

PERIODIC REVIEW BOARD FULL HEARING, 01 NOV 2016
SALMAN YAHYA HASSAN MOHAMMAD RABEI'I, ISN 508
PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE OPENING STATEMENT

Good morning Ladies and Gentlemen of the Board, I am the Personal Representative for Mr. Salman Rabei'i. I would first like to thank the Board for allowing Salman this second opportunity to appear before you and to show you that he is more than willing to cooperate in this process and to provide complete and honest answers to all of your questions. He deeply regrets following the bad advice he was given by others during his initial board and has no intention of wasting your time, or another opportunity to show that he really does not pose any threat to anyone and that he does not harbor any extremist beliefs or ideology.

Since his initial Board, Salman has obtained a new Private Counsel who has provided him with excellent support and advice with regards to this Board as well as with his future. She and I have both explained to him the importance of being one hundred percent honest with the Board in order for his current mindset to be determined. Salman fully understands and is very grateful for this second chance. The support that Reprieve can provide for him in the future is also a very great benefit and I think this might possibly help to alleviate at least some of the Board's concerns with regards to Salman's future.

His PC, Shelby, has had an opportunity to meet with Salman's family in the UK and can attest first hand that in addition to the support her company can offer, his family is quite capable and willing to support him in any way necessary, regardless of where he might be transferred. While many of the detainees I have represented have agreed that they would be willing to be transferred anywhere, I think that Salman is one of best equipped to adjust to a culture and language outside of an Arab-speaking country. He is very open minded towards other cultures and has a very good grasp of the English language, and is constantly working to improve his skills. I believe he could also quickly learn any other language if need be, as he is very intelligent and inquisitive and loves to learn.

It has now been a little over a year and a half since I first met with Salman and in all of our many meetings, he has shown nothing but kindness and respect and not once has he shown any sign of hatred or resentment towards America or Westerners in general. He has also made it quite clear that he will have nothing to do with anyone who shows any signs of extremists beliefs, even if that person were to be a member of his own family. Salman truly regrets his own past decisions and, if approved for transfer, he would take full advantage of a second chance to live an honest peaceful life and teach his future children to do the same.

I strongly believe that Salman is not a threat to the security of the United States and hope that the Board will agree based on the information we have presented, and even more importantly, on Salman's answers here today.



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

October 12, 2016

Re: Statement by Shelby Sullivan-Bennis, Private Counsel for Salman Yahya Hassan
Mohammad Rabei'i (ISN 508)

Esteemed Periodic Review Board Members,

My name is Shelby Sullivan-Bennis, and it is my privilege to represent Mr. Salman Rabei'i in this proceeding. First, I would like to express my gratitude, on behalf of Salman and myself, for the opportunity of this full hearing.

As Salman's Personal Representative has stated, we very strongly believe that there have been variety of material changes to Salman's case that warrant this full review, and you will find that Salman is eager to use this opportunity to answer questions that may have been left unanswered in his first Board.

Among the changes that are relevant to this Board is his representation. The fact of new counsel comes with it the promise of post-release support that Salman otherwise lacked. As Reprieve's client, Salman will be the beneficiary of our "Life After Guantanamo" program, which provides a host of vital support mechanisms that carry our clients through the stages of re-integration. For several clients who were resettled and repatriated by both Administrations, we worked closely with the State Department and host governments on transition plans for clients; we have served as an ongoing point of contact for local authorities; and we have facilitated financial support and referrals for needs ranging from job placement to mental health care.

Stepping in suddenly for former counsel at the time of Salman's file review, I had the chance to meet neither Salman nor his family before making my submissions. Since that date, I have visited with both multiple times, and as a result, have a much better sense of which resources might be needed upon his resettlement, and which will be unnecessary.

Salman arrived at Guantanamo when he was only 22. He sits before you today a 37-year-old man, the majority of his maturing having been done inside these walls. As with many of my clients, he has taught himself English from scratch; I will say that of those clients, Salman's language proficiency is the best. This comes as no surprise when you understand his background. When I met with one of his sisters living in the UK, she told me repeatedly that education was uniquely prized in their family, and that theirs was the only in their village in which each child—male and female—had gone to college. Though Salman was not able to finish, his education continued here at Guantanamo. You will have seen in his file review submission pages upon pages of meticulously written homework assignments, mostly self-delegated—English phrases repeated over and over, translated and conjugated back and forth. Our intent in submitting these was not to misuse your precious time, but to show you

Statement by Private Counsel for Salman Yahya Hassan Mohammad Rabei'i (ISN 508)



how dedicated Salman is—a trait that will serve him well in application to a new trade and in learning new life skills upon release.

Salman has an impressive network of family to provide both emotional and financial support, wherever he is resettled. He has five siblings living stable, peaceful lives in three different countries—in the words of his sister, “he has five moms,” referring to his four sisters and mother. “Anything, anything, he needs, he will have it. He will not need any help. We will help him.” I can personally attest to his family’s ability to help Salman get on his feet financially, and I will speak more to that end in a separate submission.

I think you will recall from having met him last year, that Salman is a respectful and reserved man. At the risk of embarrassing him, I will go as far as to call him shy. Given his small number of infractions and demonstrated ability to get along with guards and prisoners alike, I strongly believe that the Board’s concerns do not lie in his behavior while in detention, nor his personal capacity to find gainful employment (given his language skills and young age), but rather his alleged affiliations. We are confident that we can resolve those concerns in other submissions and in this hearing today.

Thank you for taking into consideration the information we have provided. We respectfully submit that Salman poses no threat to the security of the United States, and as such, should be approved for transfer from Guantánamo.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Shelby Sullivan-Bennis".

Shelby Sullivan-Bennis
Reprieve US