

PERIODIC REVIEW BOARD INITIAL HEARING, 01 SEP 2016
MOHAMMED AHMED RABBANI, ISN 1461
PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE OPENING STATEMENT

Good Morning ladies and gentlemen of the board, we are the Personal Representatives for Mr. Ahmed Rabbani (ISN 1461). Mr. Rabbani has been a willing participant in this process and has remained quite flexible to the changes in meetings and Board dates, as well as the changes in Personal Representatives and Private Counsel, which have happened along the way.

While Mr. Rabbani longs to return to his wife and children, he knows that there are several things that have to happen first. Mr. Rabbani is here today and eager to answer your questions in a bid to gain your recommendation for transfer to Pakistan, although he will go anywhere the Board recommends. He has also expressed his willingness to participate in any rehabilitation program.

Earlier in his life, Mr. Rabbani managed hotels with his father, and later, he managed them on his own. Mr. Rabbani was a shrewd and cunning businessman and chased after the almighty dollar; he did not really care to find out who he was working with, but he stresses that he was working for money, not for a religious cause or an agenda.

While he is still a hunger striker, Mr. Rabbani eats at our meetings and now goes willingly to his feedings to consume his liquid meals. Hunger striking is a peaceful way of protesting his situation and one of the few choices or decisions that Mr. Rabbani feels he can make while in detainment. Mr. Rabbani has started to eat regular food but after years of hunger striking, his body now rejects the food and causes him severe nausea. Mr. Rabbani is now working with the medical staff in an effort to get back on solid food.

Mr. Rabbani has focused on his artistic skills while here in Guantanamo; he has painted hundreds of pieces of art, some of which have been submitted for the board to see. Additionally, an art dealer in New York is interested in showing some of Mr. Rabbani's art, which could potentially lead to an income source in the future.

While not happy with his detainment, Mr. Rabbani has never expressed any anti-American sentiments to us, and has repeatedly affirmed that he has no desire to harm anyone upon his release from detention. His desire is to get back with his family and become a contributing member of society. He wants the board to know that he is not a continuing threat to the safety and security of Americans, America or its allies.

When asked about his plans for the future, Mr. Rabbani thought his work ethic, language skills (he is conversant in 4 languages) and prior work in the hospitality industry would serve him well. He could also work as a taxi driver, shop keeper or cook.

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We feel that Mr. Rabbani has grown in maturity; and he now understands the consequences and importance of knowing who you are working with. These changes, along with the dedicated support and committed resources from Reprieve will greatly assist in his transition upon transfer.



405 Lexington Ave. Fl. 62
New York, NY 10074

August 22, 2016

Re: Statement by Shelby Sullivan-Bennis, Private Counsel for Ahmed Rabbani (ISN 1461) Periodic Review Board Bearing Scheduled September 01, 2016

Esteemed Periodic Review Board Members,

My name is Shelby Sullivan-Bennis. It is my privilege to represent Ahmed Rabbani and to appear before this board today. I do so on behalf of all those at Reprieve, who have been his counsel for the duration of his time in Guantánamo.

Ahmed Rabbani appears before this board today after a harrowing fourteen years in detention which began, as we now know, as a case of mistaken identity. The Executive Summary of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence Study of the CIA's Detention and Interrogation Program ("SSCI Report") confirms what Ahmed knew from the start: "[b]y September 11, 2002, it was determined that an individual named Muhammad Ahmed Ghulam Rabbani, aka Abu Badr, and his driver were arrested, not Hassan Ghul."¹ Thus, Ahmed was indeed not a senior al Qaeda leader, a concession that did not arrive until after he had suffered dreadfully in a black site (the Senate report reflects that he was one of the few subjected to "enhanced interrogation techniques" without authorization). He has remained in detention at Guantánamo Bay and appears before this board today to tell his story.

In an effort to pave the way for Ahmed's release from Guantánamo Bay, we at Reprieve, as well as those at our affiliate organization in Pakistan, the Foundation for Fundamental Rights, have been in close contact with Ahmed's family over the years. We stay in regular contact with his wife, brother-in-law, and other members of his family in Pakistan and Saudi Arabia.

Ahmed has a warm and close family who miss him greatly. He has two children who were young when Ahmed was first detained, and a third who was born after he was taken from Pakistan who has never met father. His youngest child is now a teenager whose only connection with his father over the years has been through ICRC arranged monthly calls. Suffice it to say that Ahmed's family is eager to have him back.

Ahmed's wife and youngest son live in a 4-bedroom house in the Korangi region of Karachi, owned by his mother-in-law. When Ahmed is released, he will join them there and will have ready access to several local service providers, including medical and psychological health facilities based in Karachi with whom my office has existing

¹ SSCI Report at 325.

Statement by Private Counsel for Ahmed Rabbani (ISN 1461)
PRB Hearing Scheduled September 01, 2016



relationships. Ahmed's family is ready, willing and able to provide him a home and find him a job so that he may start his life anew. In the time between release and acquisition of gainful employment, Ahmed's family, both in Pakistan as well as his family in Saudi Arabia, have offered to financially support him until he gets back on his feet. Indeed, the amount of support Ahmed has waiting for him is considerable.

Additionally, Reprieve has a program set up to help our clients reintegrate into society called "Life After Guantánamo," which is partially funded by the United Nations. This is a program that serves the interests of each relevant stakeholder—the client needs the help, and we (the United States) want the client to do well. For several clients who were resettled and repatriated by both Administrations, we worked with the State Department and host governments on transition plans for clients; we have visited clients multiple times after release; we have served as an ongoing point of contact for local authorities; we have facilitated financial support and referrals for needs ranging from job placement to mental health care. We were a trusted and experienced resource in facilitating a successful transition for these clients, who are now rebuilding their lives. Finally, as mentioned, we have specific experience working with groups on the ground in Pakistan. We would of course offer the same assistance to Ahmed.

Thank you for taking into consideration the information we have provided. We respectfully submit that Ahmed Rabbani should be approved for transfer from Guantánamo consistent with the President's mandate to close the prison. I remain at your disposal to assist with any questions you may have regarding Mr. Rabbani.

Very Truly Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Shelby Sullivan-Bennis". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Shelby Sullivan-Bennis
Reprieve US