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Tuesday, November 14th, 2006

War Crimes Suit Filed in Germany Against Rumsfeld, Other Top U.S. Officials Over Prisoner Torture

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Attorneys with the Center for Constitutional Rights filed a war crimes lawsuit today in Germany against outgoing Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, and other high-ranking U.S. officials in the torture of prisoners in Iraq and Guantanamo. We go to Berlin to speak with CCR president Michael Ratner. [Includes rush transcript]

The Center for Constitutional Rights filed a criminal complaint in Germany today against outgoing Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld. The complaint requests that the German Federal prosecutors open an investigation - and ultimately, a criminal prosecution - looking into the responsibility of high-ranking U.S. officials for authorizing war crimes in the name of the so-called "War on Terror." Former White House Counsel and current Attorney General Alberto Gonzalez and former CIA Director George Tenet, are also charged in the complaint. The suit is being brought on behalf of torture victims - 11 Iraqi citizens who were held at Abu Ghraib prison and one Guantanamo detainee. The plaintiffs claim they were victims of electric shock, severe beatings, sleep and sexual abuse. The complaint filed today is related to a 2004 complaint that was dismissed. This new complaint is filed under new circumstances including the recent resignation of German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder. Germany's laws on torture and war crimes permit the prosecution of suspected war criminals wherever they may be found.

Michael Ratner, the president of the Center for Constitutional Rights. He joins us from Berlin, Germany.

RUSH TRANSCRIPT

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AMY GOODMAN: We go first to Michael Ratner, the president of the Center for Constitutional Rights, joining us now from Berlin. Democracy Now! welcomes you, Michael. Can you explain the major news conference that you held today? The world, for the first time, really, picking up this story.

MICHAEL RATNER: I think that's right, Amy. This is the first time they're really picking it up. The press conference was well attended. This is news all over the world. I mean, one of the things that has not been noticed about this lawsuit was the number of groups willing to join. The Center for Constitutional Rights, we have a major group of human rights organizations under the title FIDH, the Federation of Human Rights, which has 140 branches. We have Theo Van Boven, the former rapporteur for the United Nations on torture has joined the suit, Nobel Prize winners and others -- it's taken off. I think people are tired, really tired and angry over what the United States has perpetrated in the name of fighting the so-called war on terror.

What we did today was file a 220-page complaint -- we've been working on this for quite a while -- against 14 high-level US officials, Rumsfeld being the lead one, but, of course, General Myers, George Tenet, the former head of the CIA, and a number of the lawyers who wrote some of the so-called torture memos, particularly lawyers Yoo and Bybee. The procedure here is to file a complaint with the prosecutor, and the prosecutor then decides whether or not to begin an investigation.

As you said, we did file a case -- a similar case in 2004. The prosecutor in 2004 dismissed the case. He dismissed it really for legal reasons on the face of it, but for political reasons, as reasons, he said, were the United States, it appeared to him, was still investigating up the chain of command and was making an effort to look into who was responsible for the war crimes in the torture that went from Guantanamo to Abu Ghraib. We thought that was a wrong ruling then. We didn't think there was any evidence the US was looking up the chain of command.

But here, we're now even in a different situation that makes that excuse really irrelevant and not possible again. Two things have happened. One is, a year and a half has passed since the case, and, of course, nothing has been done to go after Donald Rumsfeld or Tenet or Sanchez or any of the other people we've named. So, that alone says a lot about what the US is doing. Also mentioned in your opening, that the US has also immunized these people from war crimes. In the Military Commissions Act, which was signed by the President on October 17th, he passed a statute that makes violations of the Geneva Conventions criminal. That's called the War Crimes Act. He amends it, not just going forward, but he amends it going backwards, back to 9/11, essentially immunizing these officials in the United States from any prosecutions for war crimes.

