

The Human Face of Rendition

ABDEL HAKIM BELHADJ & FATIMA BOUCHAR



Abdel Hakim Belhadj and Fatima Bouchar were one of two families rendered to Libya in March 2004, in a deal between the CIA and MI6 on the one hand, and the Gaddafi regime on the other. As Richard Dearlove, head of MI6 at the time, later made clear, the rendition of Gaddafi opponents to Libya was part of an overall diplomatic package at the time.

Belhadj describes being stripped and hung by his wrists from hooks in his cell wall, with his legs together. He was blindfolded, hooded, made to wear ear defenders, and subjected to extremely loud music and to vicious beatings. He thinks he was drugged and at one point felt needles being inserted into his back. He was interrogated, mostly in English, and describes losing consciousness on many occasions.

Bouchar describes being blindfolded and made to wear ear defenders. She had a plastic tie wound around her legs from her ankles to her knees and her wrists cuffed. She was transported in a truck for some 30 minutes and then carried on a stretcher to a cell where her restraints were removed. She describes personnel being dressed in black with balaclavas on, speaking English with American accents. Despite being several months pregnant, she was chained to the wall in her cell by her wrist and opposite ankle. She could just about sit or lie on the floor but this was painful. She was not given any food and describes extreme fluctuations of temperature.

Bouchar was released after 2 months
Belhadj was held for more than 6 years