

First-ever Trial to Assess Guantanamo Force-Feeding

By [Reprive](#)

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An unprecedented trial to assess the legality of force-feeding methods used at Guantanamo Bay will begin today, Monday Oct 6, at 10am (EST) in courtroom 26A of the District Court, Washington DC.

The trial, in the case of *Dhiab v. Obama*, will be open to the public after the US Government's request to have it held in secret was [denied by District Court Judge Gladys Kessler](#). Today's hearing comes in the wake of Judge Kessler's ruling on Friday that the US must release [several hours of video footage](#) showing cleared Syrian detainee Abu Wa'el Dhiab, who is represented by international human rights NGO Reprive, being force-fed and manhandled to the force-feeding chair.

In the first trial of its kind, Mr Dhiab, who has been cleared for release since 2009, is challenging the legality of the force-feeding practices used against hunger strikers at Guantánamo. These practices include movement of compliant prisoners to force-feeding by the 'Forcible Cell Extraction Team', a squad of soldiers in riot gear, and the use of a painful multi-point restraint chair.

Three expert witness doctors are due to testify in open court—two of them after examining Mr. Dhiab at Guantánamo – and are expected to describe the daily procedure as both punitive and abusive.

Two of the doctors due to testify have previously conducted an independent medical examination of Guantanamo's last remaining British resident, Shaker Aamer, who has been cleared for release since 2007. Despite the British government's position being that Mr Aamer should be returned to his wife and children in London he remains detained at the US prison.

Cori Crider, an attorney at Reprive who will be representing Mr Dhiab in court, said: The government has tried, at every possible opportunity, to deny our client his day in court to challenge the abusive and punitive way in which he is force-fed. Thankfully the principles of open justice have prevailed. We look forward to shining a light on the awful tactics being used to punish Guantanamo detainees who are peacefully protesting in objection to their indefinite detention without charge or trial."

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