

12 NOVEMBER 2015

## GUANTANAMO DETAINEE PROFILE

**Detainee ISN: YM-1457**

Detainee ISN	YM-1457
Detainee Name	Sharqawi Abdu Ali al-Hajj
Detainee Aliases	Riyadh [the facilitator], Haytham, Aziz
Nationality	Yemeni
Date of Birth	26 May 1974
Arrival at Guantanamo	September 2004

Sharqawi Abdu Ali al-Hajj (YM-1457) is a career jihadist who acted as a prominent financial and travel facilitator for al-Qa'ida members before and after the 9/11 attacks. He probably provided logistic or financial support for al-Qa'ida operations, although he may not have had foreknowledge of the plots. YM-1457 developed ties to senior al-Qa'ida leaders, such as Usama Bin Ladin and Khalid Shaykh Muhammad, and associated with al-Qa'ida plotters and operatives, including members of the USS Cole bombing and some of the 9/11 hijackers. However, he repeatedly has denied being an al-Qa'ida member, claiming instead that the group trusted him because of his facilitation support.

YM-1457's extremist activity began in Bosnia in 1995, where he was injured fighting Serbian forces. He tried to join other jihadist causes in Chechnya, East Africa, and Southeast Asia before returning to Yemen in 1999. From there, he facilitated the travel of fighters to Afghanistan, many of whom became Bin Ladin's bodyguards. In mid-2000, YM-1457 traveled to Afghanistan, where he received basic training at an al-Qa'ida camp, before relocating to Pakistan to help Arab fighters reach Afghanistan. Once Coalition operations began, he ran a guesthouse in Karachi that he used to help Arab fighters flee the region. During this period he also funneled Saudi donations to al-Qa'ida and dispersed money to group members and other Arab fighters.

During his detention at Guantanamo, YM-1457 has been somewhat compliant, although he has physically assaulted the guards when he perceived his grievances were not addressed. Until late 2004, he provided his interrogators with a wealth of information on his extremist activities and associations before his capture—cooperation he leveraged to improve his living situation. He has demonstrated leadership abilities, which he has used to influence other detainees and manipulate camp dynamics.

Most of YM-1457's comments on life after detention have centered on continuing to engage in jihad in defense of his religion. He remains steadfast in his support for extremist causes and groups—praising recent acts of terrorism—which indicates that he views terrorist attacks as a legitimate form of jihad. He probably views America as his enemy, given that he has expressed a desire to fight and kill Americans. YM-1457 has corresponded with former Guantanamo detainees suspected of reengaging in extremist activity.

There are no indications that YM-1457's family members in Ta'izz, Yemen, have engaged in extremist activities; however, they are affiliated with al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula members and other Guantanamo detainees. YM-1457 probably could leverage these family connections should he decide to reengage.