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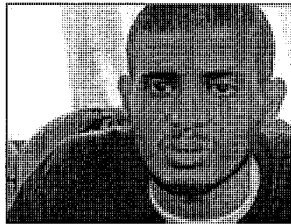
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US challenged over 'secret jails'

Two Yemeni men claim they were held in secret, underground US jails for more than 18 months without being charged, Amnesty International has said.



Both men say they were held in underground jails run by US guards

The human rights group has called on the US to reveal details of the alleged secret detention of suspects abroad.

Amnesty fears the case is part of a "much broader picture" in which the US holds prisoners at secret locations.

The US has not responded to the claims, but the head of the CIA recently said the agency does not use torture.

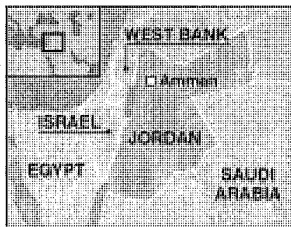
Porter Goss said in testimony to the US Senate torture was neither professional nor productive.

Beaten on feet

In the new report, Amnesty has urged the US to reveal where its alleged secret detention facilities are, stop using them and name the detainees held there.

The two Yemeni men, Muhammad Faraj Ahmed Bashmilah and Salah Nasser Salim Ali, were arrested separately but reported almost identical experiences to Amnesty.

Mr Muhammad says he was arrested in 2003 in Jordan, while Mr Salah says he was detained in Indonesia the same year and later flown to Jordan.



Both say they were tortured for four days by Jordanian intelligence services.

Alleged methods include being beaten on the feet while bound and suspended upside-down. One of the men claims he was threatened with sexual abuse and electric shocks.

Each says he was then flown to an unnamed underground jail, where he was held in solitary confinement for six to eight months with no access to lawyers.

Both claim they were interrogated every day by US guards about their activities in Indonesia and Afghanistan.

They say a period in a second underground prison followed, where loud Western music was piped into the

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cell 24 hours a day and questioning by US officials continued.

'Netherworld'

The men were transferred in May this year to Yemen, where they are still being held without charge.

Amnesty says the Yemeni authorities say they are only holding the men because the US has "made it a condition of their release from secret detention".

Amnesty's Sharon Critoph, who interviewed the men in Yemen, said: "To be 'disappeared' from the face of the earth without knowing why or for how long is a crime under international law and an experience no-one should have to go through.




Bashmilah says he was arrested in Jordan while visiting his sick mother

"We fear that what we have heard from these two men is just one small part of the much broader picture of US secret detentions around the world."

Michael Ratner, of the US campaign group Center for Constitutional Rights, said the report was the first to touch on the "netherworld of secret detention facilities that the CIA is running".

Amnesty has previously reported on what it calls the long-term detention without trial or charge of prisoners in Yemen at the request of US authorities.

The US has also faced questions over its use of "rendition", a process by which terror suspects are sent for interrogation by security officials in other countries, some of which are accused of using torture.

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US torturing detainees in secret locations: Amnesty

By David Mark for 'AM'

Posted Thu Aug 4, 2005 8:24am AEST

Updated Thu Aug 4, 2005 10:06am AEST

Amnesty International has accused the United States of complicity in the torture and detention of terrorism suspects in secret locations around the world.

In a report to be released later today, Amnesty International details the stories of two Yemeni men who were both tortured for four days in Jordan before spending 18 months in secret detention.

Amnesty says the men are still being held in prison in Yemen at the behest of US authorities, without being charged.

Amnesty believes the men's stories are part of a broader picture of US secret detentions centres around the world.

London-based Amnesty International secretariat researcher Sharon Critoph interviewed the two Yemeni prisoners - Muhammad Bashmilah and Salah Nasser Salim 'Ali - in June this year.

She met the two after asking Yemeni officials to see any prisoners who had recently been transferred from the US prison at Guantanamo Bay.

"As we interviewed them, it did become clear to us that the story they were telling was not a story of Guantanamo," she said.

Both men are originally from Yemen, but had been living in Indonesia with their Indonesian wives.

Both had spent some time in Afghanistan.

Torture

Salah Nasser Salim 'Ali was detained in Indonesia in August 2003.

After a week he was taken to Jordan and says he was tortured for four days.

"He was subject to beating, vocal intimidation, he was threatened with electric shocks, he was threatened with sexual abuse," Ms Critoph said.

"The guards would surround him in a circle and they would make him run round and round and round and round until he was completely exhausted, and then each of these guards would basically take their own turns to beat him in whatever way they chose."

Two months later Muhammad Bashmilah was visiting his sick mother in Jordan to when he was detained.

