

The 14 Missing Guantánamo files

By Andy Worthington

In the [classified US military files](#) recently released by WikiLeaks, and identified as Detainee Assessment Briefs (DABs), files relating to 765 of the 779 prisoners held at the prison since it opened on January 11, 2002 have been released. The other 14 files are missing, and this article addresses who these prisoners are and why their files are missing, and also, where possible, tells their stories. As of May 18, this list includes an Afghan prisoner, Inayatullah, who "died of an apparent suicide" at the prison, [according to the US military](#).

Two suspicious omissions: Abdullah Tabarak and Abdurahman Khadr

Of the 14 missing stories, just two are overtly suspicious. The first of these is the file for **Abdullah Tabarak Ahmad** (ISN 56), a Moroccan who, according to a [Washington Post](#) article in January 2003, "was one of [Osama] bin Laden's long-time bodyguards," and who, in order to help bin Laden to escape from the showdown with US forces in Afghanistan's Tora Bora mountains in December 2001, "took possession of the al-Qaeda leader's satellite phone on the assumption that US intelligence agencies were monitoring it to get a fix on their position." Whether or not there is any truth to this story is unknown, as the *Post's* source was a number of "senior Moroccan officials," who have visited Guantánamo, and had interviewed Tabarak. One official said, "He agreed to be captured or die. That's the level of his fanaticism for bin Laden. It wasn't a lot of time, but it was enough." Moroccan officials also stated that Tabarak, who was 43 years old at the time, "had become the 'emir,' or camp leader," at Guantánamo.

One sign of Tabarak's supposed significance is that, when representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross visited Guantánamo in October 2003, he was one of four prisoners [they were not allowed to visit](#). However, the problem with this is not that they were refused access to him, but that he was no longer present at Guantánamo. Although it was [reported in August 2004](#) that he had been released from Guantánamo at that time with four other Moroccans, it actually transpired that he had been released 13 months earlier, on July 1, 2003.

The reason for this is unknown, although in January 2006, in another article in the [Washington Post](#), Tabarak's attorney, Abdelfattah Zahrach, "said his client's importance as an al-Qaeda figure ha[d] been exaggerated, although he acknowledged that Tabarak knew bin Laden and worked for one of his companies." Zahrach stated,

"He was in bin Laden's environment, but he didn't play an operational role. Do you think that if he was really the bodyguard of bin Laden that the Americans would have let him come back to Morocco?" In response to this question, others in Rabat who were "familiar with Tabarak's case" told the *Post* that "Moroccan officials had pressed the US military for many months to hand over Tabarak, arguing that they would have a better chance of persuading him to reveal secrets about al-Qaeda."

The truth may never be known, but Tabarak's missing file suggests that there were some secrets that were regarded as off-limits to general readers of the Guantánamo DABs in the US

intelligence circles with access to them — focused, presumably, on the 13 months between his real date of his release, and his stated date of release.

The second suspicious missing file is that of **Abdurahman Khadr** (ISN 990), listed as Abdul Khadr. A Canadian, and the brother of Omar Khadr (ISN 766), he was persuaded to work as a spy, as I explained in my book *TheGuantánamo Files*:

Abdurahman was captured by Afghans in Kabul in November 2001, when he was 20 years old, and was then handed over to the Americans. Describing himself as the "black sheep" of the family, who saw no value in the radical beliefs of the rest of his family, Abdurahman agreed to work as a spy for the CIA in Kabul, and then in Guantánamo, but was told that, to protect his cover, he would have to be treated like all the other prisoners. He said that his imprisonment at Bagram — where he was stripped, photographed naked and subjected to an anal probe — was the start of "the longest and most painful ordeal of his life," and that he "had no idea what he was getting into."

After ten days at Bagram, he was flown to Guantánamo, where, he said, he arrived "a broken man," and was then kept in isolation for a month before being moved to a cell near other prisoners. The plan, as he described it, was that "they could put me next to anyone that was stubborn and that wouldn't talk and I would talk him into it. Well, it's not that easy — lots of people won't talk to anyone because everybody in Cuba is scared of the person next to him. I couldn't do a lot for them." Unable to cope with his situation, he spent the rest of his time in Guantánamo in a "luxurious" private cell, and was then sent to Bosnia, where his mission was to infiltrate radical mosques and gather information on al-Qaeda's activities.

