

WEB UPDATES – TACTICAL CAMPAIGN AGAINST TORTURE	
Name/Team	Eduarne Rubio/ TCT ext. 5515
Date	17/11/2006
Section	Features
AIDOC	AMR 51/175/2006

Title
Guantánamo: pain and distress to thousands of children

Summary for torture homepage
<p>The US authorities are believed to have held at many as 17 children at Guantánamo Bay. At least 4 of them remain there.</p> <p>Outside Guantánamo, the kids of “war on terror” detainees are tormented by the prolonged absence of their loved ones.</p> <p><i>What Amnesty International’s new video on the impact of Guantánamo on children.</i></p>

Feature
<p>Thousands of children around the world have suffered pain and distress as a result of US counter-terror policies and practices.</p> <p>Some have been held in indefinite virtually incommunicado detention without charge or trial. Some have been subjected to torture or other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment. And many others still at home are tormented by the absence of their fathers, brothers and other relatives who themselves have been subjected to indefinite detention, in many cases for years.</p> <p>The US authorities are believed to have held at least 17 children at Guantánamo Bay. Four of them, possibly more, remain there.</p> <p>They are Mohammed al-Gharani and Omar Khadr, who were 15 when detained, Hassan bin Attash, aged 17 when taken and Yousef al-Shehri, aged 16.</p> <p>Another detainee, Yassar al-Zahrani, was reportedly 17 when he was detained. He died in Guantánamo in June 2006, after apparently hanging himself.</p> <p>Only three of the children held in Guantánamo were separated from the adult detainees, though international law requires special protections for under 18 year olds in detention. The others have been detained in the same harsh conditions as adults, including prolonged solitary confinement, isolation from their families and with no access to education.</p> <p>All those who were taken into custody when still children and transferred to Guantánamo are now over 18 years old. This does not alter the fact that their earlier treatment violated international principles on the treatment of children.</p> <p>Guantánamo is a symbol of injustice.</p>

The US government must close it down.

All detainees must be released, or charged and given a fair trial.

Quotes

“As with all detainees, these juveniles were considered enemy combatants that posed a threat to US security. Age is not a determining factor in detention.”

US Department of Defence, January 2004

"We made this camp for people who would be here forever. You should never think about going home. You'll be here all your life... Don't worry. We'll keep you alive so you can suffer more."

US interrogator speaking to Mohamed al-Gharani

“Sometimes I feel like going out to Bush and say ‘What the hell do you think you are doing’? And sometimes I just feel that maybe I should leave it alone.”

Zahra Paracha, 14 year-old daughter of Guantánamo detainee Farhat Paracha

Table

International law recognizes the particular vulnerabilities of children. The Convention of the Rights of the Child, for example, protects children from indefinite detention and ill-treatment. The USA has signed this treaty and is obliged under international law not to do anything that would undermine its object and purpose. Apart from Somalia, the USA is the only country in the world that has not yet ratified the Convention.

LINKS

Case-sheet 19: Saudi Arabian national Yousef al-Shehri

<http://web.amnesty.org/library/index/engamr511742006>

Case-sheet 10: Chadian national Mohammed al-Gharani

<http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGAMR511102005>

Case-sheet 14: Canadian national Omar Kadhr

<http://web.amnesty.org/library/index/engamr511842005>

Video

Images: