

## A Letter From Guantanamo

*The Huffington Post*

*This is my call to the outside world from behind these rusty bars, in this monstrous cell. Does the world know what is happening in this prison?*



Despite the long years we the prisoners have spent in this place from 2002 to 2013, the American government does not seem interested in solving the problem. The past few months have been among the harshest lived by the prisoners here. During the Bush years, solutions seemed possible. Under Obama, it seems like there is no will to solve the problem.

I once lived communally with the other prisoners in Camp Six. Now we are all in solitary confinement here, with only two hours of recreation a day. Some prisoners are too weak and sick to ever leave their cells as a result of the hunger strike and the U.S. military's reaction to it.

The military here has used brute force against the hunger strikers. They have beaten us and used rubber-coated bullets and tear gas against us. They have confiscated everything from our cells, from toothbrushes to blankets and books. They have confined us to cold, windowless cells, beyond the reach of the sun's rays or a fresh breeze. Sometimes, we don't even know if it's day or night out.

Daily, I am forced into a restraint chair, my arms, legs and chest tied down tight. Big guards grab my head with both hands. I feel like my skull is being crushed. Then, so-called nurses violently push a thick tube down my nostril. Blood rushes out of my nose and mouth. The nurses turn on the feeding solution full throttle. I cannot begin to describe the pain that causes.

Recently, a nurse brutally yanked out the force-feeding tube, threw it on my shoulder, and left the cell, leaving me tied down to the chair. Later, the nurse returned to the cell, took the tube off my shoulder and began to reinsert it into my nose. I asked him to cleanse and purify the tube first but he refused.

When I later tried to complain to another nurse about the incident, the other nurse threatened to force the feeding tube up my rear, not down my nose, if I didn't suspend my hunger strike.

And when I tried taking the matter to a senior medical officer, he told me that they would strap me to a bed and make me urinate through a catheter forced into my penis if I kept up my peaceful protest.

I used to think I was the only one coping with severe joint pain, a weakened memory, having a hard time concentrating, and feeling constantly distracted as a result of all this. But I've since discovered that many hunger strikers struggle with the same symptoms. Without realizing it, some of the hunger strikers even speak to themselves out loud when they're alone.

But we also know that there are peaceful protests in solidarity with our plight in many countries. Even in America itself, there are protests demanding that the U.S. government close this prison that has hurt America's reputation. And international criticism mounts daily.

We the hunger strikers continue to demand our rights. President Obama can begin by releasing those of us who have been cleared for release years ago, followed by the prisoners who have not been charged with any crime after eleven years in captivity.

Despite the difficulties, the hard conditions, and the challenges created by the U.S. government, those of us on hunger strike will continue protesting until our demands for justice are met.

*Abdelhadi Faraj is a Syrian national who has been in U.S. custody since 2002. At Guantánamo, the U.S. military assigned him Internment Serial Number (ISN) 329. Faraj was cleared for release by a U.S. government interagency taskforce in 2010, yet he remains imprisoned at Guantánamo today. This article was translated from the Arabic by his attorney, Ramzi Kassem.*