



TRIAL OF ANWAR RASLAN

Higher Regional Court – Koblenz, Germany

Trial Monitoring Report 29

Hearing Dates: March 10 & 11, 2021

CAUTION: Some testimony includes descriptions of torture.

Summaries/Highlights:¹

Trial Day 63 – March 10, 2021

After the verdict in the trial of Eyad Al-Gharib was announced at the end of February, the trial of Anwar Raslan continued. The court heard the testimony of P28, a 55-year-old man who was a state employee at a laboratory for medical tests in Syria. He explained how he was detained at a checkpoint in his hometown of Harasta in 2012 for being on a wanted list. P28 was transferred to Al-Khatib Branch where he was held in the “Death Cell” with more than a hundred other detainees. He described the cell as being dark and airless, like a grave.

Trial Day 64 – March 11, 2021

The witness was P29 whose personal information was not disclosed. He described how checkpoint personnel asserted that a defect in his identification card was linked to a Sheikh who instructed people to damage their IDs in opposition to the Syrian government. On the way to Al-Khatib Branch, security officials stopped at a random location where they ordered P29 and other detainees off the bus. They then threw cigarette butts at the detainees backs and beat them. P29 described being sexually harassed by officials who fondled his hair and pushed the forepart of a rifle’s barrel up his anus.

Trial Day 63 – March 10, 2021

The proceedings began at 9:30AM. There were five spectators and two individuals from the media present.

Plaintiff Counsel Stephan Kuhn appeared for Bahns. One of the court interpreters did not attend for health reasons and was replaced by Al-Gharib’s former interpreter.

Testimony of P28

P28 [name redacted], was born on January 01, 1966. He was accompanied by his attorney, Manuel Reiger. Instructions were read and he was informed about his rights as a witness.

Questioning by Presiding Judge Kerber

Presiding Judge Kerber asked P28 if he wanted to share his address. P28 declined.

Kerber asked P28 about his job. P28 said that he used to work in a laboratory for medical tests. Currently, he is not working. He volunteered as a driver with the German Red Cross for two years.

¹ Throughout this report, [information located in brackets are notes from our trial monitor] and “information placed in quotes are statements made by the witness, judges or counsel.” Note that this report does not purport to be a transcript of the trial; it is merely an unofficial summary of the proceedings. The names of witnesses have been redacted.

Kerber asked P28 if he is related to the accused by blood or marriage. P28 said no.

Kerber asked P28 why he was in conflict with the regime and how he was detained. P28 said that he used to work at [information redacted] as a lab technician who performed medical tests. One day, he and his wife were driving home from work in their car. There were many checkpoints scattered around his town, Harasta حرستا, including at the entrances. There was—and still is—a state of security disturbance in Syria. One of the checkpoints that P28 normally travelled through always asked to see identification cards. P28 normally showed his work association card (he was a state employee). That day, however, one of the officials took P28's card to the commander of the checkpoint. P28 was surprised when the official came back and ordered him to get out of his car. They went together to the commander who told P28 that [he was wanted]. P28 asked for the reason why he was wanted. The commander did not know why, but P28's name was indeed on the wanted list. The commander found this strange and said that this could be an issue of similar names. He returned P28's identification card and let him go. P28 told the security personnel that they could visit the [police hospital where P28 worked - it was essentially a detention center from which people were transferred to the security branches] if there was a security issue [or to clear up any confusion].

P28 was surprised when the officer then instructed the personnel to tell P28's wife to leave (without the car), handcuff P28 behind his back and pull his shirt over his face, then go to the police hospital. P28 and other detainees were put on a bus that was used to transfer detainees and criminals. He remained handcuffed with his head covered. Someone approached P28, lifted the shirt off P28's face, and asked P28 his name. He then asked if P28 knew him. P28 thought the question was strange and said that he did not know the person. The man said, "I am the one whom you should know." When P28 asked why, the man replied, "you will know at the Branch." P28 and the others were taken to Al-Khatib Branch.

In the outside square, they were lined up facing a wall and remained handcuffed. The detainees heard one of the guards asking, "why are you troubling us, sir? Why don't we kill them and finish this?" Eventually, the detainees entered the Branch. The reception was bad. Abu Ghadab ordered P28 to take off his clothes then squat. He took P28's personal belongings and put him in the "Death Cell." P28 said he felt like he was still living in it now. It was like a grave—dark with 130-140 people crammed inside and no light or windows. The cell's width was 3 – 3.5m and its length was 5 – 6m. P28 stood on one leg for six hours, then alternated. There was also a toilet. There was a hatch at the bottom of the cell door that was 30x50cm. Air and dim light from the corridor entered through it. Ventilation happened through an air-suction device. The detainees felt like they were suffocating. The guards often punished the detainees by shutting the hatch on the door. When that happened, the detainees could not breathe. The cell's ceiling was so damp that it accumulated water droplets. Lice infested the cell too. The medical conditions were bad; everyone in the cell was sick. Most people had fevers and/or skin conditions. P28 was in the cell for a week and was interrogated twice. He was beaten during both interrogations. He still suffers from the damage caused by having his ear beat. He has tinnitus and hears noises in his head. He cannot sleep. Sometimes, he has to take anti-depressant pills. [P28 stopped talking and there was a moment of silence].

Kerber asked if P28 needed a break. P28 said yes and asked for water.

[15-minute-break]

Questioning by Judge Wiedner

Judge Wiedner returned to the topic of when P28 was detained at the checkpoint. He asked P28 what day that happened. P28 said it happened on May 19, 2012 at noon.

Wiedner recalled that P28 spoke about checkpoint facilities during the German police questioning (when they were established and how many there were in Harasta حراستا). Wiedner asked if P28 remembered speaking about this. P28 explained that the checkpoints were established around the end of 2011 and the beginning of 2012. There were many checkpoints in Harasta. Almost every street had one, including the street on which he lived. Checkpoints had tanks and machine-guns, so people could not fight back. The checkpoint personnel occupied places without asking for permission and nobody could object. The checkpoint near his house was formerly a shop that was looted. At the police station, there was a sniper (this was in 2012 after P28's detention). He killed people in the streets. P28 witnessed a young man being killed. [P28 and other people] could not evacuate the man who was shot because of the sniper. [P28 did not explain if the man was killed by the sniper.] The sniper was placed in that location because people demonstrated against the checkpoints. Eventually, the checkpoints remained scattered around the town's entrances, and the ones inside the town were removed.

Wiedner recalled P28's statement during police questioning that there were approximately 200 checkpoints in Harasta. P28 said that, at a certain point, the checkpoints segmented the town. He might have exaggerated the actual number of checkpoints, but they really were on every street. You could not walk 300 meters without having to stop at one. Eventually, the checkpoints were removed after protests subsided. But the checkpoints at the town's entrance remained.

