

# Terrorism Suspect Alleges 'Mental Torture'

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A suspected terrorist who once lived in Maryland told a military tribunal that he was "mentally tortured" at the U.S. detention facility at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and was driven to twice attempt suicide by chewing through his own arteries, according to a transcript of a hearing released yesterday by the Pentagon.

Majid Khan, 27, one of 14 "high-value" suspects held for years by the CIA at secret foreign prisons before their transfer to Guantanamo Bay, also said he lost 30 pounds in 27 days during a hunger strike, according to the transcript. In a statement redacted in places by government censors, he complained of mistreatment that ranged from having his beard forcibly shaved and spending weeks without sunlight to the poor quality of the camp's weekly newsletter, it says.

"I swear to God this place in some sense worst than CIA jails," Khan is quoted as telling the Combatant Status Review Tribunal on April 15 as it considered whether to designate him an enemy combatant.

Cmdr. J.D. Gordon, a Pentagon spokesman, said yesterday that Khan has been "treated humanely" in the custody of the Defense Department.

According to the transcript, Khan, who graduated from public high school in suburban Baltimore in 1999, denied being a terrorist and twice volunteered to submit to a polygraph test. He told the tribunal that he helped the FBI take an illegal Pakistani immigrant into custody in 2002 — a claim an FBI spokesman declined to comment on yesterday.

U.S. officials allege that Khan, a Pakistani national, took orders from Khalid Sheik Mohammed, who is accused of orchestrating the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks and is also a high-value detainee at Guantanamo Bay. Khan was allegedly asked to research how to poison U.S. reservoirs and to blow up U.S. gas stations, and was considered for an effort to assassinate the Pakistani president.

At the hearing, the government cited statements it said were made by two of Khan's family members in 2003. A brother of Khan's allegedly said that Khan was "involved with a group that he believed to be al-Qaeda," and his father allegedly said that Khan had been "influenced by anti-American thoughts."

The government also cited statements it said were made by Lyman

Faris, an Ohio truck driver who pleaded guilty in 2003 to supporting a plot to destroy the Brooklyn Bridge and to launch a simultaneous attack on Washington. Faris said Khan referred to Mohammed as his uncle, according to the documents, and told the government that Khan once spoke of his desire to martyr himself by detonating an explosives vest to assassinate Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf.

But Faris disavowed those earlier claims in a statement provided to the tribunal at Khan's request. "That is an absolute lie," Faris wrote of his earlier statements, saying he was coerced or deceived into making them.

Khan's father, Ali S. Khan, also provided the tribunal with a statement disavowing his and his son's earlier statements. "Anything we may have said about Majid Khan was simply out of shock because we only knew that Majid had disappeared and was pure speculation based on what FBI agents in the United States told us and pressured us to say," he wrote.

Majid Khan was detained in March 2003 while staying with a brother in Pakistan. His whereabouts were not officially disclosed

until September, when President Bush named him as one of the 14 high-value detainees transferred to Guantanamo Bay.

Gitanjali Gutierrez, Khan's attorney at the Center for Constitutional Rights in New York, said that Khan's response to the conditions of his confinement show how formidable they are. "He's definitely under a great deal of mental stress," she said. "The idea of indefinite detention is something that the Red Cross identified years ago as being tantamount to torture."

Some of Khan's complaints were less serious than others, including his allegation that he and other detainees are given "cheap branded, unscented soap" and must suffer with a loud fan that "drives us all crazy." He also complained about the condition of athletic equipment.

Damaging information about Khan came from Saifullah Paracha, a Guantanamo Bay detainee who provided a statement to the tribunal at Khan's request. Paracha said that, while in Karachi, he and a man later identified to him as Khan were introduced by Ammar al-Baluchi, a nephew of Mohammed's who is accused of helping finance the Sept. 11 attackers.



Majid Khan graduated from a Baltimore area high school.

Staff researcher Julie Tate contributed to this report.