Like his countryman he says he was subjected to four days of torture.

Ms Critoph says the men's experiences are consistent with a broader pattern.

"It's clear, yes, that the US authorities have been, and continue to be, complicit in torture of suspects," she said.

Secret locations

The two were then transferred to other locations where they say there were held and interrogated daily by American guards, who Muhammad Bashmilah described as being fully covered "like Ninjas."

"They were held in solitary confinement, that whole time they say they didn't see any other detainees, no outside access

at all," Ms Critoph said.

"The men did not know where they were held.

"We would certainly conclude by the descriptions given by the men and from other descriptions of Guantanamo, that the places seemed very, very different."

Amnesty International believes the US has established secret detention facilities in a number of countries that could include Jordan, Pakistan, Egypt, Thailand and Afghanistan.

Ms Critoph says alleges the US has other secret detention centres the world does not know about.

"Clearly, that's corroborated by other accounts," she said.

"The practice of secret detention, the fact that it is secret, makes it very, very difficult for Amnesty or other organisation to know how widespread it is, which is why we are calling on the US authorities to disclose exactly where these facilities are, exactly how many people and who are being held, and to also end this practice of secret detention," she said.

The two men were sent back to Yemen in May this year.

"There is Yemeni officials who have said to Amnesty that they have no reason to be holding the men except that the American authorities have put a condition, have said they must continue to hold them. One guard said to us basically, 'all we're doing is running a prison for the Americans'," Ms Critoph said.

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The Associated Press

Report says U.S. held two Yemeni prisoners in secret underground jail

By MICHELLE FAUL, Associated Press Writer

August 3, 2005

Two Yemeni men say they were held in solitary confinement in secret, underground U.S. detention facilities in an unknown country and interrogated by masked men for more than 18 months without being charged or allowed any contact with the outside world, Amnesty International charged Wednesday.

Amnesty and human rights lawyers argued that the report added to long-standing claims that the United States has held "secret detainees" in its war on terror.

"We fear that what we have heard from these two men is just one small part of the much broader picture of U.S. secret detentions around the world," Sharon Critoph, a researcher at Amnesty International who interviewed the men in Yemen, told The Associated Press by telephone.

Navy Lt. Commander Flex Plexico, noting that it was difficult to respond to a report he hasn't seen said, "We have said many times that the Department of Defense does not engage in the practice of renditions" - the transfer of terror suspects to third countries without court approval.

Plexico, a spokesman for the department, said it was important to note that training manuals of al Qaida terrorist network "emphasize the tactic of making false abuse allegations."

U.S. officials have denied allegations of secret detention facilities, saying they hold terror suspects only at the U.S. Naval base in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and in Iraq and Afghanistan.

In June, U.S. officials denied a suggestion from the U.N.'s special expert on torture, Manfred Nowak, that some undeclared holding areas could include American ships cruising international waters. Others have suggested "high-value" detainees could be held secretly in Diego Garcia, a British-held island in the Indian Ocean that the United States rents as a strategic military base.

Lawyers who represent detainees at Guantanamo have long believed that the CIA or other U.S. government agencies have used clandestine jails for terror suspects.

"The fact that there are underground CIA facilities somewhere where people are being tortured has been known for a while," Michael Ratner of the U.S. Center for Constitutional Rights in New York City told the AP in a telephone interview.

In the report released in Washington, Amnesty said it interviewed Salah Nasser Salim Ali and Muhammad Faraj Ahmed Bashmilah in a jail in Yemen in late June. The group also

spoke to a Yemeni government official who said the men were being held in that country only because it was a condition of their release from U.S. custody.

Ali told the rights group that he was originally detained in Indonesia in August 2003 and then flown several days later to Jordan; Bashmilah said he was detained in Jordan in October 2003 while on a trip to visit his mother.

Both men claimed they were tortured by Jordanian intelligence agents for four days and then flown to what they believe were underground jails in an unknown location.

Once there, they were held in solitary confinement for more than 18 months, interrogated daily by U.S. guards and blared Western music all day and night. No charges were ever filed against them, they said.

The men said their first jail was underground, surrounded by high walls and that it took more than 4 hours to fly there from Jordan. After six to eight months they were transferred to a modern prison run by U.S. officials a three-hour plane journey away that also appeared to be underground.

Michelle Faul, *Report says U.S. held two Yemeni prisoners in secret underground jail*, THE ASSOCIATED PRESS, Aug. 3, 2005

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Posted 8/3/2005 7:19 PM Updated 8/4/2005 9:45 AM

Report says U.S. secretly held two prisoners

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP) — Two Yemeni men say they were held in solitary confinement in secret, underground U.S. detention facilities in an unknown country and interrogated by masked men for more than 18 months without being charged or allowed any contact with the outside world, Amnesty International charged Wednesday.