So now that we're in Germany, which is really a court of last resort -- we can't go to the United States courts, we can't go to the international courts. They have no jurisdiction. You have national courts. We're in Germany, in part because it has the best law on universal jurisdiction and in part because certainly in the past, and as far as we know today, some of the perpetrators are actually at military bases in Germany. Germany can no longer say, well, the US is seriously investigating, because the US has essentially immunized these defendants.

AMY GOODMAN: I want to talk about some of the other people, outside of Donald Rumsfeld. For example, former Assistant Attorney General, Jay Bybee and the former Deputy Assistant Attorney General, John Yoo, who's a professor at UC Berkeley right now.

MICHAEL RATNER: Those two people are remarkable. I mean, they -- one, of course, as you said, is a judge, and one is a professor. And, you know, they keep saying, "Well, we just write memos of abstract legal memos on the lengths to which you could go to carry out certain kinds of interrogations." And, of course they say they narrowly define torture so that everything from waterboarding to using dogs to waterboarding doesn't constitute torture. And then they actually say in these memos that the President, in the name of national security, can use torture. Their conclusions were abstract legal opinions, and they're not liable.

Our claim is very different. Our claim is that these memos were written specifically, first to justify what was already going on in terms of torture, and they knew that, and they were also trying to justify going forward to allow this whole series of interrogation practices that we all know that was authorized by Donald Rumsfeld and others, from waterboarding to stress positions to other kinds of torture. They were written specifically for that purpose. These were not simply lawyers in an academic exercise. These were lawyers at the Justice Department whose opinions were influential, in fact, instrumental, in our belief in aiding and abetting the torture that has occurred.

AMY GOODMAN: What about Stephen Cambone, the Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence, as well as David Addington, the new Scooter Libby, the Vice President's chief of staff?

MICHAEL RATNER: Well, we believe all of these people named, that -- really there was a torture program created in the United States after 9/11. The key players were people like Stephen Cambone, people like Donald Rumsfeld, David Addington, who's the President's chief of staff now. He was the counsel. But we believe that Addington was one of the people, again, pushing for tougher interrogation tactics that we believe amount to violations of the Geneva Conventions. This was a group of people who aided and abetted really the torture program in the United States.

What is critical to us is, first of all, really to bring public attention to this matter, to say that these people have engaged in a torture program and that there be some accountability for it. I cannot say, but hopefully, hopefully, this case and other kinds of investigations will expose, stop, and hold accountable these officials.

One part of this effort, of course, is at the Center for Constitutional Rights, people can go, as they did last time, but even more important now, can go to the Center's website at ccr-ny.org, send a letter to the German prosecutor, urging the German prosecutor to open a prosecution in these cases.

AMY GOODMAN: How significant is it, Michael Ratner, that Donald Rumsfeld will soon no longer be Secretary of Defense, in terms of this criminal complaint?

MICHAEL RATNER: Well, it's of some significance. I mean, first, as I've said, you know, the US has given these guys immunity. That immunity doesn't apply outside the United States. So that's a trouble on that. But there is also an immunity that people in office have -- the President, most likely the Vice President and the foreign -- the Secretary of State, as well as probably DoD that many would argue, make him immune while he's in office from any kind of a lawsuit. So, the fact that within a short period of time from now -- maybe a week, maybe two weeks, whatever it is -- he will no longer be in office actually exposes him to this kind of investigation and prosecution. He's in a dangerous situation.

One of our hopes is, really, we believe, and we have believed for 30 years, that torturers deserve no safe haven. They should not be free to travel around the world and go wherever they've been seriously accused of torture. And they can be tried in those countries. And one of our goals here is to really turn, I would hope, a Donald Rumsfeld into a Henry Kissinger, not free to travel from country to country.

AMY GOODMAN: Finally, you mentioned that some of the people you're suing are currently in Germany on US military bases?

MICHAEL RATNER: Well, they certainly were in 2004. General Sanchez was here. Colonel Pappas was here, who's one of the people in the Military Intelligence Brigade that was involved. A man named, I think pronounced, Wojdakowski was here. We are no longer as sure as we were then that they're here, but we don't have contrary information.