Wiedner asked when the number of checkpoints increased in relation to the demonstrations. P28 recalled that the number of checkpoints increased in 2012, but he did not remember the month. The number increased while he was detained, so maybe in March or April [2012].

Wiedner recalled P28's statement during police questioning that the checkpoints were only on main streets at the beginning of the demonstrations, but were then placed everywhere. Wiedner assumed that more checkpoints were established after the demonstrations started. P28 said that he had a problem with dates. At some point, there were no checkpoints inside the town—only along its perimeter. However, P28 did not know for sure. It had been 10 years since then.

Wiedner asked if the number of checkpoints increased in 2012. P28 said that when the checkpoints increased, they were added around the same time, not gradually. One day, the Presidential Guard and the Fourth Division entered Harasta. There were at least ten soldiers on every street. The whole army was there from 6:00AM to 12:00PM. They were allegedly looking for armed people.

Wiedner asked what happened and if people were detained. P28 said people were detained throughout the country on a daily basis. When the demonstrations started, the security forces detained anyone in their way.

Wiedner said that P28 mentioned an incident in which someone died during a demonstration. P28 explained that there was a demonstration in As-Sabeel [a neighbourhood in Harasta]. The security forces surrounded the demonstrators. Four people were killed. One of the victims was a young man between 15-20-years-old. He died instantly from a shot to the heart. P28 tried to carry him away, but was forced to leave him because the security forces surrounded [the demonstrators]. The [security forces] went door-to-door and searched for [demonstrators] in people's houses.

Wiedner recalled P28's statement during police questioning that this incident occurred in 2011. P28 did not remember the date, but the demonstrations happened in 2011 and the beginning of 2012. Checkpoints increased and people began to arm themselves [this sentence was not interpreted].

Wiedner asked whether detentions at the checkpoints were targeted or indiscriminate. P28 said that the detentions were indiscriminate at the time when he was detained. Anyone in the street was detained. When the security forces heard about a demonstration, they came and detained everybody in their way. It did not make any difference whether or not someone was actually involved in the demonstration. It was merely a retaliatory operation.

Wiedner said that P28 mentioned something during police questioning that bribes were paid. P28 said that he had a 70-year-old cousin whose son was around 40-years-old. Both the father and son were detained at a checkpoint. A bribe was demanded for their release. [Their family members] did not pay the bribe and the men were killed in a horrible way.

Judge Kerber asked if P28 knew which branch was responsible for detaining people. P28 said that the checkpoints were [operated by different branches]. He did not know to whom the checkpoint belonged. All security forces were involved, even the army, but especially the Fourth Division. There were checkpoints where the personnel wore military uniforms and others where they did not.

Wiedner asked P28 when he was released. P28 said that he was released in July 2012 in Kafar Souseh كافر سوسة in the evening.

Wiedner asked P28 how he knew that he was detained at Al-Khatib Branch. P28 said that people knew more information inside the prison than outside the prison. They received news from the outside before the people outside got it (he did not know why).

Wiedner asked if P28 meant that other detainees told him about Al-Khatib Branch. P28 said that, at the time he was detained, the detainees knew that the branch responsible for security in Harasta was Al-Khatib.

Wiedner quoted from the police questioning transcript: "P28 lived in Harasta and worked in Damascus, so he was familiar with Damascus. P28 knew the bus routes. Other detainees told P28 that they were at Al-Khatib." Wiedner asked P28 if that was correct. P28 confirmed and said that Harasta is not far from Damascus, around 9km away. He studied at the Health Institute which is 400 – 500m away from Al-Khatib Branch. He went back and forth for two years. He also worked as a taxi driver in Damascus and knows his way around the city with closed eyes. He anticipated that he would go to Al-Khatib Branch [when he was in the bus].

Wiedner asked for how long P28 was detained at Al-Khatib Branch. P28 said that he was detained for one month.

Wiedner asked what happened afterward. P28 said that he was sent to another place, which he thought was Najha نجها, but was not sure. He was there for around a week. The other detainees there said that it was Najha. He was interrogated once during that week. He was beaten and lost consciousness. After one week, he was returned to Al-Khatib. After one week at Al-Khatib, he was taken out of the "Death Cell" and was put in another cell that was relatively better.

Wiedner asked about the conditions in the other cell. P28 said that the cell was crowded, especially when new [detainees] came. Sometimes [the guards] brought 20 or 30 [detainees] at once. The health conditions were bad.

Wiedner asked if P28 was transferred to Kafar Souseh toward the end of his detention. P28 confirmed. After he was returned to Al-Khatib from Najha, he was interrogated again, then transferred to Kafar Souseh. During the interrogation, he was beaten and the interrogator demanded that P28 sign [two or three white] blank papers. He was blindfolded during the interrogation. A prison guard stood behind him while P28 sat on his knees with his head down and his hands cuffed behind his back. P28 received blows from the person behind him and the interrogator asked questions. A person came into the room and talked with the interrogator. [The interrogator] told that person: “[the personnel] are bringing people who did not do anything [wrong].” After that, the interrogator [was annoyed] and asked why they brought people who did not do anything [wrong].

Wiedner asked if that happened at Kafar Souseh or Al-Khatib. P28 said Al-Khatib.

Wiedner asked if that was when P28 signed the papers. P28 said yes. He told [the interrogator], “I did not do anything and want to end this tragedy. If you want to kill me, then kill me. I did nothing [wrong].”

Kerber asked if there was a third person in the room. P28 thought that a third person, who was a friend of the interrogator, came in for a moment.

Kerber asked if P28 identified a certain dialect being spoken. P28 said that there is a problem in Syria regarding dialects: everyone who joins the army or the security services speaks a coastal dialect [associated with Alawites]. Therefore, detainees cannot tell where authorities are really from. It is as if speaking [the coastal dialect] made people more powerful within the regime.

Wiedner asked if P28 ever saw the interrogator. P28 said that he saw the interrogator when the interrogation ended. P28 told the interrogator to kill him or release him. The interrogator replied that he would not kill P28 and told him to sign the blank papers. At that moment, the interrogator took the blindfold off P28’s eyes [P28 saw the interrogator], then told P28 to leave.

Wiedner asked P28 to describe the interrogator. P28 said that he was in his 40s or 50s. His hair was white. He was not tall and had tan skin. He wore a suit of a similar color [P28 pointed to his own suit, which was grey].

Wiedner asked P28 whether he could identify the person who was sitting to his right [Raslan] as the interrogator. P28 said no, he did not think [Raslan was the interrogator].

