



PROFILES:

**FACES OF
GUANTÁNAMO**

2022

**CENTER FOR CONSTITUTIONAL
RIGHTS**



“Where is the world to save us from torture?
Where is the world to save us from the fire
and sadness?”

–Adnan Farhan Abdul Latif

INTRODUCTION

780

Muslim men and boys
have been imprisoned at
Guantánamo since Bush’s
declaration of the so-called
War On Terror in 2001

9

Men who have died while
in custody at Guantánamo
military prison

39

Men who remain incarcerated,
separated from their families
and communities, isolated from
the rest of the world

Twenty years after the opening of Guantánamo, Adnan’s questions remain unanswered. Adnan is one of the nine men who died while in custody at the military prison, taking his own life rather than continuing to endure the brutality of indefinite detention. Thirty other men have died since being released. Since Bush’s declaration of the so-called War On Terror in 2001, seven hundred and eighty Muslim men and boys have been imprisoned at Guantánamo. Thirty-nine men remain incarcerated, separated from their families and communities, isolated from the world. Twenty-seven have never been charged. All have been subjected to torture by the U.S., including twenty-six who survived the CIA torture program. Yet numbers can never convey the human toll of this monstrous experiment in cruelty, a manifestation of the deadly ideology of white supremacy and the politics of domination and impunity.

Just as Guantánamo serves as a thermometer of our society’s values, so too does our continued, collective rejection of this assault on our shared humanity. As we mark twenty years of U.S. policy to imprison Muslim men and boys without charge in Guantánamo, the Center for Constitutional Rights, together with our clients, co-counsel, and partners, honors the human beings behind the numbers. Below are the stories that we, as lawyers and advocates, have the privilege to hold—our clients’ rich lives that have been suspended for over two decades. Their resistance to the inhumanity and injustice of Guantánamo reaffirms our commitment to its closure.

May each of these men be free, and may you join us in making it so.



MOATH AL ALWI

- Imprisoned at Guantánamo since January 2002
- Status: Cleared for release

“I was asked, if you had the option between your own release and your artworks’ release, which one would you choose?” And without any hesitation, I answered: “I would opt for the release of my artwork because as far as I am concerned, I’m done, my life and my dreams are shattered, whereas if my artwork is released, it will be the sole witness for posterity.”

- Moath Al Alwi

About Moath

Even as a young boy in Saudi Arabia, Moath enjoyed creating things, seeing how things were made, and fixing things around the house. His mother wrote to him a few years ago, “Do you remember that door you fixed? It’s still there.” But feeling that opportunities for a Yemeni living in Saudi Arabia were limited, Moath left for Afghanistan. When the United States began its bombing

al-Alwi faces the real prospect that he will spend the rest of his life in detention.

operation there in late 2001, he fled for safety to Pakistan, arriving at the border as the United States flooded the area with flyers offering bounties for “suspicious” people (that is, anyone who was Arab). Sold to the United States, he was taken to Guantánamo in January 2002 where he has remained, never being charged with any criminal conduct,

although courts found no evidence that he ever used arms against the United States or its allies. In a **rare statement** in 2019, U.S. Supreme Court Justice Stephen Breyer **warned** that “al-Alwi faces the real prospect that he will spend the rest of his life in detention.”

After about a decade of hunger strikes and other protests of his imprisonment, Moath began to concentrate on developing his talent for art. He began during solitary confinement, drawing on the walls of his cell. The drawings would be washed off when he was taken away for force feeding, and so he would

draw again the following day. The following year, he created a large “window,” a three-dimensional collage looking out on a sea he created, replete with islands,

boats, trees, a house. He started creating furniture—cabinets, bookshelves, tables, a foot-operated trash basket—all out of cardboard, soap, and whatever other limited materials were available. And he began teaching himself to paint. His creations were destroyed by the guard force in 2013, but Moath continued creating art. Soon, he began to build meticulous models of tall ships, although he has never seen one outside of pictures, using threads from his shirts and prayer caps, strings from mops, bottle tops, cardboard, and other odds and ends. An award-winning **short documentary** describes the creation of one of these ships, and the freedom Moath finds when he creates—the only freedom he has known for two decades.

After about a decade of hunger strikes and protests at his imprisonment, Moath began to concentrate on developing his talent for art.

Legal Representation

Moath al Alwi is represented by Beth Jacob from Healing and Recovery after Trauma, the **CLEAR** Clinic at CUNY School of Law, and John Connolly, Zuckerman Spaeder.

ZAKARIA AL BAIDANY

- Imprisoned in secret prisons 2002-2003, imprisoned at Guantánamo since 2003
- Status: Cleared for release



About Zakaria

Zakaria comes from a well-educated, prosperous, cosmopolitan family; all of his siblings, including his sisters, are college graduates, and most have graduate degrees. They are all eagerly awaiting his release and committed to supporting him as he rebuilds his life. Zakaria is the youngest brother; his father’s death when he was only 16 set him adrift, and he ended up going to Georgia to support the Chechnyan rebels against Russia. He was captured in a violent ambush with three others—one was shot dead, he and the other two were sold to the U.S. government. They were sent to one of the CIA dark sites where, as indicated in the [Senate Torture Report](#), he was held and tortured for about a year. His treatment when he was first taken to Guantánamo was little better. Shortly after he arrived, he complained of a tooth ache. He was taken to a “dentist,” who (without explanation) pulled eight teeth and sent him back to his cell.

The government now says, “there is no information indicating that [Zakaria] engaged in activities against the United States prior to detention.”