Amnesty and human rights lawyers argued that the report added to long-standing claims that the United States has held "secret detainees" in its war on terror. (Related: Amnesty International report)

"We fear that what we have heard from these two men is just one small part of the much broader picture of U.S. secret detentions around the world," said Sharon Critoph, a researcher at Amnesty International who interviewed the men in Yemen.

There was no immediate U.S. comment. Three messages to the Department of Defense by The Associated Press were not returned.

But U.S. officials have previously denied allegations of secret detention facilities, saying they hold terror suspects only at the U.S. Naval base in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and in Iraq and Afghanistan.

In June, U.S. officials denied a suggestion from the U.N.'s special expert on torture, Manfred Nowak, that some undeclared holding areas could include American ships cruising international waters. Others have suggested "high-value" detainees could be held secretly in Diego Garcia, a British-held island in the Indian Ocean that the United States rents as a strategic military base.

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more than 4 hours to fly there from Jordan. After six to eight months they were transferred to a modern prison run by U.S. officials a three-hour plane journey away that also appeared to be underground.

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Two Yemeni Men Claim Secret Detention

Thursday, August 04, 2005 Associated Press

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SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico — Two Yemeni men say they were held in solitary confinement in secret, underground U.S. detention facilities in an unknown country and interrogated by masked men for more than 18 months without being charged or allowed any contact with the outside world, Amnesty International (search) charged Wednesday.

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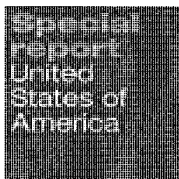
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Detainees 'deprived of daylight'

Richard Norton-Taylor
 Thursday August 4, 2005
[The Guardian](#)

Two men in a Yemeni prison were held at a US secret detention centre in solitary confinement for more than one and a half years without seeing daylight, according to Amnesty International.

Salah Nasser Salim 'Ali, and Muhammad Faraj Ahmed Bashmilah say they were flown to unknown underground jails in 2003 where they were held by US guards for more than 18 months without charge.

They were mostly shackled and handcuffed, and could not communicate with their families, lawyers, or humanitarian organisations.

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In May 2005, the men were transferred to Yemen, where they remain in prison. According to Amnesty, Yemeni officials said they were being held at the request of the US.

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Amnesty decries US secret detentions

Two men now in a Yemeni prison appear to have been kept in secret US detention facilities in solitary confinement for more than 18 months, Amnesty International has said in a report.

The human rights organisation said interviews with Salah Nasser Salim Ali, 27, and Muhammad Faraj Ahmed Bashmilah, 37, indicated they were victims of "the US administration's policy of secret detentions around the world".

"Their testimony will hopefully shed light on US detention centres just as sinister, yet less well-known, than Guantanamo," said William Schulz, executive director of Amnesty International USA.

Yemeni authorities said the men had been transferred from the US detention facility at Guantanamo Bay in Cuba about three months ago at the request of US officials, but Amnesty said separate interviews with the Yemeni detainees painted a different picture.

Not at Guantanamo

Amnesty said the men could not have been held at Guantanamo based on the length of travel they said they took from their initial confinement in Jordan and their description of underground detention facilities.

Human rights groups have railed against a practice known as rendition, in which detainees are transferred from one country to another, often in secret and without legal safeguards.

"The Department of Defence does not engage in renditions," said Air Force Major Mike Shavers, a spokesman for the department that operates the facility at Guantanamo Bay.

Shavers said records of who had been held in Guantanamo were confidential.

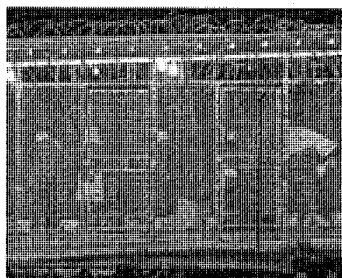
Tough treatment

The men, who say they were tortured and beaten in four days of confinement in Jordan, said after their transfer they saw no daylight, had no chance of outside communication and were not told why they were detained,

"We fear that [what] we have heard from these two men is just one small part of the much broader picture of US secret detentions around the world," said Amnesty's Sharon Critoph, who interviewed the men in the Yemeni prison.

Amnesty, which says the US is holding detainees in secret in countries that could include Jordan, Pakistan, Egypt, Thailand and Afghanistan, called on the US government to disclose the whereabouts of secret detention facilities, disclose the identity of detainees and take immediate steps to end secret detentions.

Source: Reuters



Amnesty says the men were not held at Guantanamo, as claimed

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