Wiedner asked how P28 was released and if it was through a court. P28 said that, after his interrogation at Al-Khatib Branch, the prison warden came [to the cell] a day or two later. He usually came when people needed to be transferred. P28 saw him twice and he wore a mask to shield him from the detainees’ scent. He read some names, including P28’s name. P28 was transferred to Kafar Souseh. When he was leaving Al-Khatib Branch, P28’s hands were tightly tied using zip ties that almost cut his wrists. [One of the personnel] gave P28 his belongings (not his belt), then P28 was transferred to Kafar Souseh. P28 said that he stayed at Al-Khatib and Najha for approximately a month and a week, then he stayed at Kafar Souseh for more than ten days (perhaps 12 – 14 days). Kafar Souseh was worse than Al-Khatib. There were 54 people in a cell that was called “The Double” المزدوجة. The cell was named “The Double” because it only fit two people. There was a window but it was closed. He was interrogated three or four days after his arrival.

Wiedner was interested in whether P28 was released after a trial. P28 said that he was released from Kafar Souseh without a trial.

Wiedner asked about food and water during detention. P28 said that the food situation was indescribably bad. No one in the courtroom today would offer that food to an animal. For example, the soup was served in a plastic washtub without bread or spoons. The other food was also bad.

Wiedner asked if the food was sufficient. P28 said that the food was so bad that he lost 30 kg. He entered prison weighing 90 kg and was 60 kg when he was released. He was also insulted while he ate. Insults were constant and detainees were beaten. The medical condition was bad. He recalled how he got sick for 15 days and had a high fever. There was no doctor. His fellow detainees had to take P28's shirt, dampen it with toilet water, and put it on him to reduce his temperature. This was repeated multiple times a day. He had lice, scabies, and patches on the skin, some of which were the size of [the bottom of a cup]. There was no medicine. At that time, [news] spread that there was a death in the "Death Cell." P28 thought that [the personnel] were afraid [because of the alleged death], so they brought a doctor. That was the only time [a doctor came] and he was only there for around an hour. Among the detainees in the external [cell], there was a person who had foot and chest injuries. He was thrown [by personnel] near the toilet and was surrounded by toilet water which touched his wounds. The man did not receive medical care. When the doctor came, he wrapped the man's inflamed leg with a bandage. Other detainees had diabetes, hypertension, lice, and more. The prison guard would say "who wants to donate money to cover the cost of medicine for [other detainees]?"

Wiedner asked if P28 received medical care or medicine. P28 said no.

Wiedner asked if P28 saw anyone die. P28 said that he did not see anyone die, but he heard about people who died. [News was spreading amongst] the detainees that the doctor came because someone died. P28 thought that anyone who lived in such conditions would probably die if they were not released. When people were released, they were reborn.

Wiedner asked about the water situation. P28 said that the detainees all drank from a jug of water. Like the food, the water was insufficient.

Wiedner recalled P28's statement during police questioning that the detainees were given a jug of water that was inadequate and that P28 washed himself with toilet water. P28 said yes. He bathed with toilet water because he had no other choice. [The detainees] were not able to wear their clothes due to breathing [difficulties].

Kerber asked P28 to clarify what he meant by "toilet water" and whether he meant water from the toilet itself. P28 said that there was a hose that was used to clean the toilet. They used it to bathe. The toilet sometimes overflowed. [The detainees] lined up to go to the toilet. P28 had to wait around four hours for his turn.

Wiedner recalled P28's statement during police questioning that the air in the cell was bad and the detainees complained about it. P28 said that, in the "Death Cell", whenever they closed the ventilation hatch, [the detainees] suffocated within a few minutes, so they screamed. The prison guard would then beat them. [The guard] brought a cable with him. One time, the cable's ends were exposed and iron wires protruded. [The guard] beat detainees with it and caused many wounds.

Wiedner recalled that P28 mentioned a situation in which detainees complained [that they were suffocating] and the guard told them that he wanted them dead. P28 said yes, they complained to [the guard about the lack of air] and he told them, "we want you to die."



Wiedner asked if the detainees suffered from collective punishment. P28 said yes, whenever the guard heard a noise or something in the cell. No one could look at him and everybody had to make space for him to stand. There was no space to begin with, but they were forced to stack [their bodies] on top of each other. Then [the guard] beat people randomly.

Wiedner asked how often the detainees slept. P28 said that they were unable to sleep. [The guard] came at any moment. He had fun and his hobby was killing. He took people close to death, but did not kill them. [The guards] were literally criminals.

Wiedner asked how the detainees slept. P28 said that they slept from exhaustion on top of each other. There was not enough space, except for on a few occasions when people were released [and there was more room]. In the external cell, detainees suffered as they heard the sounds of other detainees being tortured. P28 heard sounds that resembled an electric shock. It was horrible.

Kerber reminded P28 to ask for a break whenever he wanted one.

Wiedner asked if there was enough space to sleep. P28 said that it was too difficult to sleep. If one wanted to sleep, then he had to do it while sitting. The room was 3x6m with approximately 120 people inside. When P28 wanted to go to the toilet, he stepped over people. There was a lot of psychological pressure. Every moment, one anticipated being killed. P28 wondered how he could have slept [under such difficult conditions].

Wiedner recalled P28's statement during police questioning about an Iraqi. P28 said that the Iraqi had a notable decline in psychological functioning. He was badly beaten. His body had black, blue, and dark red bruises. His hand was swollen. His skin pores oozed blood instead of sweat. He constantly screamed. The prison guard heard him banging on the [cell] door while he repeated that he did not do anything wrong and asked to be released. The prison guard came, took him out of the cell, then returned him [later]. [The Iraqi] was beaten so badly that he defecated and had bloody urine. He was unable to control [his bodily functions].

Wiedner asked whether other detainees talked about the various methods of torture used. P28 said that they talked about electric shocks, beating, and Shabh [hung by hands with toes barely touching the floor for many hours].

Wiedner asked P28 to which torturing methods he was subjected. P28 said that he was not tortured. There was one person who went to interrogation and had to be carried back to the cell. His situation was bad.

Wiedner recalled P28's comment that he was beaten during the first interrogation. P28 said that beating was normal, but his major problem was the psychological condition. He did nothing wrong. When he asked to clear up his security situation [when he was at the checkpoint], he never expected to be detained and badly treated, especially because he was a state employee. Unfortunately, he was humiliated and beaten like everyone else.

Wiedner asked P28 who asked questions and who beat him during the interrogation. P28 said that he was blindfolded. He could only see for less than a minute at the end of the interrogation.

Wiedner recalled P28's statement during police questioning that "[he] sat on his knees, the interrogator was in front of [him], and [he] was beaten on his feet, body and legs." Wiedner asked if this was Falaqa. P28 said that there are many types of Falaqa, but essentially: one lays down and raises his legs.

