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Sabah El Banna read this out to Serenase Symons at the meeting with the PCO, Tuesday 16th April 2008

From a mother of five children, with a disabled right hand.

Can you imagine how my life is? The feelings I have for my children in the absence of their father? Imagine my feelings for their poor, oppressed father who has been convicted of no crime.

Anyway, I shall tell you about my children and not bother you with my feelings. My children are always more important to me.

Amr – 2 years old

He always asks me about his father. One day he heard a boy at school talking about prisoners in Iraq and Guantanamo and that they do bad things to them and torture them.

Amr returned to the house, frightened, and asked me, 'Is that true what I heard?' I told him immediately that this was not true. I told him that his father had sent us letters and he is well.

Amr asked 'Why are there no telephones where Baba (Dad) is?' and 'Why can't we go to any country with Baba where we can be in peace?'

Mohammed – 7 years old

He always draws pictures of his father from his imagination. He draws his father playing with him in the park. His father is small and far away. He draws himself as very tall.

I asked him 'Why are you very tall?'

He says 'Because my father is very far away and I try and reach him – but I can't.'

Abdul Rahman – 5 years old

He always says 'Phone Baba and tell him I am coming home.'

Abdul Rahman stops watching cartoons, which are his favourite, so he can watch the news about his father. He believes that if he watches these cartoons his father will come home sooner.

He cries if he hears Amr asking that his father is in prison. He asks me if Amr is lying?

What answer do I give this child? The truth? Or do I lie to him?

Bedou – 4 years old

Her father left to the Gambre when Bedou was just 2 years old. She always prays that her father will come back safe.

Now she is 4 years old. When she fights with her brother and sister, she cries and says: 'I only want one person in the world, I only love Baba.'

Every time I see an aeroplane she asks 'Is that Baba's aeroplane?'

Mariam – 2 years old

Serenase Symons

 juegos

 mayo 10 2005

 GUANTANAMO BAY, CUBA
Poor Maryam — a week ago was her 2nd birthday. She does not even know the meaning of father. Her brothers have tried to show her photos of her father many times. They try to teach her the word "father" and what it means — she just cannot understand.

No mother or father would want this to happen to their children.

I want everyone to know that I always pray to God to give me the health, strength and patience, even if I use one hand — just for my children.

I always pray to God to keep my husband safe — to give him strength and patience until he returns to his children.

This is the last thing I wish to say — about his poor mother who cries all the time. She is an old and sickly woman. She has high blood pressure and heart problems. She has lost sight in one eye from so much crying. She says that her last wish in life is to see Jamil one last time — and hug him. After that, it does not matter if she dies.

Is it possible to give this sickly mother her last wish?

Is it possible to give these children happiness in their home?

I ask the humanity in all of you and I ask for the justice that we always talk about.

Do you have any answers for me? I am sorry I have taken up your time but I am always thinking about this.

The suffering began when I was 3 months pregnant with Maryam on 8th November 2003.

From the depths of my broken heart

I thank you very much