

UK to investigate Guantánamo torture claim

By Megan Murphy

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Police are to investigate whether British agents were complicit in the **alleged torture** of former Guantánamo Bay detainee Binyam Mohamed.

Baroness Scotland, the Attorney General, announced on Thursday that she would ask the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police Force to probe allegations of “possible criminal wrongdoing” in relation to Mr Mohamed, who was released from the US prison camp last month following a lengthy legal fight.

He claims that he was repeatedly tortured after being arrested in Pakistan in 2002 and flown to detention centres in Morocco and Afghanistan as part of the US government’s programme of “**extraordinary rendition**” before being sent to Guantánamo.

The Met inquiry will focus on his allegations that British security officials fed information about his case to his captors for use in their interrogations.

An MI5 agent who questioned Mr Mohamed in Morocco, known only as “Witness B”, has denied threatening or putting any pressure on him.

The Attorney General, who first began weighing whether to involve the police in October, said she had given the matter “very careful consideration” before referring the investigation to the police.

She said: “Any decision on whether any person should be charged with a criminal offence can only be taken following the police investigation on the basis of an independent assessment of the evidence and the public interest, in accordance with the Code for Crown Prosecutors.”

Mr Mohamed, who was born in Ethiopia but lived in the UK before his arrest in Pakistan, was held in Guantánamo for nearly five years. He has never been charged or tried with any crime.

Human rights groups, which have long pushed for a full judicial inquiry into Mr Mohamed’s treatment, gave a cautious backing to news of the investigation.

“While many will see the Attorney General’s announcement as coming better late than never, the five-month delay in reporting such a serious suspected offence to the police is far from an ideal example of respect for the law,” said Shami Chakrabarti, director of Liberty.

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