Wiedner asked if what he just described happened to P28. P28 said that it happened, but it was not called Falaqa. He was just randomly beaten.

Wiedner said that P28 described how he was beaten from behind, then his ear was hit. P28 said yes, most of the beating was from behind.

Wiedner asked if the interrogator and the person beating P28 communicated with each other or if there were instructions or orders to beat P28. P28 said that, most likely, the interrogator and guard agreed in advance that the guard would hit P28 if the interrogator did not like P28's answer.

Wiedner recalled that P28 said in police questioning that the individuals referred to each other as "Sidi" and that one of them said "do this." Wiedner asked if that was correct. P28 said yes.

Wiedner asked if P28's family knew where he was. P28 said that nobody knew where he was. In general, people assumed that detainees from Harasta were taken to the Inner Branch (but they never knew for certain).

Wiedner asked P28 if the interrogations took place in the basement or somewhere else. P28 said that the "Death Cell" was underground and it did not have windows. The external chamber [cell] had a window at the top of the wall and [the detainees] were able to see the sky. However, it was closed and the detainees were not allowed to open it.

Wiedner asked if the interrogation room was on the same floor [as P28's cell] or if P28 had to go up or down stairs. P28 did not remember.

Wiedner asked if P28 heard screams during the interrogation. P28 said that it was normal to hear [the screams]. He thought that the interrogation rooms were close to each other, but he was not sure if the screams came from another room or another corridor. The prison was a place for torture, not for interrogation. In the external chamber [cell], the detainees could hear sounds of people being beaten and screams.

Wiedner said that P28 mentioned how he suffers from tinnitus. Wiedner asked him to elaborate. P28 said that his body is abnormal now. He has diabetes, high blood-pressure, backpain, and had a cardiac catheterization. He takes seven medications. He is not able to escape the psychological pressure. He remembers the detainees. No one did anything wrong. One of the detainees was a young man who was going to get married soon. He was detained at a checkpoint and is still not released. Accusations were made against everyone: from arms to terrorism to demonstrating. The young man was accused of being armed. He was one of five people detained in a group, none of whom have been released. P28 knew them personally. Three of the five were brothers from the same father. Even if they were not executed, then it is impossible for them to still be alive.

Wiedner recalled P28's statement during police questioning that 90% of the detainees did nothing wrong. P28 said yes. Everyone with whom he spoke in the [cell] said that they were not armed. [The security forces] brought people from the streets. But at that time, it was impossible for anyone who was armed to get caught by the security forces.

Wiedner asked P28 if the security forces knew that the detainees did nothing wrong. P28 said that when one hears phrases like "why would you bring them here if they did nothing?", then what do you expect? Indeed, people were brought from the streets and the detainees witnessed that.

Wiedner asked P28 if he heard detainees complain that they did nothing wrong. P28 confirmed.

Questioning by Prosecutor Klinge

Prosecutor Klinge asked P28 what other methods of torture he mentioned during police questioning [Klinge referred to the term “plastic”]. P28 said that he was hit with a plastic cable.

Klinge was referring to something else that P28 mentioned during police questioning. More specifically “melted plastic”.² P28 said that he saw a person on whom “they” dripped melted plastic on his head and back. The plastic drops seared the man’s shirt and flesh. Another person was burned with spray. “They” ignited the spray and burned him. P28 saw that in the external chamber [cell].

Klinge mentioned that P28 said during police questioning that there were suicide attempts. P28 said that someone attempted suicide. Due to psychological pressure, people lost their minds. Someone put his hands behind his back and rammed himself against the wall. The prison guard came and took the man for 30 minutes to an hour, then brought him back. The detainee was doing this movement all day [P28 demonstrated a jerking movement]. He was unable to talk. P28 thought that it was due to electric shock, but he was not sure. The detainee’s situation was bad.

Klinge mentioned sexual abuse. P28 said that he did not see sexual abuse, but he heard about it. P28 did not know whether it happened at this Branch or at another one. Detainees heard about electric shock being used on male genitals.

Klinge asked if it was correct that P28 did not know if sexual assault happened at Al-Khatib Branch. P28 confirmed.

Klinge asked if it was correct that there were female detainees. P28 said that in the “Death Cell,” he heard women’s voices. There was a women’s cell nearby. When P28 left interrogation, a female shouted her name to P28 and asked that he tell her relatives about her if he was released. P28 did not remember her name. There was also a young man who sat near the air hatch and could look through it. He told the detainees that the guards took naked women out of a cell.

Klinge asked what P28 meant by “naked.” P28 was naked due to the bad ventilation. All the detainees were naked. They sat naked on the tile floor. In the external chamber [cell], there were blankets, but no one used them because they were dirty and lice-infested.

Klinge asked again what P28 meant by “naked.” P28 said that “we” are a conservative Muslim society. In a sense, a girl who typically wears a hijab was considered “naked” if she was unallowed to cover her hair [during detention]. If a girl only wore her underwear during detention, then she was “totally naked” which usually meant that she was sexually assaulted.

Klinge recalled that P28 said during police questioning that the guards took women upstairs for their amusement. P28 said yes, the young man who sat next to the door told that to the [detainees].

Klinge asked if P28 heard women scream. P28 said that he heard one woman shout when he went to interrogation. She told P28 about her existence.

Klinge asked P28 if he heard about sexual abuse in Al-Khatib Branch. P28 said that he heard about women who became pregnant in prison, but not necessarily in Al-Khatib Branch. Sexual abuse was normal in the security branches.

² Note from the Trial Monitor: The parties often use certain “key words” to trigger the witnesses’ recollection regarding their previous statements with the police.

Klinge asked if P28 personally heard about women being tortured or sexually abused in Al-Khatib Branch. P28 said that everybody who enters Al-Khatib or any other security branch is tortured. When someone goes to a security branch, he or she is headed to death.

Klinge asked if P28 said that women were tortured in Al-Khatib Branch and that he heard their screams. P28 said that the detainees could hear [women being tortured], but he did not see it.

Klinge asked if P28 personally heard women scream or tortured. P28 said that he did not hear screaming. A woman tried to tell him that she was there. There were women in Al-Khatib Branch.

Defence Counsel Böcker said that the defence did not have questions.

The plaintiffs' representatives did not have questions.

Judge Kerber dismissed the witness.

P28 asked Kerber if he could make a final statement. Kerber permitted the statement. P28 said that he was more psychologically than physically harmed. Physical harm was nothing compared to the psychological condition that he now faces. Until this day, he still lives in cell number five. Even P28's family lives this agony. His child was 5-years-old when P28 was detained and, because of how much the child was scared by P28's detention, he cannot sleep alone or in a closed room. The child is now 17-years-old and suffers because P28 suffered. All of P28's family suffers. P28 still has the images [of detainees] in his head which keeps him awake [haunts him at night], in addition to the tinnitus. Sometimes, he loses self-control. "I am not me."