So, there are big military bases in Germany. Germany, therefore, has an ability to do an investigation here that should allow it to go forward. We also, as you will be interviewing, we have people who can actually testify and help Germany go forward with the investigation, and that's Janis Karpinski.

AMY GOODMAN: And we're going to go to Janis Karpinski right now. Michael Ratner, I want to thank you for joining us. When we come back from break, we're going to go to the former general to talk about these military officials right up to Donald Rumsfeld. And then we'll speak with Gita Gutierrez of the Center for Constitutional Rights. She represents Mohammed al-Azawi at Guantanamo and says he was tortured. She'll talk about her attempts to meet with him and finally having those conversations with him.

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Tuesday, November 14th, 2006

Torture Suit Star Witness, Fmr. Abu Ghraib Head Janis Karpinski Points to Signed Rumsfeld Memo Listing Harsh Interrogation Techniques

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A group of lawyers filed a lawsuit today calling on German prosecutors to investigate outgoing Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld for allegedly sanctioning torture. We go to Berlin to speak with former Brigadier General Janis Karpinski, who served as the commanding officer at Abu Ghraib. She is the highest-ranking US military officer reprimanded over the Abu Ghraib prisoner abuse scandal. [Includes rush transcript]

Attorneys with the Center for Constitutional Rights filed a war crimes lawsuit today in Germany against outgoing Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld for his role in the torture of prisoners at Guantanamo.

We go to Berlin to speak with former Brigadier General Janis Karpinski. She was the Commander of three large US and British-led prisons in Iraq in 2003. She oversaw all military police in Iraq and was the first female ever to command soldiers in a combat zone. In May 2005, she was demoted from Brigadier General to Colonel over the Abu Ghraib prisoner abuse scandal. She remains the highest-ranking military officer reprimanded for the abuse. Wolfgang Kaleck, the German lawyer leading the litigation said Karpinski would be the "star witness" of the case.

Janis Karpinski, former Brigadier General and author of "One Woman's Army: The Commanding General of Abu Ghraib Tells Her Story."

RUSH TRANSCRIPT

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AMY GOODMAN: Our next guest in Berlin today is former Brigadier General Janis Karpinski. She was the commander of the three large US- and British-led prisons in Iraq in 2003. She oversaw all military police in Iraq and was the first female ever to command soldiers in a combat zone. In May 2005, she was demoted from Brigadier General to Colonel over the Abu Ghraib prisoner abuse scandal. She remains the highest-ranking military officer reprimanded for the abuse. Wolfgang Kaleck, the German lawyer leading the litigation, said Karpinski would be the, quote, "star witness" of the case. She's the author of the book, One Woman's Army: The Commanding General of Abu Ghraib Tells Her Story. Welcome to Democracy Now!, Janis Karpinski. Tell us why you're in Berlin today.

JANIS KARPINSKI: Thank you. Good morning, Amy. I'm in Berlin because I was invited to make my presentation. Over the course of time, as you're probably well aware, we had different presentations. I was first asked for information about what I saw, what I witnessed in Iraq, and what I believe led to what we saw in those photographs. And the case was initially presented and then discussed. But again, over the course of time, and opening discussions, Mr. Kaleck decided to proceed and to pursue presenting the case again. I was at a presentation in the United States, and I had an opportunity to meet with them to again clarify some points. And when they asked me if I would be interested in coming here to give a presentation in person, I said it would be a privilege to present the truth. And presenting the truth and presenting first-hand information has become increasingly important in this entire process.

AMY GOODMAN: Can you tell us how it happened? When you were in Iraq, when you were in charge at Abu Ghraib, tell us how you learned about the torture that was taking place, and about the jurisdiction, your authority over the area in the prison where these prisoners were tortured.

