

PERIODIC REVIEW BOARD, JANUARY 26, 2016
YASSIN QASIM MOHAMMED ISMAIL QASIM (ISN 522)

**OPENING STATEMENT OF
PRIVATE COUNSEL DAVID H. REMES**

Good morning. I am David Remes, private counsel for Yassin Qasim Mohammed Ismail (ISN 522). (His name is Yassin, not Yassim.)

I have represented Yassin in his habeas corpus case since July 2004 and have met with him dozens of times. I have also met members of his immediate and extended families on several of my trips to Yemen. In addition, I currently represent Abdalmalik Wahab (ISN 37), a second cousin of Yassin by marriage, whom the PRB cleared in December 2014, and I represented Yassin's second cousin Sadeq Ismail (ISN 69), who was repatriated to Yemen in June 2007. I spoke with Sadeq on January 3, 2016, and with one of Yassin's brothers on December 20, 2015. I am submitting a separate statement summarizing those conversations.

Yassin is intelligent and perceptive. He is serious and well-mannered. He is a fine writer and a natural teacher. He thinks through his actions and makes his own decisions. I especially value my meetings with Yassin because he is a close observer of life in the camps and provides context for detainee's concerns. I can confirm that he is well-respected by other detainees.

Yassin is also deliberate. He viewed his hunger strike as a form of peaceful protest, the only means of expression open to him. He was only trying to make himself heard. I know if he had some other form of peaceful protest, he would have stopped his strike. In light of this proceeding, he has stopped his strike and hopes to persuade the Board to clear him for transfer.

Yassin is not a threat to the national security of the United States. His cousin started a family after he returned to Yemen and lives a peaceful life as a day laborer. His brother, who also has a family, is pursuing a Ph.D. in engineering. The Board has cleared his cousin Abdalmalik Wahab for transfer. Wherever Yassin is sent, he will likewise have a family

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and live a normal life. He aspires to teach Arabic, which my habeas linguist, a master of classical Arabic, considers him well qualified to do. At age 36, Yassin has lost the wanderlust and thirst for adventure he had at age 22. After fourteen years at Guantánamo, he has no appetite for politics and simply wants to get on with his life.

Yassin prefers to go to an Arabic-speaking country, but his goal is release, and he is ready to go wherever the United States sees fit to send him. He is ready to accept such security conditions as the U.S. may require and to take part in rehabilitation and reintegration programs. He does not require continued detention. I urge the Board to approve him for transfer. Thank you.

PERIODIC REVIEW BOARD INITIAL HEARING, 26 JAN 2016
YASSIM QASIM MOHAMMED ISMAIL QASIM, ISN 522
PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE OPENING STATEMENT

Members of the Board, we are the Personal Representatives for Yassin Qasim Mohammed Ismail Qasim. When I first went to meet Yassin, I was uncertain if he would participate in the meetings since he was on a hunger strike. During our first meeting, he explained to me that he was very happy that we were there and he felt hopeful for the future as being detained made him feel as if there was no tomorrow. He went on to explain that the reason for his hunger strike was not out of rebellion but that he wanted to bring focus to being detained so that he could get some sort of resolution, but not cause animosity. He just felt hopeless. He offered that day to stop his hunger strike because he felt that he could see hope for the future. His demeanor is one of a serious, thoughtful man which both my partner and I can confirm.

Yassin comes from a large family that owns a farm which has been in the family for generations in Yemen. He has learned how to work this business growing up throughout his school years with his father. This farm is now so large that the family has to hire extra helpers. Upon his release, even if he is not able to return to Yemen, this farm's value and the money generated from it will help financially support Yassin wherever he is reintegrated. In addition, he has two brothers that work in Saudi Arabia that can assist him. His brothers work in business which Yassin is considering as an employment option. His goals for his future involve continuing his education, building a family and reconnecting with the family.

As we were getting to know Yassin, we learned that he has spent much of his time reading and learning while in GTMO. We listed the many health and medical books and journals he has read as an exhibit in his case file. In fact, because of his passion for health, he has started counseling other detainees in nutrition to increase their knowledge in an effort to assist with their quality of life. Yassin has used his years in GTMO actively learning about nutrition and medicine which he may continue to study once he leaves here. As you will see during his opening statement, he is also working on his English. He will not leave GTMO the same way he entered but he will have broadened his mind. He will have the support of his family and is looking forward to creating a successful future. We appreciate you taking time to hear his case and your consideration for transfer.

Yassin understands that in order to be recommended for transfer he must first gain the board's approval. Therefore he is willing and ready to answer your questions.

We and the PC are here throughout this proceeding to answer your questions.