Kerber thanked P28 and told him that he was heard.

The proceedings were adjourned at 11:55AM.

The next trial will be March 11, 2021 at 9:30 AM.

Trial Day 64 – March 11, 2021

The proceedings began at 9:30AM. There were four spectators and two individuals from the media present.

Testimony of P29

The witness's attorney asked Presiding Judge Kerber to allow her client to wear his face mask and to abstain from giving personal information that might endanger his life and liberty.

Kerber asked about the reason for the witness's endangerment. The attorney said that her client was afraid that his family would be threatened, which happened to a former witness.

Kerber allowed the witness to keep his mask on and to not give personal information. Kerber said that she previously received a message from the attorney regarding this matter.

Instructions were read to P29 and he was informed of his rights as a witness.

Questioning by Presiding Judge Kerber

Kerber asked P29 if he is related to the accused by blood or marriage. P29 said no.

Kerber asked P29 how he came into conflict with the regime and how he was detained. P29 said that he participated in demonstrations in Sha'lan شعلان, Al-Qaboun القابون, Douma دوما, and other places. But the reasons for his detention were not based on [the demonstrations]. On May 12, 2012, P29 was on his way home from Al-Jisr Al-Abyad الجسر الأبيض. There was a checkpoint at Sabe' Bahrat سبع بحرات. He was stopped at the checkpoint because his identification card was damaged. The issue with P29's ID was just a manufacturing defect near the part of the card that listed his father's name. Although P29 had whiskey with him and [checkpoint personnel were familiar with him], they accused him of being an Islamic extremist because of a Sheikh named Al-Ar'our العرعور who asked people to break their IDs in defiance of the regime. Additionally, P29 is from Homs حمص which opposes the regime. P29 tried to explain the situation, but the checkpoint personnel called another patrol which then took P29 to the Branch. P29 was not tortured to confess. He mentioned this each time he spoke with police. But the conditions during detention were difficult, beginning when he was transferred by car (a Mitsubishi) from the checkpoint to the Branch. The first slap (before he got into the car) was bad and raised his tolerance threshold. He tried to concentrate on where he was being taken. He assumed that the [location] was close to the Council of Ministers and that he was going to Al-Khatib. The car stopped at a random location where there were other detainees. P29 was thrown to the ground, then low-level officials began to kick and sexually harass him. At that time, P29 had longer hair [a note from the Trial Monitor: P29's hair was shoulder-length at the trial]. The officials fondled P29's hair and chest. They put a rifle at P29's bottom as they jumped around and repeated pro-Bashar slogans. The detainees were then put on a microbus. The route was long. At each checkpoint, the door [of the microbus] opened and [the officials] said something along the lines of "we brought Ara'eer عراعر [a derogatory reference to supporters of Ar'our] to you" and had a "welcome party."

Kerber asked if [the welcome party] happened on the bus or at the Branch. P29 clarified that the first party [was on the bus], but the main party was at the Branch.

Böcker did not understand the term that was mentioned and asked the interpreter for clarification. The interpreter said that "Ar'our" is the name of the Sheikh and "Ara'eer" is little "Ar'ours."

P29 said that the detainees arrived at Al-Khatib Branch. He was not tortured. His hands were bound by a zip tie behind his back. Perhaps he stayed like this [he did not mention where] for one or two hours. After that, he was taken upstairs to a low-ranking officer who said that P29 would stay [at the Branch] for a while. [The officer] asked for P29's Facebook and email passwords. P29 tried to provide the correct password with one typo and then was taken downstairs to detention. [The detainees] asked P29 to take off his shoes because [the cell] was where they ate and prayed. During the first few days, there were 100 people (P29 did not remember precisely). It was a long room with a small room on its right-side and a toilet. It was crowded and there was no place for people to sleep. The newcomers either had no place to sleep or alternated spots with old detainees. Ultimately, P29 could not sit for five days. The psychological pressure in the Branch led to group affiliations. People gathered according to city: Damascus, Homs, Hama, Harasta, etc. There was constant fear of the prison guard. The guard was referred to as "Memati ميماتي" after a person in a Turkish series. After four or five days, P29 began to imagine that he was in a reality show. He wanted to sleep. He started to scream and bang on the iron door. The men tried to stop P29, but they could not. A guard came with whips. The detainees were afraid because conflicts were not allowed in the cell. The guard opened the door and spoke with a coastal dialect ("Alawite" dialect). P29 challenged the guard by also speaking the coastal dialect. He said "if you think that you can speak the dialect, then I can speak it better." The detainees were terrified. This was the first time that the guard entered the [cell]. The guard told someone to "go stand and let this donkey sleep." The toilet area was small. There was an Arab-style toilet that P29

slept next to. It became P29's sacred place to sleep and he was not willing to forfeit it. P29 said that he was not directly tortured and was briefly interrogated after the time when he started screaming.

Kerber asked when P29 was detained. P29 said that he tried to forget the date, but his Facebook indicates that he was detained from May 12, 2012 until May 26, 2012.

Kerber asked if P29 knew why he was not tortured. P29 said that [prior to being detained], he asked his friends not to create a Facebook page that advocated for his release because he was not a hero [a Facebook page was commonly made by family and friends of detained individuals to advocate for their release]. Many of P29's friends who were not pro-opposition reached out to contacts to get P29 released. They secured a meeting for P29's mother with a person connected to Hafez Makhlof مخلوف حافظ. P29's mother begged the person and, eventually, P29 was released on bail after he signed many blank papers and paid money.

Kerber asked if [P29's release] occurred because of his contact's connection to Hafez Makhlof. P29 said yes.

Kerber asked if a ransom was paid. P29 said no, a ransom was not paid.

Questioning by Judge Wiedner

Judge Wiedner recalled that P29 said during the French police hearing that he was active in the early demonstrations. He asked about P29's observations after he was released. P29 said that there was violence from the first moment [of the uprising in Syria]. He remembered that he witnessed a direct shooting for the first time after a demonstration in Douma دوما. He was naive because he was a city boy. He laid on the ground [and pretended to be dead] and people pulled him away. He lost his voice until the demonstration on behalf of the 13 martyrs in Al-Qaboun.

Wiedner asked when [the demonstration in Al-Qaboun] happened. P29 did not remember the exact date, but it occurred between 2011 and 2012.

Wiedner asked if P29 was there when [the 13 people] were killed. P29 said no. The event was a funeral [demonstration] for the 13 people.