JANIS KARPINSKI: Well, I think it's a critical point and certainly important in the discussion, because I was responsible for 17 prison facilities in Iraq, and they were spread all over Iraq in various stages of disrepair. And our purpose was to assist the prison experts under the Coalition Provisional Authority with the rebuilding of these and re-opening of these prisons. We had to use, and we never planned to use Abu Ghraib for any long-term detention operation, because it was, number one, in one of the most dangerous locations in all of Iraq, in the middle Triangle, and it had a notorious history of abuse and torture under Saddam Hussein. So we were moving in the direction of transferring all of the Iraqi criminals being held at Abu Ghraib facilities, as they became open and operational. And our Iraqi criminal population was very limited at Abu Ghraib. Again, we were moving towards closing it completely.

And then, they -- the Coalition Provisional -- excuse me, the CJTF-7, the coalition forces, undertook these raids and roundups, as they would come to be called, in the different sectors, combat divisions would put together plans to go out and apprehend targeted individuals. But with very little description of the individuals they were attempting to capture and apprehend these operations would take place in a location where there would be 20, 30, 50, 100 people meeting for some reason. And when the operational force arrived there, they would see the detainees, not two or three individuals, but 50 or more, so they would arrest everybody. And they started to turn these new security detainees over to Abu Ghraib, contrary to what our plans were completely. Now we have an enormous growing population.

But in November of 2003, the prison responsibility for Abu Ghraib was transferred from the Military Police Control, my control, to the Military Intelligence Control, making it an interrogation facility. In fact, in January of 2004, as General Miller planned and directed during his visit in September of 2003. So, I had 16 other prison facilities to be concerned with and to focus on. In fact, in January of 2004, I heard about this ongoing investigation at Abu Ghraib. I couldn't find out from anybody any information or any details of what this investigation really encompassed.

And it wasn't until the 23rd of January, when I saw the pictures for the first time. And I asked -- when I saw the pictures, I asked the commander of the Criminal Investigation Division, military intelligence in all of this? And seeing one of the contract people in some of the photographs, I said, "Why are the translators in any of these photographs?" And I was told, "Ma'am, those are contract interrogators." So, it was first time not only seeing the pictures, but the first time I was receiving details of contract interrogators actually working out at Abu Ghraib. When I tried to go to see some of the soldiers, to get access to some of the soldiers seen in some of those photographs, I was told by the JAG officer representing General Sanchez, that they did not work for me, so I had no right to go and speak to any of them. In fact, they worked for the Military Intelligence commander. It was a different story in April of 2004, when the photos were released for the world. But there were specific steps taken to keep me from speaking to the individuals, from having information, and from having any insight in terms of what was going on in the interrogation operations.

AMY GOODMAN: Some of these people were yours. They were military police. They were the people that you were in charge of, right?

JANIS KARPINSKI: Correct. I had military police personnel working in every one of the prison facilities all over Iraq. But it is important to know that there were interrogation operations

facility: Abu Ghraib. And these abuses, or the photographs, the humiliation seen in those photographs, occurred when the prison was no longer under my control. The commander at AT AMY GOODMAN: What was it like when you saw the photographs, Janis Karpinski, when you first -- can you explain -- what was it? -- January 2004 -- and how did you actually get a h JANIS KARPINSKI: Well, I heard about this ongoing investigation -- as I said, that was on the 12th of January of 2004 -- tried to get some information to put, you know -- get an idea, i what was being investigated. And it wasn't until the 23rd of January, when I saw the photographs for the first time, and they were presented to me by the commander of the Criminal I Division. He called me, said he had the pictures. Could he meet with me? He met with me that night at my operations center. I saw the photographs for the first time, and I was absolut felt -- I just felt as if the walls of that room were closing in on me. I felt sickened by what I saw. I was particularly offended by the expressions on the faces of the military people in the When I asked the person showing me these photographs, I said, "Well, where's the military intelligence in all of this?" And there were some explanations, and he told me that they were some of those answers. And he pointed out one picture in particular, where he showed me that there were -- you couldn't see all of the people in the picture, but the angle it was taken all of the feet in the picture. And there were 32 boots, as he pointed out. So, he said each -- you know, the bare feet, we believe, belonged to the prisoners, but the boots belonged to I And 32 boots means that there's 16 US people in this photograph, and we haven't identified all of them yet.

