

TARIQ BA ODAH, ISN 178

***YEMENI DETAINEE IN NEED OF URGENT RELEASE ON HUMANITARIAN GROUNDS;
ON HUNGER-STRIKE AT GUANTÁNAMO SINCE FEBRUARY 2007***



“Even if they keep me another 10 years, I will not break my hunger-strike. I’ll stop under one of two conditions: I die or I am returned to my family.”

– Tariq Ba Odah [March 22, 2012]

Name: Tariq Ba Odah

Age: 34 years old

Place of Birth: Shabwah, Yemen

Family: Large family residing in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia

Languages: Arabic

Personal interests: World politics; Reading political biographies; Poetry

Status: Detained in February 2002; Began a peaceful hunger-strike to protest his indefinite detention in February 2007; Force-fed daily through nasogastric intubation; Segregated since 2009 and held in under solitary-confinement like conditions in Camp 5; Held without charge.

MR. BA ODAH IS A HUNGER-STRIKER IN NEED OF URGENT RELEASE

Tariq Ba Odah was born in Yemen, but lived almost of all of his life before his imprisonment in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. He was sent to Guantánamo in February 2002 at approximately age 24. His petition for a writ of habeas corpus is stayed in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia in part because of Mr. Ba Odah's compromised health.

As of counsel's last visit to Guantánamo in December 2012, the U.S. Department of Defense has been holding Mr. Ba Odah in solitary-confinement like conditions in Camp 5. It isolates Mr. Ba Odah from the other prisoners because he has been on a 6-year, peaceful hunger-strike to protest his indefinite detention. The Department of Defense views this as non-compliance. Mr. Ba Odah has maintained his hunger-strike throughout the years because he sees the U.S. Department of Defense, the Obama administration, Congress, and increasingly U.S. courts as part of single apparatus of power that keeps him locked-up at Guantánamo and separated from his loved-ones. In his words – hunger-striking *“is the only peaceful way I can show the magnitude of the injustice I suffer.”*

Mr. Ba Odah is force-fed daily. He is strapped to a restraint chair, a rubber tube is forced down his nose, and a liquid dietary supplement is pumped into his stomach. In what Mr. Ba Odah believes are clear attempts to break his protest, prison administrators have told him that *“if [he] stops his strike, [he would] be moved to the common area with friends, television, and recreation time”* – basic rights the men in Camp 5 are often deprived.

Mr. Ba Odah is only permitted to be outside of his cell between 2-4 hours per day. Unfortunately, Mr. Ba Odah is often too weak to take advantage of the recreation time that is allotted to him. He has virtually no human contact. He must shout through a slot in the door of his cell to exchange a word with another prisoner. To protest these conditions, Mr. Ba Odah has also gone on “no wash protests,” in one instance going four months without showering, leaving his cell for recreation, or cutting his nails. According to Mr. Ba Odah, he *“looked like [he] crawled out of a grave.”* No independent medical expert has ever assessed the impact of extended hunger-striking on Mr. Ba Odah's body. But there can be no doubt that he is need of urgent, sophisticated medical care. Like most other Guantánamo prisoners, Mr. Ba Odah has never been charged with a crime. President Obama should lift the moratorium on transfers to Yemen and certify Mr. Ba Odah for release on humanitarian grounds.

LEGAL REPRESENTATION

Mr. Ba Odah is represented by the Center for Constitutional Rights. For more information, the Commission should contact:

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