Wiedner recalled that P29 said in police questioning that the demonstration was on July 15, 2011 and asked P29 if that was correct. P29 said correct, he participated in the funeral [demonstration].

Wiedner asked if P29 witnessed violence during the demonstrations. P29 recalled many demonstrations in Al-Midan الميدان where he heard shooting from a distance and saw injured people [note from the Trial Monitor: "and saw injured people" was not interpreted]. [Violence occurred at demonstrations even before the uprisings, like at] the demonstration against Al-Qaddafi القذافي in front of the [Libyan] embassy. P29 wondered why he was summoned to testify in court since he did not witness much: 13 days in detentions was nothing compared to others.

Wiedner said that P29 was detained from a checkpoint and was taken to a location where he was abused. P29 was then taken to Al-Khatib and was eventually released from Al-Jisr Al-Abyad. Wiedner then asked P29 if it was possible that P29 was detained in the same place from where he was released. P29 said that the first time he was released was on May 26th. He was taken by car to Al-Jisr Al-Abyad and was released. The following day, he went back to Al-Khatib Branch for his papers.

Wiedner asked if P29 was sure that it was Al-Jisr Al-Abyad. P29 said that he was 80% sure that it was Al-Jisr Al-Abyad. At first, he thought that it was the Council of Ministers, but it was not.

Wiedner asked if P29 recalled a case with the key word “cigarettes.” P29 said of course. [When he was at the random location before he arrived to Al Khatib], the officials threw cigarette butts at the detainees backs to see if the butts would stick to them and burn their skin.

Wiedner asked if that happened to P29 as well. P29 said of course.

Wiedner asked how P29 knew that he was at Al-Khatib Branch. P29 learned that he was in Al-Khatib Branch after he was released. When [the detainees] were in the Branch, many people did not know where they were or what time it was. Some people suspected that they were at Al-Khatib. When P29 returned the following day (after he was released from Al-Jisr Al-Abyad), he saw the door he went through. At that moment, P29 was certain that he was held at Al-Khatib. Based on that, when they [French or German police] asked him to draw a sketch of the surrounding space, he could draw it.

Wiedner asked if P29 remembered anything about the Branch and where it was. P29 said that it was practically in the basement. There was an iron door to the right and a set of stairs, then another set of stairs. There was a place where they had to put their personal belongings and after that was the room of the officer who interrogated him.

Wiedner asked where the interrogation took place. P29 said that it was either on the ground floor or the first floor.

Wiedner asked if P29 remembered the interrogation room. P29 said that the image is completely absent [from his mind]. He remembered what he told the German police (but not the French): there were green curtains, pictures of Hafez and Bashar Al-Assad (like all government departments), and a brown desk with gold decorations on it.

Wiedner recalled that P29 said in police questioning that he was detained in the basement and that the interrogation took place on the first floor. [P29 consulted his attorney]. P29 still thought the same: either the ground floor or the first floor.

Wiedner asked P29 if he was alone in the interrogation. P29 said that he was alone and initially blindfolded. The interrogator was kind and did not call him bad names. [The interrogator] asked P29 to take off the blindfold, then he asked a few questions that were unrelated to P29’s detention. At that time, P29 felt that [the interrogator] had [already] received a call from the parties who were trying to release him.

Wiedner asked if the interrogator received a call during the interrogation. P29 said no, he felt like the interrogator received the call prior to that.

Wiedner asked why P29 had that feeling. P29 felt that way because of the interrogator’s way of speaking and because P29 compared the appearance of people after they returned from interrogations versus P29’s appearance after he returned. Additionally, he got cardiac medicine after two hours, whereas others with much more serious conditions did not get medicine. P29 recalled an incident in which a person had a severe headache and was not given medicine. A sheikh put his hand on that person and read the Quran to him. The prison guard came inside the cell, beat them, and told them “this is how your headache goes away.”

Wiedner recalled that P29 said that he was treated better than others and the interrogator was nice. Wiedner asked about the subject discussed during the interrogation. P29 noted that the interrogator said that P29 was from a kind family, unlike other detainees. [P29 stopped speaking for a moment.] He apologized and said that he did not remember.

Wiedner said that P29 was shown photos during police questioning. P29 said correct.

Wiedner noted that P29 previously pointed to a person in a photo and indicated that the person might be the accused. Wiedner asked P29 how he identified the accused. Böcker objected to the question's phrasing.

Wiedner rephrased the question. He asked P29 if he recognized Raslan in one of the photos and if P29 saw Raslan in Syria. P29 said that he did not want to speak about a [specific] person. At the moment [when P29 was questioned by the police], Raslan was detained and his picture had spread across the internet. Therefore, P29 thought this would influence his answer. When P29 was released, there was a travel ban on him and whenever he wanted to travel abroad, he had to go to the officer who was responsible for him. One time, P29 had to go to another officer because the officer who was responsible for him defected. The original officer was from the Al-Bab الباب area, which conflicts with the location that was mentioned by the media [referring to Al-Houla, where Raslan comes from].

Kerber asked if P29 recognized Raslan as the officer who was responsible for him. P29 said no.

Kerber asked if P29 recognized Raslan as the officer who was connected to P29's release. P29 said that the officer who released him was an official who was connected to Hafez Makhoul.

Wiedner asked if P29 recognized Raslan as the officer who conducted the interrogation. P29 did not remember.

Wiedner said that he was asking because P29 said during police questioning that he recognized similarities between the person in the photo and the officer who interrogated him at Al-Khatib. P29 said correct, but that he questioned his own credibility. P29 asked Wiedner to put himself in P29's position in Syria while he was in front of an officer who could take away his life. [The interrogator] told P29 to remove his blindfold. P29 is not 100% sure, but there are similarities.

Wiedner asked if P29 heard screams and sounds of torture in the interrogation room. P29 said yes.

Wiedner asked from where the sounds came. P29 said that the area between the offices and the basement was not large. He recalled something that happened during the interrogation: [the interrogator] asked P29 "did they torture you?" which made P29 laugh [after the interrogation] because it was impossible not to hear screams and sounds of torture.

Wiedner asked if P29 actually laughed. P29 said no, he did not laugh.

Wiedner asked if the sounds came from the nearby basement. P29 said yes.

Wiedner asked how many times P29 was interrogated. P29 said once.

Wiedner asked whether P29 saw signs of torture on other detainees. P29 specifically remembered the torture of a person whose name P29 did not remember. He was the chief of the [cell]—a position appointed to one of the detainees. One of his tasks was to prevent the prisoners from waking up the guard at night. One time, the detainees woke up the guard. The guard took the chief, shaved off his hair and beard, then beat him. The detainees heard the chief's screams from their cell. The guard returned the chief to the cell and said, "now, I want to sleep." A [prison guard] used to come inside the cell and beat people.

