



Written by [Thomas R. Eddlem](#) on January 13, 2011

FBI Issues Death Threat in U.S. Citizen Interrogation

An FBI agent reportedly issued a death threat against a U.S. citizen traveling abroad, according to the January 13 *New York Times*. The American, 19-year-old Gulet Mohamed, also alleges beatings and sleep deprivation in his interrogations since his arrest by Kuwaiti authorities in late December.

After he was detained by Kuwaiti authorities, “Mr. Mohamed said the agents began yelling the name ‘Anwar al-Awlaki’ at him,” the *Times* [reported](#), “prompting Kuwaiti officials to intervene and request that the agents end the interrogation.” New Mexico-born Anwar al-Awlaki is an American citizen and Islamic cleric who has emigrated to Yemen and advocated jihad against America, and President Obama has reputedly put him on an [assassination list](#) of U.S. citizens for when he is found.



Making a death threat against a defenseless prisoner is a crime of felony torture under the U.S. criminal code, and the [jurisdiction](#) of the crime for federal agents is anywhere in the world. The U.S. Code, Title 18, Section 2340 [defines](#) felony torture as follows: “torture means an act committed by a person acting under the color of law specifically intended to inflict severe physical or mental pain or suffering (other than pain or suffering incidental to lawful sanctions) upon another person within his custody or physical control,” including “the threat of imminent death.”

The *New York Times* story [added](#) that after Gulet Mohamed’s arrest and while under FBI interrogation,

[H]e said ... he was severely beaten, deprived of sleep and questioned about his travels to Yemen and Somalia.... He said the agents never presented evidence that he made contacts with militants. “They wanted me to lie about myself, and pushed me to lie about things I had done,” he said.

Although President Obama [campaigned](#) as a candidate against the use of torture, little has apparently changed in this regard since the Bush administration.

The President’s assassination list of U.S. citizens has been public since the *Washington Post* [reported](#) it on January 27, 2010. While the *Washington Post* later corrected a few details of its original story, the existence of the assassination list was verified when John O. Brennan, White House senior adviser on counterterrorism, [told](#) the *Washington Times* June 24, 2010 that

To me, terrorists should not be able to hide behind their passports and their citizenship, and that includes U.S. citizens, whether they are overseas or whether they are here in the United States. What we need to do is to apply the appropriate tool and the appropriate response.

Brennan then [stressed](#):



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If an American person or citizen is in a Yemen or in a Pakistan or in Somalia or another place, and they are trying to carry out attacks against U.S. interests, they also will face the full brunt of a U.S. response. And it can take many forms.

But the difference is that Anwar al-Awlaki has not been accused of participating in actual attacks against American forces abroad. He has been accused of merely justifying and encouraging them with his words.

Thus, it's perhaps surprising that CIA Director Leon Panetta [told](#) ABC News' Jake Tapper back in June 2010,

Awlaki is a terrorist who has declared war on the United States. Everything he's doing now is to try to encourage others to attack this country[.] [T]here's a whole stream of intelligence that goes back to Awlaki and his continuous urging of others to attack this country in some way. You can track Awlaki to the Detroit bomber. We can track him to other attacks in this country that have been urged by Awlaki or that have been influenced by Awlaki. Awlaki is a terrorist and yes, he's a U.S. citizen, but he is first and foremost a terrorist and we're going to treat him like a terrorist. We don't have an assassination list, but I can tell you this. We have a terrorist list and he's on it.

Panetta's ludicrous statement that one person can "declare war" against a whole country (Can a single person really "declare war"?) is emblematic of the absurdity to which government officials will go to rationalize their attack on the Bill of Rights. While Panetta denied that the Obama administration has an "assassination list," it's more than clear that the Obama administration has one and that Panetta was just contesting which term is most descriptive of that list. U.S. policy is to kill terrorists.

When he was still a candidate for President, Obama (in an interview with the *Boston Globe*) [denied](#) that the President has the power under the Constitution to detain U.S. citizens without trial — and yet Gulet Mohamed remains detained without trial in Kuwait.

The torture and detention without trial of U.S. citizen Gulet Mohamed at the hands of the Obama administration comes at the same time that the President is [lecturing](#) in favor of "more civility in our public discourse" and against "discourse [that] has become so sharply polarized -- at a time when we are far too eager to lay the blame for all that ails the world at the feet of those who happen to think differently than we do -- it's important for us to pause for a moment and make sure that we're talking with each other in a way that heals, not in a way that wounds."

But no true patriot can be civil about the blatantly unconstitutional torture (which violates the [Eighth Amendment](#)) and detention without trial (which violates the [Fifth and Sixth Amendments](#)) of his fellow citizens at the hands of an executive who defines his powers outside the limits of the U.S. Constitution.

President Obama needs to be taught that only actions such as government torture wound, not words. In fact, only very uncivil words can lead to healing of the bodily wounds inflicted upon citizens and upon the U.S. Constitution.



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