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Good morning,

I am Guled Hassan Duran. I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today.

I take this process seriously, and I believe that it is important for me to be here today and participate in the process. On the advice of my counsel, and in consideration of the fact that my habeas case is being actively litigated in federal court in Washington, I must respectfully decline to answer any questions during this hearing.

There are however a few thoughts I'd like to share with you. Please understand that I have been detained since 2004, under very difficult circumstances, including some serious medical problems. I am 47 years old and I have been held for nearly 20 years without charge or trial. I am not and even never have been designated for prosecution. I ask you each to put yourselves in my place. When you are in my position, and have had almost no contact with the outside world for a very long time, it can be very difficult to fully imagine how to move forward and improve your situation by yourself. At some point you have to put your faith and trust in others. I choose to trust my lawyers, and it is based on their advice that I will not answer any questions while we are waiting for Judge Walton to issue rulings in my habeas case.

I admit that I am also cautious and skeptical about this process today given what my experience has been. Wouldn't you feel the same way if you were in my place? But I choose to trust you and that you also take this process seriously, and that you will see that I should not continue to be here.

As you consider your decision and the nearly 20 year old information you have about me, please do not mistake my decision not to answer questions as a sign of defiance or a bad attitude toward the United States. It is not.

Please understand, too, I am not happy about what has happened to me or about being in Guantanamo. It is very frustrating and demoralizing being held for so long when you have no idea when you will be released, and sometimes it boils over. Wouldn't you feel the same way if you were held without charge for this long or without any indication that you would be free one day based on allegations from almost two decades ago?

The last year and a half have been particularly difficult because I have had limited contact with my family, and continue to be very worried about them given the pandemic—I am sure you can understand this—and I haven't been able to meet with my lawyers in person because of the pandemic. It has been very hard on me.

But the fact of the matter is that I do not have any ill-will toward the United States. I never have. But I'm here. And you're here. We are where we are right now. We cannot go back and change the past. But I am not the same person I was when I was arrested in 2004. That was a long, long time ago. 17 years ago. It was a different lifetime for me.

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All I want is just to move on with my life. I want to be reunited with my wife and my children. I have lost so much time with them, and it has been very difficult for everyone. Do you have any idea what it is like to lose a parent or a young child, as I have, while you are in prison with no idea when you will be released? You have no control over what matters most to you in life, you feel helpless. I don't want to lose the next 20 years, or however much time I have left in my life, to Guantanamo. I don't want to die here, inshallah.

All I can add is that I am willing to be transferred anywhere, under any circumstances, where I can live a quiet life and eventually be reunited with my family. I want to get a job and support them the way I have not been able to for a very long time. I hope your decision will allow me to have a future beyond Guantanamo.

I consent to this statement being made public.

Thank you.



July 15 2021

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