When the CIA wanted to send him to Iraq, however, he decided that he couldn't take the pressure any more, and after resigning from the agency he returned to Canada, where his most salient comments concerned the prisoners in Guantánamo. He said that he told the CIA that the vast majority of the prisoners were innocent, and that it was "a huge mistake for the US military to offer large cash rewards for the capture of al-Qaeda suspects when they first arrived in Afghanistan."

The US "enemy combatant": Yasser Hamdi

One other missing file relates to **Yasser Hamdi** or Yaser Hamdi (ISN 009), identified as Himdy Yasser in the files, who was one of around 80 survivors of [a massacre in the Qala-i-Janghi fort](#) in Mazar-e-Sharif in November 2001. This came about after several hundred prisoners had surrendered, as part of the fall of the city of Kunduz, apparently on the basis that they would be allowed to return home after doing so. However, after being transported to the fort, some of the men started an uprising, because of their betrayal, or because they feared that they were about to be killed, which was then suppressed savagely. Hamdi and the other survivors hid in the basement for a week, where they were bombed and, finally, flooded.

Hamdi was initially regarded as a Saudi, even though he had told a journalist on his emergence from the basement that he was born in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. When it finally dawned on the US authorities that they were holding an American citizen at Guantánamo, Hamdi, who retained his US citizenship, although he had moved to Saudi Arabia as a child, was immediately moved to the US mainland (on April 5, 2002), where he was [one of only three US citizens or residents held as "enemy combatants"](#) — along with [Jose Padilla](#) and [Ali al-Marri](#) —

and subjected to profound isolation, sleep deprivation and sensory deprivation (in other words, torture), until he was repatriated to Saudi Arabia in September 2004 — and stripped of his citizenship — after he won a landmark case in the US Supreme Court (*Hamdi v. Rumsfeld*, in which the Court rejected the government's attempts to detain him indefinitely without trial).

The late arrivals — in 2007 and 2008

Three other missing files relate to three of the last six prisoners brought to Guantánamo, between March 2007 and March 2008, two of whom are, according to the US authorities, regarded as "high-value detainees.". I am unsure why these files are missing, as files are available for the three other prisoners who arrived at Guantánamo during this period.

The first of these three (and the first of the two missing "high-value detainees") is **Nashwan Abd Al-Razzaq Abd Al-Baqi**, more commonly known as Abd Al-Hadi Al-Iraqi (ISN 10026), who is referred to repeatedly in the Detainee Assessment Briefs, and the third to arrive (and the other "high-value detainee") is **Muhammad Rahim** (ISN 10029), an Afghan.

This is how they were described in the United Nations' "Joint Study on Global Practices in Relation to Secret Detention in the Context of Counter-Terrorism," a detailed report issued in February 2010 ([PDF](#), or see [here](#)):

On 27 April 2007, the Department of Defense [announced](#) that another high-value detainee, Abd al-Hadi al-Iraqi, described as "a high-level member of Al-Qaida", had been transferred to Guantánamo. On the same day, Bryan Whitman, a Pentagon spokesman, [stated](#) that the detainee had been transferred to Defense Department custody that week from the CIA although he "would not say where or when al-Iraqi was captured or by whom". However, a United States intelligence official stated that al-Iraqi "had been captured late last year in an operation that involved many people in more than one country". Another high-value detainee, Muhammad Rahim, an Afghan described as a close associate of Osama bin Laden, was transferred to Guantánamo on 14 March 2008. In [a press release](#), the Department of Defense stated that, "prior to his arrival at Guantánamo Bay, he was held in CIA custody". According to [reports](#) in Pakistani newspapers, he was captured in Lahore in August 2007.

The Government of the United States provided no further details about where the above-mentioned men had been held before their transfer to Guantánamo; however, although it is probable that al-Iraqi was held in another country, in a prison to which the CIA had access (it was [reported in March 2009](#) that he "was captured by a foreign security service in 2006" and then handed over to the CIA), the Department of Defense itself made it clear that the CIA had been holding Muhammad Rahim, indicating that some sort of CIA "black site" was still operating.

