

By Andy Worthington

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I have just received a brief message from a credible source inside Guantánamo, about the situation in the prison today, which I wanted to make available because it exposes how four prisoners are close to death, as a result of [the prison-wide hunger strike](#) that is on its 80th day, and yet the guard force are behaving with brutality and indifference.

The source stated that it “looks like GTMO is going backward,” with the guards “putting people in isolation and all day long making lots of noise by speaking loudly, running on the metal stairs and leaving their two-way radios on all day and night. People cannot sleep.”

The source added, “There are at least four people that are at the very edge and one named Khiali Gul from Afghanistan is in a bad shape and cannot move and cannot talk or eat or drink. When other detainees tell the guards about him, they say, ‘When he is completely

unconscious, then we will take him.’ The chances are that he will die.”

The source also explained that he has been trying to get an Afghan lawyer “to notify his family to at least call him and they might have a chance to talk to him for the last time.”

The source also stated, “There is such an arrogance inside the camp,” that, while a prisoner was meeting with his legal team, “a guard came and knocked on the door and said, ‘Your time is up.’ One of the lawyers said, ‘OK, can we have a few minutes to clean up?’ and the guard said, ‘No, your time is up.’ He kicked us out.”

Khiali Gul (aka Khi Ali Gul), who is 49 or 50 years old, is one of the [86 cleared prisoners still held](#) because of President Obama’s inertia and the cynical obstructions raised by Congress, designed to prevent the release of any of the prisoners. He is an Afghan who should never have been detained in the first place, as I explained last July, when [I wrote about discussions between Presidents Obama and Karzai](#) regarding the possibility of transferring some or all of the remaining 17 Afghan prisoners back to Afghanistan.

I first declared Khi Ali Gul innocent in my book [The Guantánamo Files](#), published in 2007, and can say with confidence that I came to regard him as an innocent man wrongly detained while researching the prisoners’ stories in the summer of 2006. In my article last July, drawing on my analysis of his story in my book, I wrote:

[Gul] was captured in Khost and accused of taking part in a bomb plot and being part of a Taliban assassination team. During his long years in Guantánamo, he has stated that he fought with US forces in Tora Bora, and described one occasion when “the Americans were sleeping and we were guarding them.” He added, “If I were their enemy, I would have killed them all.” He was captured at a checkpoint, where, he said, “there were some people that I had a dispute with,” and he added that they “told the American soldiers a lie,” and he was then arrested.

Last September, another cleared prisoner, Adnan Latif, [died in Guantánamo](#), allegedly by committing suicide. President Obama needs to act immediately, so that other cleared

prisoners, like Khiali Gul, do not die.

The President needs to understand that the hunger strike is a result of despair, and cannot be seen in the narrow context of the need to restore order in the prison, and, as commander in chief, he needs to rein in the guard force.

Most of all, though, he needs to release those like Khiali Gul who were told, at least three years and three months ago, in January 2010, when President Obama's inter-agency task force issued its report recommending prisoners for transfer, indefinite detention or trials, "On January 22 2009, the President of the United States ordered a new review of the status of each detainee in Guantánamo. As a result of that review you have been cleared for transfer out of Guantánamo ... The US Government intends to transfer you as soon as possible ..."

Act now, President Obama, or these tragic and unacceptable deaths will be on your conscience.