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Gitmo jailers use force-feeding to punish detainees, lawyers argue

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Lawyers for the detainee, Syrian national Abu Wa'el Dhiab, said during Monday's hearing in DC that personnel at the infamous US-run prison facility have needlessly stripped their client of his underwear and socks when administering the procedure, with one attorney going as far as to quote a former Gitmo commander who said such policies "*incentivized*" compliant behavior.

Dhiab's counsel wants US District Court Judge Gladys Kessler to grant an injunction that will compel Gitmo officials to stop forcefully removing detainees from their cells in order to pump hunger-striking prisoners full of nutrients in lieu of letting them starve to death. Dhiab, who has been held at the facility since 2002 and was cleared for release in 2009, has protested his continued confinement by refusing meals for roughly seven years, Spencer Ackerman reported for [The Guardian](#).

"Mr. [Dhiab] does not want to die," the [New York Times](#) quoted Eric Lewis, a lawyer for the detainee, as saying during Monday's hearing "He wants to be treated like a human being."

Participating in a hunger strike, Lewis added, is "*a cry of humanity from a person who feels he has no choice left.*" As [RT reported](#) previously, more than 160 Gitmo detainees are believed to have participated in a wave of hunger strikes waged by prisoners last year in protest of their ongoing detention and the conditions they're subjected to while being jailed indefinitely.

Last Friday, Judge Kessler ruled that US attorneys must [release video footage](#) of the force-feeding procedures. When Dhiab's trial resumed on Monday, the detainee's attorneys called on

two witnesses who raised questions about policies at Gitmo.

Sondra Crosby, a medical professor from Boston University who examined Dhiab on behalf of his legal team earlier this year, testified on Monday that the detainee is likely being made to endure painful and humiliating treatment as a means of ensuring future compliance.

*"It looks like medical care is being withheld because of disciplinary status and that should never happen,"* she told the court, according to The Guardian.

Dan Froomkin, a journalist for [The Intercept](#), wrote that Crosby described video footage played during Monday's hearing of a force-feeding procedure as being *"disturbing."*

Later, Froomkin said Crosby raised questions about the Gitmo guards' tendency to forcefully restrain Dhiab when removing him from his cell or taking him to be force-fed. According to medical records presented by Dhiab's attorneys during Monday's hearing, guards have removed his socks and boxer shorts, allegedly for disciplinary reasons, and previously rescinded the detainee's access to his wheelchair.

*"I can't think of any reason why a physician would write an order to discontinue socks or boxer shorts,"* the [Washington Post](#) quoted Crosby as saying. *"It seems punitive on the surface."*

*"That's completely inappropriate and cruel, to take a wheelchair away from someone who is not able to walk,"* Crosby said, according to the Intercept.

Another witness called by Dhiab's attorneys on Monday, retired Army brigadier general Stephen Xenakis, told the court that he *"wouldn't recommend any restraints"* are used by jailers on the detainee, and said he was too physically weak to pose any threat, according to Ackerman.

The hearing is expected to continue through Wednesday.

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