

## QUAKER CONCERN FOR THE ABOLITION OF TORTURE (Q-CAT)

**Briefing 22**

**April 2011**

The Guardian on 25 and 26 April covers the latest mass publication of Wikileaks revelations of secret files on past and present prisoners at Guantanamo Bay. These are all available on The Guardian website. Particularly enlightening is the 5-minute video of Clive Stafford-Smith giving his summary of their significance ( [www.guardian.co.uk/world/video/2011/apr/25/guantanamo-bay-files-reprieve-video](http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/video/2011/apr/25/guantanamo-bay-files-reprieve-video)). The following is an extract from a leading article on 26 April:

### **The Guantánamo files: Tale of two prisons**

*Guantánamo embodies the failure of the Afghan war, which began amid bombast in 2001, but which collapsed long ago*

As a metaphor for everything that has gone wrong with the Afghan war, the story of two prisons is hard to beat. In one prison, they can't get the remaining inmates out. In the other, they can't keep them in. Either way, the military coalition has been left looking like a fool.

In southern Afghanistan yesterday morning, 475 prisoners, almost all said to be Taliban insurgents, escaped through a tunnel that seems to have been dug under the eyes of their captors. And just as the Taliban were digging their way out, the Guardian and the New York Times were putting online leaked documents describing the management of inmates in that other, more famous prison in Guantánamo Bay. President Obama was elected on a promise to close the latter within a year of taking office. Instead he has abandoned the task with 172 inmates still inside. Some of these, as the Guantánamo files show, are seriously unpleasant and dangerous but others are lesser figures who have become lost in the system after years of abuse and misinformation made them impossible to prosecute or simply homeless, like the Chinese Uighur Muslims, who have nowhere to go...

Guantánamo was and still is a dumping ground for all sorts of people, not (as America once claimed) the distillation of its most extreme enemies. Among the leaked files is a guide for interrogators, telling them what to look out for in order to identify terrorists. It reveals a desperate lack of precision, and a system in which it was almost impossible for inmates to convince anyone of their innocence. One supposed sign of terrorist links was a particular kind of Casio watch. Another was the fact that someone had gone to Afghanistan after 2001. Yet among the original detainees was a 14-year-old boy and an 89-year-old man, neither of whom had anything to do with the Taliban. Imprisoned beyond the rule of law, as enemy combatants, they found themselves part of a cruel and surreal system which sustained itself through its own illegitimacy.

As President Obama has found, once someone has entered the Guantánamo system it has proved very difficult to get them out. The nature of their imprisonment and questioning makes prosecution in a federal court all but impossible. The innocent or insignificant were trapped, or only gradually released. The more that is revealed about Guantánamo, the worse it looks as a way of responding to terrorism. It was a symbol of vengeance, not a system of justice. Read the files and find out why.

**Omar Awadh and the outsourcing of torture.** *Allegations of mistreatment of a Kenyan businessman suggest the FBI and MI5 have opened a 'new Guantánamo' in Kampala*  
Clara Gutteridge [guardian.co.uk](http://guardian.co.uk), Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> March 2011.

The UK government has promised an inquiry into past incidents of torture. But its complicity in abusive practices appears to continue, and as the Guardian reports, a recent case suggests that its worst practices have simply been outsourced to Africa.

Omar Awadh is a 38-year-old Kenyan businessman who was forcibly and secretly deported, or rendered, from Nairobi to Kampala, and charged with offences relating to the July 2010 Kampala bombings, where he faces the death penalty if convicted. While in Ugandan detention, Omar Awadh's lawyer says Awadh has been tortured in the presence members of the FBI, and interrogated by members of the UK's MI5 intelligence service, on matters that have nothing to do with the crimes he is accused of. Omar Awadh's case raises serious concerns that the FBI is running – with British complicity – what is essentially a sort of decentralised, outsourced Guantánamo Bay in Kampala, under the cloak of legitimate criminal process.

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