

Periodic Review Board Members,

This statement is being submitted jointly on behalf of Khalid Qasim's counsel, Shelby Sullivan-Bennis, Thomas Wilner, and Mark Maher. It is our privilege to represent Khalid in this process and we would like to express our appreciation for the Board's willingness to expedite this hearing. Together, we have represented Khalid Qasim for many years and have come to know him very well. We would like to use this statement as an opportunity to tell the Board a little about who Khalid is today, and why we believe he will be successful upon release from Guantánamo.

With an eye to the future, it is worth describing the person that we have come to know. Far from being any threat to the United States, Khalid is a thoughtful and kind man, who has developed into a gifted artist and writer. His humor and kindness are clear to all who have met and interacted with him. Each of us has been struck by how relaxed every meeting with Khalid is. Instead of a focus on his case, the circumstances of his incarceration, or the past, he is more often focused on knowing how his attorneys are—learning about their families, their health, and their faith—and looking toward the future.

Khalid has used his time at Guantánamo positively, developing talents and skills useful for his future life in society. Although he is never boastful, Khalid is an astonishingly talented artist. His work is varied—he is adept at using various mediums, and his subjects have ranged from simple words against solid backgrounds to large, complex displays. He has a keen understanding of light and can paint incredibly effective works with very few colors. Ever the hard worker, Khalid is not content with these accomplishments, and frequently expresses his desire to learn more and hone his skills when he is released. The fact that Khalid could develop into such an accomplished artist while incarcerated indicates that when he is a free man, his skills will only increase.

Similarly, Khalid arrived in Guantánamo unable to recognize the English language and is now a fluent speaker. He is not only able to speak about himself and his case with ease, but poetically articulates his opinions on a range of topics. His written thoughts are often full of beautiful or funny turns of phrase and alliteration. It is always a joy to receive a letter or call from Khalid.

These facts are not just admirable in themselves, they demonstrate that Khalid has a real future ahead of him. Khalid entered Guantánamo as one of the youngest detainees and will leave with plenty of life left to live. His mastery of an art form and a language and his engagement with classes in Guantánamo demonstrate that he is devoted to self-improvement. We believe that upon release he will not only live, but will thrive.

Khalid will not be alone in this endeavor. While his ultimate destination is not clear, he will continue to enjoy the support of his counsel, Reprieve's Life After Guantánamo Project, and his family. The statements before this Board demonstrate just how much Khalid's family and friends are ready and willing to support him upon release.

Finally, it would be inappropriate to not remark on the length of Khalid's detention. He has been incarcerated for nearly 20 years, and like any person, he is certainly not the same twenty-something that entered Guantánamo, but a matured and educated man. He does not look back in bitterness.

Rather, he looks positively to the future. The Khalid we know is a wise and caring man, who wants nothing more than to live a fulfilling life, work at a job, raise a family, and of course, paint. We hope that this Board will see fit to give him this opportunity.

Mark Maher
Thomas Wilner
Shelby Sullivan-Bennis