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Statement of Private Counsel James Connell
Regarding Mohammad Rahim

My name is James Connell, Private Counsel for Mohammad Rahim. I have been traveling to Guantanamo since 2008, and have spent well over 500 days on the island. I have held a TS//SCI clearance for fourteen years, and have worked primarily for the United States Department of Defense since 2011. Of course, I speak here only for myself and Rahim; nothing I say is the official position of the Department of Defense.

Rahim is one of only three remaining Guantanamo detainees who are neither charged in a military commission nor cleared for release. Having met many current and former Guantanamo detainees, I suggest that Rahim's position as uncleared detainee is an anomaly, probably a result of the circumstances which brought him here. As you know, Rahim was the last prisoner transferred out of the Rendition, Detention, and Interrogation Program to Guantanamo.

But Rahim is a poor candidate to be one of the last uncleared detainees. Rahim is not alleged to have been involved in 9/11 or any other attack on the United States or its allies. Rahim is not alleged to have personally committed any act of violence against any person.

In the four current military commission cases, the Office of the Chief Prosecutor has named nearly 100 co-conspirators in al Qaeda attacks; not a single case names Rahim as a co-conspirator, which casts significant doubt on the allegation that Rahim played any significant role in al Qaeda. The same factors which mean that Rahim will never be charged with a crime support a determination that he does not represent a threat to the United States.

From my long-time personal involvement with Guantanamo, and my personal experiences with Rahim, I can offer three observations.

First, there are many sources of frustration at Camp 5, and before it, Camp 7. Camp 7 was decrepit and plagued by many physical problems that would anger any person, such as sewage backup into the cells. Not long after the transfer of Rahim and others to Camp 5, Camp 7 was

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condemned such that no one is allowed to visit it even for documentation purposes. Camp 5 has had its own share of serious problems, including HVAC issues which led to both high heat and humidity and disruption of prison life during repairs. Particularly for aging detainees with increasing health problems like Rahim, such conditions can exacerbate sleep issues and worsen their health, causing great frustration. Despite these challenges, Rahim has not had any serious disciplinary issues for well over five years.

Second, I have personally visited Rahim's brother and respectfully suggest that concerns about him are misplaced. I visited his home, spoke to him for hours, and shared meals with him. He lives a humble and respectable life. But he also lives a life designed to give authorities no cause for concern. I did not observe anything that would weigh negatively against Rahim or his family, but rather the opposite. Rahim's brother is a person who can be relied upon to help Rahim live a productive life after release, assuming the United States eventually decides to release Rahim to a country with appropriate security and safety guarantees.

Third, and on a lighter note, it has been my privilege to eat food prepared by many of the men in Camp 7 and now Camp 5. I can tell you that Rahim is the best cook among a field of good cooks. Working with limited equipment and supplies, Rahim prepares a wonderful array of dishes drawing on a range of cuisines. His spinach curry is the best anywhere. After release, if Rahim has a food truck or restaurant, I can tell you that I would be first in line. With the benefit of contact with many Guantanamo detainees over the years, I am confident that the care and hospitality that Rahim puts into sharing his food with us, and even those he doesn't know well, reflects his sincere desire to build relationships without discrimination.



if cleared, Rahim will

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seek resettlement in a country that can offer both modern health care and appropriate guarantees of safety and security.

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**PERIODIC REVIEW BOARD SUBSEQUENT FULL REVIEW, 09 MAY 2023
MUHAMMAD RAHIM, ISN 10029
PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE STATEMENT**

Members of the Board, thank you for the opportunity to present this statement for Mohammad Rahim (ISN 10029).

For the past year Rahim has shown a complete commitment to the PRB process. He routinely meets with myself and his new Private Counsel, preparing for our meetings and presents us with fresh ideas and strategies on how to best present his case.

Outside of prepping for this hearing Rahim and I routinely discuss current events, politics, family events, and occasionally we exchange jokes as well as impart some wisdom on each other. While Rahim and I do not see eye to eye on everything he has shown a great deal of respect and understanding on the topics where we do not agree. I have also seen a change in attitude on how Rahim views the differences between the United States and Afghanistan.

During previous hearings I stated Rahim has the full support from members of his family [REDACTED] Despite not having the time to provide letters of support for this hearing the family has been in contact with Rahim's Private Counsel still fully supporting Rahim and can provide documentation on their willingness to assist Rahim.

Finally, I cannot stress enough how refreshing it is to see Rahim's involvement, interest and sincerity while preparing for this hearing. This is a much different Rahim than the one who appeared in his past hearings. I trust that you will see the difference that I have after today's discussions addressing all of your concerns.

Myself, Rahim and his Private Counsel are here to answer your questions.

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