The second to arrive (who is not regarded as a "high-value detainee"), is **Inayatullah** (ISN 10028), another Afghan, whose arrival at Guantánamo was announced on September 12, 2007. As I explained in [an article at the time](#):

Captured, according to the DoD's press release, "as a result of ongoing DoD operations in the struggle against violent extremists in Afghanistan," the DoD claimed that Inayatullah had "admitted that he was the al-Qaeda Emir of Zahedan, Iran, and planned and directed al-Qaeda terrorist operations," adding that he "collaborated with numerous al-Qaeda senior leaders, to

include Abu Ubaydah al-Masri and Azzam, executing their instructions and personally supporting global terrorist efforts.” (Al-Masri and Azzam were not identified in the DoD’s press release, but the [former](#) is an Egyptian-born al-Qaeda commander in Afghanistan’s Kunar province, and the latter is probably the American Adam Gadahn, known as [Azzam the American](#), who has produced al-Qaeda propaganda with Ayman al-Zawahiri).

On May 18, 2011, it was reported that Inayatullah had “died of an apparent suicide,” according to [a news release issued by US Southern Command](#). The news release also stated, “While conducting routine checks, the guards found the detainee unresponsive and not breathing. The guards immediately initiated CPR and also summoned medical personnel to the scene. After extensive lifesaving measures had been exhausted, the detainee was pronounced dead by a physician.”

As it transpired, the death could have been avoided, had the authorities been concerned to act on information that, according to the dead man’s attorney, was readily available to them. Paul Rashkind, a federal defender in Miami, [explained](#) that his client, whose real name was Hajji Nassim, “had never been known as Inayatullah anywhere but in Guantánamo, had never had a role in al-Qaeda and ran a cellphone shop in Iran near the Afghan border.” He also explained that he “suffered significant psychosis, a paralyzing psychosis beginning many years ago, long before he got to Gitmo,” and that he had previously attempted to commit suicide twice. Rashkind [told the Associated Press](#) that that he was “not permitted to provide details” about either of his client’s two previous suicide attempts, “except to say both were serious,” although he did explicitly state, “He was close to death the first time.”

The eight others, released between 2003 and 2005

And finally, eight of the missing files seem to refer to generally Insignificant prisoners:

The first, **Badshah Wali** (ISN 638), an Afghan released in March 2003, is known about because he is the brother of Niaz Wali (ISN 640), also released in March 2003. As I explained in *The Guantánamo Files*, “Two brothers from Khost — 39-year old Niaz Wali, a cobbler, and 24-year old Badshah Wali, a taxi driver — were ‘targeted for arrest by local people, who were their enemies from another Pashtun tribe.’ On their release in March 2003, they were ‘too scared to talk about their experiences.’” The quotes are from an article, “A Tough Homecoming,” published in the Institute for War and Peace Reporting’s “Afghan Recovery Report,” shortly after their release. In the Detainee Assessment Briefs released by WikiLeaks, it was revealed for the first time that [Niaz Wali \(Neyaz Walijan\)](#) was seized during “a routine search” of his home because “local security forces” “discovered a large, thick hard cover book.” When “questioned about the nature of the book,” Niaz Wali “was unaware of its existence.” On the basis of this book, he was taken into US custody, and when his brother, Badshah Wali (Patcha Walijan) “freely visited” him at his place of detention “to inquire about the book,” he was “told to mind his own business.”

“Shortly thereafter,” he too was seized.

Haji Mohammed Wazir (ISN 996), a 60-year old Afghan, was released in March 2004 with 22 other Afghans. A farmer from Helmand province, he spent a year in Guantánamo and was held for two and half years in total. [Speaking briefly to reporters](#) on his release, he said, “I’m a poor and innocent man. I was in my home, unaware of Taliban and al-Qaeda, when I was caught. If

I'm a Taliban or al-Qaeda I want to be punished. If I'm not, then they should compensate me. The two-and-a-half years that I have spent in pain and soreness — who is going to pay?"

Mirwais Hasan (ISN 998) is an Afghan, [apparently born in 1980](#), who was released in March 2004, but nothing else is known about him.

Reda Fadel El-Waleeli (ISN 663), identified by the US as Fael Roda Al-Waleeli, is an Egyptian, [apparently born in 1966](#). The first Egyptian transferred from Guantánamo to Egypt, he arrived in Cairo on July 1, 2003, and subsequently disappeared. As I explained in [an article in April this year](#):

In October 2009, Martin Scheinin, the UN Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism, [complained](#) that, after a visit to Egypt in April 2009, he “regrets that the Government of Egypt did not reply to his questions on the fate of ... El-Waleeli,” although I was later told that UN representatives finally succeeded in tracking him down, and that he was a broken figure, and very obviously a threat to nobody, who explained that, after his return from Guantánamo, he had been held and tortured in a secret prison in Egypt for three and a half years.

