



Morning Star

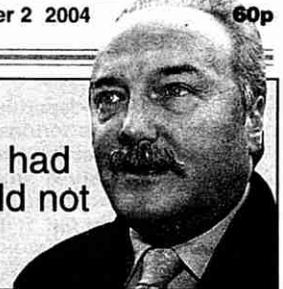
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JOHN PILGER points out that when the media stops reporting the deaths of innocent people, silence is a lie: **p9**



GEORGE GALLOWAY explains why, even if Blair had apologised for Iraq, it would not have been enough: **p10**

Lawyers release letter from Moazzam Begg:

'US tortured me in Guantanamo'

HUMAN rights lawyers revealed a shocking account of murder and torture by US soldiers against prisoners held illegally at Guantanamo Bay yesterday.

by **DANIEL COYSH**

Campaigning solicitor Gareth Peirce, who was joined at a London press conference by US counsel Clive Stafford Smith, made public a newly declassified letter from their client, British detainee Moazzam Begg.

Mr Begg, who vehemently denies any charges of terrorism, said that he has witnessed the deaths of two fellow inmates "at the hands of US military personnel," while being held at Bagram airbase in Afghanistan.

In the letter, the first time that any communication from a serving Guantanamo prisoner had been made public, he also spoke of "severe antipathy towards detainees," plus a constant barrage of racist and religious abuse from guards.

"During several interviews, particularly, though unexclusively, in Afghanistan, I was subjected to pernicious threats of torture, actual vindictive torture and death threats — amongst other coercively employed interrogation techniques," said Mr Begg.

Torture methods included severe beatings, forcible stripping while being filmed and sleep deprivation.

Mr Begg added: "Interviews were conducted in an environment of generated fear, resonant with terrifying screams of fellow

'I'm ashamed of what my country is doing'
— US counsel Clive Stafford Smith



OUTRAGE: Clive Stafford Smith (centre), the US counsel for British Guantanamo Bay detainee Moazzam Begg (inset), leading a press conference in central London demanding that the detailed evidence of Mr Begg's torture be declassified and made public.

detainees facing similar methods.

"In this atmosphere of severe antipathy towards detainees was the compounded use of racially and religiously prejudiced taunts.

"This culminated, in my opinion, in the deaths of two fellow detainees at the hands of US military personnel, to which I myself was partially witness."

The New York Times reported last month that two detainees had

died at Bagram airbase within a week of each other in December 2002.

But it is unclear whether these were the same two incidents described by his client, said Mr Stafford Smith.

The lawyer, who is a US citizen, added: "I'm ashamed of what my country is doing."

Lawyers who have been allowed to speak with the detainees could be jailed if they

reveal any details of torture allegations, he noted.

"It's abhorrent. I'm disgusted that we are placed in a position where the US is torturing people and then gags us from telling anyone about it," said Mr Stafford Smith.

The lawyer noted that he believes that the letter may have been released in error by the US authorities.

"The letter has either been let

through by mistake or because someone in the US has a conscience," he said.

"The bottom line is: I don't mind which of those it is," he added.

Ms Pierce called for the immediate repatriation of all prisoners being held at Guantanamo Bay.

She asked: "What do we do when Mr Begg's captors are, in fact, a state, a rogue state, acting wholly illegally?"

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