Kerber asked whether P29 wanted a break. P29 said yes.

[10 minute-break]

Wiedner asked if it was correct that P29 was not abused during the interrogation. P29 said correct.

Wiedner asked if abuse happened on his way to the interrogation room. P29 said that there were some provocations.

Wiedner asked if P29 could describe the provocations. P29 said that he was pushed and insulted.

Wiedner recalled that P29 said in police questioning that “he was insulted on the way from the cell to the interrogation room and was sexually harassed by the prison guards who put their finger up P29’s anus. However, he was not tortured.”

Wiedner asked P29 to speak about the key word “collective punishment.” P29 recalled that he tried to evade torture [on the way to Al-Khatib] and blasphemed so he would not be accused of being an Islamist. The personnel’s reaction was strange. They got madder and beat him, saying that he was not allowed to blaspheme without an order to do so. One time, [the detainees] were ordered to get off the bus and lay on the gravel. They were then stepped on. P29 remembered that there was constant beating.

Wiedner said that P29 mentioned an incident during police questioning when a guard entered the cell. P29 said this incident was what he mentioned before the break. [The guard] entered the cell with his whip or other tools, then started beating and cursing until the detainees were pushed to the corners. P29 recalled the name of one prison guard, Memati [according to other witnesses named after a character in a Turkish TV series]. Another guard was named Abu Ghadab or Abu Al-Jamajim [father of skulls]. P29 apologized for not recalling many details and said that one forgets things inside the branch.

Wiedner said that it was not a problem and told P29 that he wanted to give him key words and P29 can talk about them if he recalls something. Wiedner then mentioned the key word “cables with open endings.” P29 did not remember the details, but the signs remained on his back. He sometimes had flashbacks, but not many now.

Wiedner mentioned the key word “electricity” and recalled that P29 said in police questioning that “the most brutal method used to torture detainees during interrogations was when water was put on their bodies then electricity was applied. One’s body jerked afterward and there were signs on his back. P29 saw this on someone who was with him in the cell and heard from others when he was released.” P29 asked when he said that.

Wiedner said P29 said this to the German police. P29 said that he did say that, but in a slightly different context. P29 heard in prison about people who were tortured with electricity, but he did not see that. When he was released, he met a close friend from the presidential palace and she was the one who told him about the electricity and water. P29 saw the injuries of people who were tortured with electricity, but they did not tell P29 themselves.

Wiedner asked if these people were in Al-Khatib. P29 said yes.

Wiedner asked about nutrition in the prison, namely the food and water. P29 said that the floor of the [cell] was [clean] for eating and praying. Pots of cooked food were served with bags of bread. The detainees opened the plastic bags to eat on them. As far as P29 remembered, the food was sufficient.

He thought that three meals were served every day. In the morning, “Hawader حواضر” were served (labneh [strained yogurt] and sometimes eggs).

Kerber asked P29 if he lost weight in prison. P29 said that he lost 8kg in 13 days.

Wiedner said that Al-Khatib was a 5-star branch compared to other branches. P29 confirmed.

Wiedner asked how P29 knew about conditions in other branches. P29 said that he had many friends who were detained at the Palestine Branch and Air Force Branch. Detainees at Al-Khatib had water inside their cells, ways to maintain their hygiene, and the place was relatively bigger than what his friend who was at the Palestine Branch told him. “We” used to hear about the conditions in the Air Force Branch. It is true that the detainees at Al-Khatib were collectively punished. But at the Air Force Branch, collective punishment happened every few hours. “We” were beaten for trivial reasons, however, [detainees in other branches] were beaten with or without a reason.

Wiedner asked why P29 thought that he was not abused during interrogation. P29 said that he did not experience abuse personally because his friends intervened.

Wiedner asked if P29 still has residual injuries due to his detention. P29 said that psychiatrists told him that he had no clinical problems [because of his detention]. P29 had a dental bridge that fell out during detention, but there was no link. P29 often thinks about the first welcome party, but those thoughts are philosophical, not psychological: how could people he didn’t know him beat him?

Wiedner asked P29 to confirm that the guard’s finger went inside his bottom. P29 confirmed.

Wiedner asked if the finger really went inside his anus. P29 said no, but the forepart of the rifle’s barrel went inside him during the welcome party while he wore underwear.

Wiedner asked if that happened before Al-Khatib in Al-Jisr Al-Abyad. P29 was not certain if it was Al-Jisr Al-Abyad, but it happened at the first location before Al-Khatib. What was humiliating was the fondling of his hair and chest. The whole situation did not make sense.

Wiedner asked if that also happened before Al-Khatib. P29 said yes. However, the fingering happened later (P29 apologized for the vulgar term).

Klinge asked if P29 was afraid after he was released. P29 said that he was scared every time [he left home] because his ID was still defected and he was from a pro-opposition area. When he went back to Al-Khatib [he was repeatedly summoned after his release and before he left Syria], he was afraid that he would have to sleep there.

Questioning by Defense Counsel Böcker

Defense Counsel Böcker asked how many times P29 was interrogated at Al-Khatib. P29 said that he was interrogated once at Al-Jisr Al-Abyad (by the low-ranking officer who asked for P29’s passwords), then a second time at Al-Khatib.

Böcker recalled that P29 said in police questioning that he was interrogated at least twice by the same interrogator. P29 did not remember if he was interrogated twice.

Böcker reiterated what P29 said and quoted from the police questioning transcript. P29 said that his statement was probably right, but now he does not remember anything except the instance when the interrogator asked him to take off the blindfold.

Böcker noted that P29 was confused between his client and Al-Gharib. P29 did not remember why he said that.

Böcker asked if P29 said that his client was from Deir ez-Zor. P29 explained that news circulated that Raslan was from Deir ez-Zor, but P29 noted that the defected officer was from Al-Bab, rural Aleppo.

Böcker recalled that P29 said during the German police hearing that "Raslan is from Deir ez-Zor" (full stop) and today P29 said otherwise. Böcker asked if P29 thinks that this affects what [was read from] the transcript. P29 said that, based on his understanding, it could affect his evaluation.

Böcker noted that P29 was asked if the interrogator was from Deir ez-Zor, then P29 apologized because he did not know. P29 said yes. He did not know why Deir ez-Zor was stuck in his mind.

Scharmer interjected that the witness did not say that today, and he asked Böcker to stop confusing the witness.

Böcker asked how P29 was sure that people were tortured during interrogations. P29 said that he was sure because he compared how people looked before and after their interrogations, versus how P29 looked. There was a 16 or 17-year-old boy who was arrived to the Branch before P29. The boy pretended to be tough, until P29 was released and the boy cried. P29 tried to remember his name because he was innocent. If P29 was tortured half as much as that child, then he would have blown himself up. There was something systematic [happening].