Ayman Mohammad Silman Al-Amrani (ISN 169) is a Jordanian, [apparently born in 1978](#), who was released in November 2003, but nothing else is known about him.

Hammad Ali Amno Gadallah (ISN 705), from Sudan, is the only one of these eight released after September 2004. He was freed in July 2005, and, like all the prisoners released after September 2004, was subjected to a Combatant Status Review Tribunal, whose results were released by the Pentagon in 2006. He was one of five prisoners working for the Revival of Islamic Heritage Society (RIHS), a Kuwait-based NGO, with branches around the world, who were seized in 2002 after the Pakistani and Afghan branches of RIHS were blacklisted by the US government. This is how I described his story in *The Guantánamo Files*:

32-year old Hamad Gadallah (released in July 2005) told the most complete story of the organization's activities, and obviously managed to impress upon the Americans that not everyone who worked for the charity was siphoning off money for al-Qaeda. Arrested at his home on 27 May 2002, by two Americans and representatives of Pakistani intelligence and the police, he explained that he had been working for the Central Bank in Sudan, when his brother, who worked for a bank in Bangladesh, told him that the RIHS in Peshawar had a vacancy for an accountant. He took leave from his job to investigate the organization in January 2001, and, after seeing that they were “all good people, with high standards, [who] love their work, and ... perform their work faithfully,” and that there were “no problems with the accountancy programme,” he handed in his notice at the bank and began working for the RIHS in March.

Refuting allegations about the organization's inclusion in a US guide to terrorist organizations, he said, “I say that not every organization or person that is within that guide can be accused of being a terrorist. That requires a lot of evidence and proof ... I'm sure that the year that I was working for the RIHS in 2001, it had nothing to do with any terrorist acts.” He added that the organization had an income of around two and a half million dollars in 2001, which came from mosques in Kuwait, and described it as a “huge organization” with one branch in Pakistan. He also explained the significance of his role and, crucially, how there were no underhand financial transactions during his time there:

Q: If your organization were transferring money to another organization, you would be aware of it?

A: That never happened.

Q: But if it had, you would know that?

A: Yes I would. Because I record everything that comes in and everything that goes out.

Sadee Eideov (ISN 665) is a Tajik, [apparently born in 1953](#), who was released in March 2004, but nothing else is known about him.

Shirinov Ghafar Homarovich (ISN 732), also identified as Abdughaffor Shirinov, is one of three Tajiks seized in a raid on an improvised dorm in the library of Karachi University, where he was working, and where he allowed two of his compatriots to stay. Files exist for the other two — [Muhibullo Umarov \(Moyuballah Homaro\)](#) and [Mazharuddin](#) — and all three were released in April 2004. This was how I explained their story in *The Guantánamo Files* (via an article in [Mother Jones](#)), and the files for Umarov and Mazharuddin reinforce this explanation of how they were seized by mistake:

In 2006, the journalist McKenzie Funk met Umarov by chance while reporting from Tajikistan, when a farmer in the remote Obihingou valley told him, "There's a man in the valley who has been to America. Really. He was in a prison. They made a mistake." After tracking Umarov down to his tiny, mud-walled home, Funk heard how, during the civil war, when he was 14 years old, his father took him and his two younger brothers to Pakistan and installed them in madrassas for the duration of the war.

Six years later, he returned to his home village, diploma in hand, and began helping the family with their harvest of apples, potatoes and walnuts, "but then America bombed Afghanistan and the whole world went crazy." Sent back to Pakistan to raise money to bring his brothers home, he found odd jobs in the bazaar in Peshawar and on 13 May 2002, in search of a better job, set off for Karachi, where his friend Abdughaffor Shirinov, who was working at the library, had a place for him to stay. Mazharuddin was also staying there, and at night the three men hung their T-shirts on the bookcases and slept on thin carpets on the floor.

Six days after his arrival, in the wake of Pakistan's first suicide bombing, Pakistani intelligence agents raided the library, using the men's T-shirts to tie them up and blindfold their eyes, and took them away. Held for ten days by the Pakistanis, Umarov was moved to secret prison — in what appeared to be a luggage factory — that was run by Americans, where he was questioned about al-Qaeda and was locked them up for ten days in a concrete cubicle that was only a metre long and half a metre wide, and was "insufferably hot." "All my thoughts were about how my life was going to end," he told the journalist. He was then returned to his friends in the Pakistani jail, and the following day the three men were transported to Kandahar.