So for -- four months later, for the seven so-called bad apples to be identified as the -- as totally responsible for designing, implementing, and taking these photographs, I knew it was i wrong from the beginning. But I was shocked by what I saw in those photographs, as I'm sure people around the world were, when they first saw them in April of 2004.

AMY GOODMAN: Janis Karpinski, can you talk about Donald Rumsfeld, number one in this lawsuit for war crimes, and how you know he knew? What physical evidence did you have or c him?

JANIS KARPINSKI: Well, Amy, I think it's -- again, it's another important point largely missed in many discussions. The outrage was not ever over the actions in these photographs. The seemed to be centered on the existence of photographs, because what the photographs did was lift the curtain on what was actually authorized, ordered, designed and directed by peop higher levels than mine or anybody else serving in Iraq.

When I heard about the investigation and was at another location outside of Baghdad altogether, we prepared to leave at first light the next day, went directly out to Abu Ghraib, and, c the people who would normally work in those positions, in Cell Block 1A or 1B, they had been removed from their positions. So the sergeant I had the opportunity to speak to was withc information himself.

He explained that he didn't ordinarily work in the "hard site," as they called it. But he -- and so I asked him for logs or journals to try to piece information together, and he said everyth seized. All of the information was confiscated in the course of this investigation. But he pointed to a memorandum, one page, regular standard-size piece of paper, on a column just out administrative office that they were using.

And on the column, it talked -- the subject was interrogation techniques. And it was a one-page memorandum. It listed a few interrogation techniques to be used for effective interrogat the wording was. And it -- I mean, there was about a half a dozen of them: prolonged standing, disruption of sleep patterns, playing loud music during -- throughout the day and during hours, disruption of meal plans, those kind of things.

But it was signed by the Secretary of Defense. And there was a handwritten annotation in the margin of that memorandum. And it was written -- four words: "Make sure this happens." remember my mind, my eye going to it directly, because it was written in such a manner that it was squared off. It seemed to be very military-oriented. But it was the same handwritin appeared to be the same ink, because this was a copy of the memorandum, as the signature on the memorandum, and that was the Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld. It was his memorandum, and it seemed to be the same ink and handwriting in the margin, saying, "Make sure this happens," referring to those techniques for interrogation.

I said to the sergeant, "Why is an interrogation memorandum here?" And he said, "Ma'am, I don't know. We were told that this has to be posted." So, to me, months later, when the ot started to come out and I was individually accused of allowing this to happen, I knew there was no truth to those accusations, but I did recall the memorandum. Certainly, the Secretar signature on the memorandum indicated he had knowledge of what was being allowed in terms of interrogation.

AMY GOODMAN: Janis Karpinski, finally, in this lawsuit, also being sued are General Sanchez and Geoffrey Miller, the general who was in charge of Guantanamo, then sent to Abu Ghrai "gitmo-ize" it. If you could very briefly talk about your direct knowledge of their knowledge of these operations.

JANIS KARPINSKI: I don't have any direct knowledge of these operations, except that I saw their testimony in front of the Senate Armed Services Committee, where they denied any kr photographs and chose their words specifically to work around admitting to any knowledge of the techniques being used. But General Miller did come to Iraq. He was sent specifically to the detention operations, he was sent specifically to work with the military intelligence personnel to teach them harsher interrogation techniques, to obtain more actionable intelligence efforts.

And in the course of his presentation, his initial briefing, he made the comment about -- in response to an interrogator who raised the issue about what could we do immediately to enh interrogation efforts, because we think we're doing what we should be doing. And he said it was his impression that they were treating the prisoners too well. And he said, "You need to prisoners like dogs, because if you treat them any differently, you have effectively lost control of your interrogation." And he went on to explain that at Guantanamo Bay, the prisoners : everything they had, to include a change of color of their prison jumpsuits.

