, with the active involvement of U.S. forces in Guantánamo. Further, threats of torture, imprisonment, harm to one’s family and even death upon return to their home country have solidified detainees’ fears of forced repatriation in some instances.

In addition, security forces from many other countries have interrogated their nationals and residents repeatedly while at Guantanamo, at times when the public statements from the country’s leaders were in opposition to the human rights abuses there.

China – The U.S. allowed Chinese officials access to the Uighurs in Guantánamo as a diplomatic concession. China’s human rights record is egregious, and Uighurs are one of the most persecuted groups in China. All of the Uighur prisoners are believed to have been interrogated by Chinese security forces while in Guantánamo.

Numerous Uighur prisoners in Guantánamo, including **Ali Thabid**, **Bahtiyar Mahnut**, **Sabir Osman**, and **Huzaifa Parhat**, were told by Chinese interrogators that they would be killed or imprisoned if the U.S. returned them to China. One Chinese interrogator even told prisoner **Adel Abdul Hakim** that he was “lucky” to be in Guantánamo because in a Chinese jail, he would be “finished.” Uighur prisoner **Abdusemet** was threatened and deprived of sleep and food by Chinese interrogators.

Chinese officials told another prisoner that the Defense Department has given the Chinese information the prisoner had previously provided to U.S. interrogators about himself and his family, violating specific promises by U.S. interrogators that they would not provide this information to the Chinese. The Chinese also attempted to photograph this prisoner during his interrogation, and when he resisted, U.S. soldiers forcibly restrained him and held his head so that the Chinese could clearly photograph his face.

The U.S. government has consistently exploited the Uighurs’ fear of torture and death at the hands of the Chinese. Prisoner **Adel Noori** reports that around January 2004, CIA or Defense Department officials threatened to send him to China unless he cooperated and spied on other non-Uighur prisoners in Guantánamo. When he refused, he was punished severely. Mr. Abdusemet also stated that an American who identified himself as a White House representative specifically threatened to send Mr. Abdusemet to China if he did not cooperate.

Uzbekistan – The United States allowed Uzbek security forces to interrogate and threaten Uzbek detainees. Uzbekistan has a notorious human rights record, including credible allegations that security forces have boiled people alive.

Uzbek former prisoner **Zakirjan Hasam** was interrogated by Uzbek officials who threatened to torture him and his family upon his return to Uzbekistan, and asserted that the U.S. government had authorized his return to Uzbekistan. Mr. Hasam attempted suicide the night of this interrogation, hanging himself in his cellblock for fear of being transferred to torture in Uzbekistan. After being hospitalized due to the suicide attempt, US forces mercilessly *returned* Mr. Hasam to the Uzbek interrogators, where he faced continued threats.

Uzbek officials tried to force Uzbek prisoner **Oybek Jabbarov** to sign a series of incomplete documents, including a statement indicating that he wanted to go back to Uzbekistan with empty space that could have been subsequently revised in his absence; he refused to sign. Mr. Jabbarov also reports that Uzbek security officers told two other Uzbek prisoners, “we will kill you if you come back to Uzbekistan.” They also told one prisoner that when he got back to Uzbekistan they would be waiting with “one bullet for your forehead.”

Libya –The U.S. State Department reports that Libya’s security forces have engaged in brutal torture including clubbing, applying electric shock, applying corkscrews to the back, and breaking bones. Nevertheless, the United States has allowed Libyan security forces to interrogate Libyan prisoners at Guantánamo, and transferred two men to Libya where their fate is unknown.

Several Libyan prisoners, including **Abdul Rauf Al Qusin**, **Omar Khalifh**, and **Omar Deghayes** were interrogated by a Libyan delegation in Guantánamo. The delegation made clear that they would be tortured, imprisoned and harmed upon their return to Libya. Mr. Al Qusin reports that Libyan officials threatened to kill two fellow Libyan detainees if the United States sent them back to Libya.

During a 2005 visit, Mr. Khalifh was threatened by the Libyan delegation with torture, rape and execution upon his return to Libya. The officials accused Mr. Khalifh of being a “destroyer of Libya, the reason why the revolution is not moving forward.” They threatened, “if you are not with the revolution, then you will be executed.” They also made specific threats to “put iron into [his] flesh,” rape him, “iron [his] whole body,” “cut off [his] other leg,” and write a report of the interrogation in Mr. Khalifh’s own blood. To demonstrate the authenticity of their threats, they mentioned the name of a friend who suffered torture at the hands of the Libyan security forces.

Jordan – The U.S. allowed Jordanian officials to interrogate, threaten and even abuse non-Jordanian prisoners in Guantánamo.

Maher el Falesteny, a stateless Palestinian who had lived in Jordan, was interrogated by a Jordanian intelligence service official who threatened to torture Mr. el Falesteny if he was returned to Jordan.

Lakhdar Boumediene, an Algerian detainee, reported in early 2005 that he was interrogated by a Jordanian interrogator in the presence of three U.S. interrogators. At one point, the Jordanian interrogator asked the U.S. interrogators to leave him alone with Mr. Boumediene, and then proceeded to threaten Mr. Boumediene by saying, “I came here specifically to take you to Jordan. We will take you there and make you talk.” The interrogator then became abusive and attempted to choke Mr. Boumediene when he didn’t adequately respond to questions. Mr. Boumediene reports that after this incident, one of the U.S. interrogators that left the room at the behest of the Jordanian interrogator apologized.

Tajikistan – With U.S. approval, Tajik security agents visited Guantanamo on at least three separate occasions. Detainee **Umar Abdulayev** described the agents as from the Ministry of Interior, or “the

KGB," harkening back to Soviet days. Mr. Abdulayev says that the Tajik agents asked him to become an agent for them. When he refused, they threatened him repeatedly. They promised to throw him in jail and torture him upon his return to Tajikistan and told him, "Maybe we'll even get rid of you." The Tajik agents similarly threatened two other Tajik prisoners who were repatriated to Tajikistan in March 2007 - **Rukniddin Sharipov** and **Sobit Valikhonovich**. Both were rapidly sentenced to 17 years in prison upon their return.

Tunisia – The U.S. allowed Tunisian interrogators to threaten Tunisian detainees in Guantánamo. The U.S. also repatriated two Tunisians to Tunisia where torture and abuse by security forces are endemic; unsurprisingly, they suffered abuse upon their return. One had even been convicted in absentia prior to his repatriation.

Hisham Sliti reports that when the Tunisians interrogated him, they threatened him saying, “When we do water torture in the barrel, you'll talk soon enough.” Tunisian prisoners have also been questioned by Spanish and Italian officials.

Other Security Forces

Interrogators and security officials from the following countries have also reportedly interrogated their nationals detained in Guantánamo. Although there have been no reports of abuse during these interrogations, the presence and cooperation of security officials from these countries with the U.S. military in Guantánamo has been under-reported.

Bahrain
Canada
France
Germany
Italy
Morocco

Pakistan
Saudi Arabia
Spain
Turkey
United Kingdom
Yemen