

Biography of Plaintiff Bisher al-Rawi

Iraqi citizen and long-term British permanent resident Bisher al-Rawi was kidnapped in Gambia in November 2002 and later secretly flown by the CIA to Kabul, Afghanistan. Flight documents indicate that al-Rawi was taken aboard a Gulfstream V aircraft registered with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) as N379P. Jeppesen Dataplan Inc. provided the logistical and flight support for the aircraft, which was used for a CIA clandestine interrogation and detention program run outside of the United States, known as "extraordinary rendition."

For two months al-Rawi was imprisoned, interrogated and tortured at two separate CIA facilities in Afghanistan, before being transferred to the U.S. detention facility in Guantánamo Bay, Cuba in February 2003. There, he was imprisoned for more than four years until his release on March 30, 2007. On his release, al-Rawi returned to his home in London where he currently resides freely. No charges have ever been brought against him.

BACKGROUND

Bisher al-Rawi is a 39-year-old Iraqi citizen who became a resident of the United Kingdom in the 1980's. His father was a prominent businessman who was tortured by Saddam's Hussein's secret police. The al-Rawi family fled Iraq as exiles, and Bisher's siblings have now become British citizens.

Bisher al-Rawi traveled to Gambia in November 2002 to assist his brother and some colleagues in opening a peanut-oil processing business. Both al-Rawi and his brother were apprehended by Gambian intelligence agents after arriving in the capital city of Banjul. Although his brother was subsequently released, Bisher was detained for almost a month and was interrogated by both Gambian and American officials. He was then hooded, handcuffed, diapered, shackled and flown for nine hours from Banjul to Kabul, Afghanistan.

For two weeks, al-Rawi was kept shackled in complete isolation and darkness at the secret CIA facility known as the "Dark Prison." Screams of other prisoners were only broken by the blaring of strange noises and loud music throughout the day and night. Al-Rawi was then transported by truck and helicopter to the U.S. Air Force base in Bagram. He was beaten severely before his flight and his extensive injuries were later photographed by U.S. soldiers. For the next two months he was subjected to humiliation, degradation, and physical and psychological torture by U.S. officials. He was forced to undergo prolonged periods of isolation and sleep deprivation and was frequently threatened with death.

During this entire time, efforts by his family to locate him or learn of his whereabouts were rebuffed at almost every turn. In January 2003, Amnesty International received information that al-Rawi had been secretly transferred from Gambia to Bagram, absent any extradition or deportation process and despite the fact that a habeus corpus petition filed on his behalf was still pending before a court in Gambia. Despite requests, U.S. officials refused to confirm al-Rawi's whereabouts. The British government similarly refused to provide any consular or diplomatic assistance in locating him or seeking his immediate or unconditional release.

On February 7, 2003 al-Rawi was transported on a 24-hour flight to the U.S. detention facility in Guantánamo Bay, Cuba in shackles, handcuffs and with goggles blinding his vision. He remained there for more than four years. On March 30, 2007 he was released from Guantánamo without charge and flown directly to Britain. To date, he has not been charged with any crime.