And when I raised my hand and suggested that, you know, it was a different situation in Iraq than what he was facing in Guantanamo Bay -- for example, we didn't even have enough f prisoner, every prisoner, a jumpsuit, let alone a change of colors of jumpsuit -- he dismissed my concerns, by saying his budget was \$125 million a year, and he would give as much m necessary to the Military Intelligence commander to make this operation work.

AMY GOODMAN: Janis Karpinski, I want to thank you for joining us. Thank you for being with us, former Brigadier General and author of One Woman's Army: The Commanding General Tells Her Story, speaking to us from Berlin, where she will be the star witness in this criminal case against high US military officials, including outgoing Defense Secretary Donald Rumsf To purchase an audio or video copy of this entire program, click here for our new online ordering or call 1 (888) 999-3877.

Last edited by Alpha on Tue Nov 14, 2006 10:57 pm; edited 2 times in total



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Alpha

Posted: Tue Nov 14, 2006 8:47 pm Post subject:

Israeli interrogators 'in Iraq'

The US officer at the heart of the Abu Ghraib prison scandal says she has evidence that Israelis helped to interrogate Iraqis at another facility.

Brig Gen Janis Karpinski told the BBC she met an Israeli working as an interrogator at a secret intelligence centre in Baghdad.

A BBC reporter says it is the first time a senior US officer has suggested Israelis worked with the coalition.

The Israeli foreign ministry said the reports were completely untrue.

Intelligence access

Gen Karpinski was in charge of the military police unit that ran Abu Ghraib and other prisons when the abuses were committed. She has been suspended but not charged.

She told BBC Radio 4's Today programme she met a man claiming to be Israeli during a visit to an intelligence centre with a senior coalition general.

"I saw an individual there that I hadn't had the opportunity to meet before, and I asked him what did he do there, was he an interpreter - he was clearly from the Middle East," she said in interview.

"He said, 'Well, I do some of the interrogation here. I speak Arabic but I'm not an Arab; I'm from Israel.'"

Until a 1999 ruling by the Israeli Supreme Court, Israeli secret service interrogators were allowed to use "moderate force".

The US journalist who broke the Abu Ghraib scandal told the programme his sources confirm the presence of Israeli intelligence agents in Iraq.

Seymour Hersh said that one of the Israeli aims was to gain access to detained members of the Iraqi secret intelligence unit, who reportedly specialise in Israeli affairs.

'Convenient scapegoat'

The BBC reporter, Matthew Grant, says that whatever the truth, these allegations could cause anger in the Arab world.

Photographs of naked Iraqi detainees being humiliated and maltreated first started to surface in April, sparking shock and anger across the world.

One soldier has been sentenced and six others are awaiting courts martial for abuses committed at Abu Ghraib jail.

Gen Karpinski has said she was being made a "convenient scapegoat" for abuse ordered by others.

Story from BBC NEWS:

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Zionists and torture (from GITMO to Abu Ghraib):

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Tuesday, November 14th, 2006

Plaintiff in Suit Against Rumsfeld Subjected to Sexual, Religious Humiliation at Guantanamo

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 Guantanamo prisoner Mohammed-al-Qahtani is among the plaintiffs named in a war crimes lawsuit filed in Germany today against outgoing Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld. Attorneys at the Center for Constitutional Rights accuse Rumsfeld of being directly involved in the brutal interrogation of al-Qahtani. We speak with al-Qahtani's attorney, Gita Gutierrez. [Includes rush transcript]

Gita Gutierrez, attorney with the Center for Constitutional Rights. She represents Mohammed al-Qahtani who has been detained at Guantanamo since January 2002.