Böcker asked if P29 had any other explanation. P29 said that one saw how people went to Najha ^{نجها} and cried. One saw how people went to interrogations and were unable to stand on their feet when they returned. That was sufficient [to deduce that things were systematic].

Böcker asked P29 how often he was interrogated. P29 said that the first time was at Al-Jisr Al-Abyad and [the second time was] when he took off the blindfold.

Böcker asked if P29 was interrogated more than once at Al-Khatib. P29 did not remember.

Questioning by Plaintiff Counsels

Plaintiff Counsel Scharmer recalled that P29 said that he was detained at Al-Jisr Al-Abyad, then was abused at some location where there were personnel from Al-Khatib. Scharmer asked P29 how he concluded that the personnel were from Al-Khatib. P29 asked if Scharmer could repeat the question without the introduction.

Scharmer repeated the question. P29 said yes, he found out later the structure [of the intelligence services and how they work]. Personnel from military intelligence cannot detain someone and deliver him to another branch. P29 knew that this checkpoint belonged to General Intelligence.

Scharmer asked if P29 was detained at Division 40. P29 did not have the numbers of the branches memorized. During police questioning, P29 told the police "Al-Khatib" and they told him its number.

Scharmer refreshed P29's recollection by quoting the police questioning transcript: "P29's hands were cuffed behind his back. [The personnel] threw cigarettes at [the detainees]. Sometimes, the cigarettes stuck to the detainees' skin and burned it. After the second cigarette, P29 screamed. They told him that he screamed like women. One of them started fondling his chest. After that, someone inserted the forepart of a rifle into P29's anus." P29 said correct.

Scharmer recalled that P29 said that he was sleeping next to the Arab-style toilet and asked if others used the toilet. P29 said yes. It was impossible to fit one person in that spot. Nonetheless, a person shared that spot with him. That person died later in another branch.

Scharmer asked whether P29 heard about sexual abuse from other detainees. P29 said yes.

Scharmer asked if P29 could describe what he heard. P29 said there were people in Al-Khatib Branch (before he was there) who were overweight and were sexually harassed.

Prosecutor Klinge asked if P29 could describe the sexual harassment. P29 said, in general, there was fondling of chests, nipples, and ears. He added “there was also adhesion from behind” [Branch employees approaching a detainee from behind in a sexual manner].

Klinge asked P29 where that happened. P29 thought it happened at Al-Jisr Al-Abyad.

Klinge asked P29 how many people were harassed. P29 did not remember.

Klinge asked P29 about the minimum number of people harassed. P29 said that there were [at least] two people other than him.

Defense Counsel Böcker asked whether P29 witnessed this or was told about it. P29 said that he saw this when he stood in line near the Branch’s door. The person near him was fondled on his chest. P29 did not remember the people or the whole scene.

Böcker asked whether P29 saw the fondling or only heard about it. P29 saw it.

Presiding Judge Kerber asked whether P29 heard about sexual abuse from other detainees in Al-Khatib Branch. P29 did not remember. In his culture, he could not imagine that someone subjected to [sexual abuse] would speak about it.

Defense Counsel Fratzky asked P29 to explain how he knew about the locations Al-Jisr Al-Abyad and Al-Khatib and how certain he was about the locations. P29 said that, after he was released, it took him a long time to form a [map in his mind]. He was 70 – 80% certain of it. He went back to Al-Khatib and was 100% certain that he was there. He concluded that he was at Al-Jisr Al-Abyad after analysing the motion of the car.

Fratzky asked if P29 was 70 – 80% certain of his conclusion. P29 said that he was 100% certain of Al-Khatib. Regarding Al-Jisr Al-Abyad, he still had questions.

Defense Counsel Böcker said P29 mentioned P6’s name during the German police questioning. P29 thought that he asked the police not to include P6’s full name.

Böcker asked if P29 confused P6 to be a relative of Raslan instead of Al-Gharib. P29 clarified that the mix-up happened because of the news that circulated. The name was just mentioned to read a post.

Judge Wiedner said that P29 mentioned similarities between the photos shown to him during the German police hearing and his memory. P29 recalled saying that then, but he might not be able to remember well now.

Wiedner refreshed P29’s recollection by quoting from the police questioning transcript: “P29 does not know the person in Photo 1. The person in Photo 2 resembles the interrogator at Al-Khatib. P29 was not sure, but thought that they looked similar.” P29 confirmed.



Wiedner continued quoting: “P29 does not know the people in the rest of the photos. After P29 was released, he went back to Al-Khatib approximately three times. One of those times, he was told that the officer who was responsible for him defected and he was from Al-Bab.” P29 confirmed.

Wiedner asked P29 if he was told that he was going to be questioned about whether the name Anwar Raslan means anything to him. P29 confirmed.

Wiedner said that “P29 replied that [Raslan’s] pictures were on the internet, but P29 was not sure if Raslan was the interrogator at Al-Khatib. P29 was asked whether he saw Photo 2 on the internet or in the media. P29 said no, [his answers] were not linked to the internet, but rather to his memory of Al-Khatib. P29 remembered that there was a picture of Bashar Al-Assad.” P29 confirmed.

Defense Counsel Böcker said that P29 was questioned about Al-Khatib at the second police questioning in France. At that time, P29 did not remember the face of his interrogator. Böcker now asked if P29 was familiar with Raslan’s name before the hearing. P29 said that he would not have remembered anything about Raslan had it not been for the hearing.

Böcker asked if P29 remembered how many people were at the hearing. P29 said no.

Böcker said that the transcript indicates that there were three people. He asked P29 if there was an interpreter. P29 said that he remembers, but he did not want to say. [He paused and consulted with his attorney.] P29 asked Böcker if he meant the first or the second hearing.

Böcker said the second hearing. P29 said that he did not remember.

Böcker said that there were four people including: P29, two interrogators, and one interpreter. P29 said yes: a lady, a young man, and an interpreter.

Böcker asked if P29 described the interrogator as being slim and plain-clothed. P29 asked if Böcker was referring to the Syrian officer who conducted the interrogation.

Böcker said yes. P29 explained that he might have said that. He wished that he could identify the person, but he could not.

Böcker asked if the interrogator spoke with an Alawite accent. P29 said “Sir, I do not remember the first interrogation. I was standing on my feet for approximately five days and was semi-crazy.”

The witness was dismissed.

Plaintiff Counsel Scharmer noted that testimonies of witnesses [like P29 validate] the motion by him and Dr. Kroker pertaining to systematic sexual violence used against the Syrian people.

The proceedings were adjourned at 12:15PM.

The next trial will be March 17, 2021 at 9:30AM.