

PERIODIC REVIEW BOARD FULL HEARING, 28 FEB 2017
SHARQAWI ABDU ALI AL-HAJJ, ISN 1457
PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE OPENING STATEMENT

Members of the board, thank for allowing Mr. Sharqawi Adu Ali Al-Hajj to have a second chance at hearing his case. I am his Personal Representative. He made the decision to not attend his first board because he did not feel confident sitting before the board without a Private Counsel. At that time, he still feared that the Board was a legal proceeding versus an administrative board and therefore, he did not want to attend without having his lawyer present. But, since that time, he has attended every meeting with me and been very cordial. He is easy to get along with and is obviously a very intelligent person, who communicates well. He has worked well with both a female Personal Representative and Private Counsel.

Since Sharqawi has moved camps, he has worked to build his relationships with fellow detainees. During our conversations, he has indicated that since he has been here, he has learned to appreciate other people's cultures which he had not before. He is actively participating in classes to prepare for life after Guantanamo and he speaks English quite well. His Private Counsel has been in contact with his family to confirm that they will support him after his departure from GTMO. He is open to repatriation anywhere and feels he is capable of working in other cultures since he has learned to work with other detainees in GTMO.

I appreciate your consideration of his case today as he answers your questions so you can decide if he still poses a threat to the U.S.

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SHARQAWI ABDU ALI AL-HAJJ, ISN 1457
PRIVATE COUNSEL STATEMENT

Members of the Periodic Review Board:

Good morning. My name is Pardiss Kebriaei, and I am Private Counsel for Sharqawi Al Hajj.

Thank you for the opportunity for Mr. Al Hajj's subsequent full review. We are encouraged that the Periodic Review Board has been continuing its work. The board's purpose of determining whether continued detention is still necessary is vital for men like Mr. Al Hajj, who has been held in U.S. custody for over 15 years.

I am currently a Senior Attorney at the Center for Constitutional Rights, which has represented Guantanamo detainees since 2002, including dozens of men whom the United States, under the Bush and Obama administrations, has successfully repatriated or resettled. I have represented detainees for nearly ten years. I have represented Mr. Al Hajj since last year.

I'll make a few brief points about the past, present and future with respect to Mr. Al Hajj.

With respect to the past: In Mr. Al Hajj's habeas proceedings, the government's case-in-chief relied on statements Mr. Al Hajj made during several interrogations in Bagram and Guantanamo in 2004. To the extent the board is considering any of this information as part of this review, it should know that then-Chief Judge Royce Lamberth of the D.C. District Court struck all of these statements as unreliable; he found that they were tainted by prior physical and psychological coercion Mr. Al Hajj experienced in prisons [REDACTED] after his capture. Mr. Al Hajj is here to answer your questions about his present views and conduct, and his future intentions, but this point about the past bears noting.

With respect to the present: Mr. Al Hajj is 43 years old today. The impulses and views that led to his detention were by a young man in his 20s. The government's unclassified profile of Mr. Al Hajj states that he "most likely continues to view America as his enemy." That description is outdated. Mr. Al Hajj's detention has necessarily entailed interactions with Americans of different stripes over the years that have complicated and changed his views. Blanket statements no longer apply.

[REDACTED] A
medical expert opinion is included in Mr. Al Hajj's detainee submission. Far from having the desire or energy for any involvement in conflict, the hardship of the past 15 years makes him want to turn away.

Finally, with respect to the future: Mr. Al Hajj would accept resettlement in any safe country the government believes appropriate. His family stands ready and able to provide financial and

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moral support for his reintegration wherever that may be, as they have stated in the detainee submission. My organization, which has worked closely with envoys from the Defense and State Departments on detainee transfers in prior years, also stands ready to assist.

Thank you.