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AMY GOODMAN: Well, a year ago I interviewed US Army Specialist Tony Lagouranis, an Army interrogator from 2001 to 2005, served a tour of duty in Iraq from January 2004 to January 2005, stationed at Abu Ghraib. In the spring of 2004, he joined a special intelligence-gathering task force that moved among detention facilities around Iraq. In the interview, Specialist Tony described some of the interrogation techniques he used on prisoners at Abu Ghraib.

TONY LAGOURANIS: It was just like we were trained in the schoolhouse, right out of the Army field manual. We would just talk to them, ask them questions, maybe, you know, use some different approaches but nothing -- nothing too serious. But I knew that some interrogators there were still at that time, in January of 2004, using a little bit harsher techniques. Like, they -- if a prisoner wasn't cooperating, they could adjust his diet. People were in deep, deep isolation for months there, which I believe is illegal, according to Army doctrine. And they would also take their clothes and mattress so that they would be cold in their cells.

AMY GOODMAN: Former US Army interrogator Tony Lagouranis speaking on Democracy Now! last year. Well, we're going to go back to Berlin right now to Gita Gutierrez. She is an attorney with the Center for Constitutional Rights, who represents Mohammed al-Qahtani, one of the plaintiffs who's been detained at Guantanamo since January 2002. Gita Gutierrez, we don't have much news just filed this criminal complaint against Donald Rumsfeld and other high-ranking US officials. Can you tell us about the client you represent, al-Qahtani?

GITA GUTIERREZ: Yes. Mohammed is the victim of what's called the "first special interrogation plan," which was a regime of interrogation tactics that amounted to torture that Secretary Rumsfeld authorized himself, passed down through the chain of command and was implemented by one of the other defendants, Major General Geoffrey Miller.

AMY GOODMAN: Tell us how you came to actually meet Mohammed al-Qahtani face to face, and what he told you about what happened to him.

GITA GUTIERREZ: His father had come to the Center for Constitutional Rights seeking legal representation for his son. And we filed a petition for habeas corpus on Mohammed's behalf. I first met with him in Guantanamo in December 2005 and have continued to meet with him for the past ten months to talk about what happened to him.

I think what's actually extraordinary about his case and the complaint we brought in Germany is that the information that we have about the interrogation tactics used against him are not just Mohammed's claims, but are drawn as well from government documents that established the tactics used against him. There was an interrogation log leaked from Guantanamo, as well as Freedom of Information Act documents, emails, complaints from FBI agents at Guantanamo who observed Mohammed during his interrogation and were concerned about abuse.

AMY GOODMAN: What did he say happened to him?

GITA GUTIERREZ: Specifically, he was subjected to approximately 160 days of isolation, 48 days of sleep deprivation, which was accompanied by 20-hourlong interrogations consecutively. He was not permitted to sleep for four hours, between 7:00 a.m. and 11:00, in order to disrupt his sleep patterns and wear him down psychologically.

During that period of time, he was also subjected to sexual humiliation, euphemistically called "invasion of space by a female," at times when MPs would hold him down on the floor and interrogators would straddle him and molest him.

He was subjected to religious humiliation and was forcibly had his beard and hair shaved, which, of course, is a violation of his faith.

He was physically abused, had medical professionals in the room during his interrogations monitoring him and at times doing medical procedures on him in conjunction with the interrogations.

So, he was put through quite a number of tactics, in and of themselves which would constitute torture, but certainly in combination had a tremendous and severe psychological and physical impact on him. At one point in Guantanamo, his heart rate dropped so low that he was at risk of dying and was rushed to the military hospital there and revived, sent then back to interrogations and was actually interrogated in the ambulance on the way back to his cell.

AMY GOODMAN: Gita Gutierrez, I want to thank you for being with us, attorney with the Center for Constitutional Rights representing Mohammed al-Qahtani, who's been detained at Guantanamo since January 2002, speaking to us from Berlin. This is Democracy Now!, democracynow.org. We will continue to follow this lawsuit as it makes its way through Germany's courts.

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