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Now, Zakaria likes to play videogames, especially adventures, and watch American movies. He says that when he plays the games and watches the movies, he is transported to another world—away from prison and abuse. In the past few years, he has started painting and making dioramas, including a detailed campsite complete with camel, hookah, and tea pot simmering on the fire. He also enjoys trying different coffees and cappuccinos, within the limitations of prison. His dream is to open a cafe where his customers will be able to play video games while drinking their coffee.

He says that when he plays the games and watches the movies, he is transported to another world—away from prison and abuse.

Legal Representation

Zakaria al Baidany is represented by Orrick (Rene Kathawala), Beth Jacob from Healing and Recovery after Trauma, and Marc D. Falkoff.



SUFYIAN BARHOUMI

- Detained at Guantánamo since 2002
- Status: Cleared for release by the Obama administration in 2016

“For all these years, this has been my life. Forget the past, it’s behind me. I am looking forward to my family and future. I want to get married. Everybody has a dream.”

– Sufyian Barhoumi

About Sufyian

Sufyian Barhoumi is an Algerian citizen in his late 40s who was born and raised in Algiers, where his mother still lives and his late father practiced law. As a young man, Sufyian lived in various countries in Europe—Spain, France, and England—as a farm worker and then a street merchant for about four years. He has been held at Guantánamo since June 2002 even though the U.S. government cleared him for release in 2016.

All parties expected Sufyian to be sent home to Algeria after his clearance, but unexplained bureaucratic problems with the transfer led to him being one of five cleared men stranded at Guantánamo when Trump took office. By all appearances, diplomatic disputes between the U.S. and Algeria appear to be responsible for Obama’s failure to send Barhoumi home: the government stated in a court filing that the failure to transfer Barhoumi at the end of 2016 was owing to factors “not related to petitioner himself.” Algeria is stable and has been one of the most secure places for the U.S. to transfer detainees to, having already accepted some fifteen former detainees without incident. However, as part of Jared Kushner’s Mideast peace plan, the Trump administration agreed to recognize Moroccan claims to territory disputed with Algeria in exchange for Morocco’s recognizing Israel, which appears to have brought U.S. diplomatic relations with Algeria to a low point. In his first year in office, President Biden has only transferred one man out of Guantánamo despite the fact that many more, like Sufyian, are cleared for release.

Sufyian lost his left hand in a landmine accident 21 years ago, and he believes the military kept him at Guantánamo for so long because they assumed that he had blown it off while training to make bombs. The government no longer believes that: Sufyian was briefly charged before a military commission as part of a supposed bomb-making cell in Pakistan, but all charges against him and his co-defendants were dropped (and one co-defendant was eventually cleared for release and sent home to Saudi Arabia). Even when, in 2012, he offered to plead guilty to anything to get a fixed date for release, prosecutors refused to do so.

Sufyian is one of the best-liked prisoners among both his fellow detainees and the guards, always meeting visitors with a smile, and now speaks fluent English. He is a soccer enthusiast, and regards himself as the best striker at Guantánamo. He has been described as “highly compliant” by the prison authorities and told *The Wall Street Journal*, “I don’t have a black heart against America.” Sufyian is eager to return to his family in Algeria, a country that has successfully received more than a dozen of its citizens from Guantánamo. He dreams of hugging his mother again, going into business with his brothers, and getting married.

Legal Representation

Sufyian Barhoumi is represented by the Center for Constitutional Rights.



GULED HASSAN DURAN

- Detained at Guantánamo since 2006
- Status: Cleared for transfer

“All I want is just to move on with my life. I want to be reunited with my wife and my children. I have lost so much time with them . . . I don’t want to lose the next 20 years, or however much time I have left in my life, to Guantánamo. I don’t want to die here, inshallah.”

– Guled Hassan Duran

About Guled

Guled Hassan Duran is a Somali citizen with prior residence in Germany and Sweden. He is a father and husband and has family members living throughout Canada and the United States, who are eager to be reunited with him and will support him when he is released. Never designated for prosecution, Guled has been detained at Guantánamo without charge or trial since September 2006.

CIA Torture

Guled was captured in March 2004, and disappeared into secret CIA detention, where he was physically and mentally tortured. Most significantly, he was denied urgent medical treatment for an abdominal wound suffered in a street robbery in Mogadishu, Somalia prior to his capture. He was traveling to seek treatment when he was taken into custody, but his captors did not allow him to receive the necessary surgery until years later.

The Senate Select Committee on Intelligence [report](#) on the CIA Rendition, Detention and Interrogation program documented that Guled was among a group of “CIA detainees [who] had care delayed for serious medical issues” while in detention “[d]ue to a lack of adequate medical care at CIA detention sites and the unwillingness of host governments to make hospital facilities available.”

In addition, as disclosed in Guled’s public court filings, throughout his CIA detention, interrogators withheld medical care to pressure him to cooperate.

Guantánamo

In November 2016, Guled filed a habeas petition in federal court in Washington, D.C., challenging the legality of

his capture and detention. The case is active and ongoing, but Guled has been waiting more than two years for rulings on significant motions. No trial date has been set.

Guled has appeared before the Periodic Review Board as part of an administrative process to determine whether he should be transferred. Guled presented a [statement](#) to the Board in July 2021, addressing the devastating impact of more than 15 years of indefinite detention on him and his family. He asked the Board to put itself in his place and consider, for example, that “[i]t is very frustrating and demoralizing being held for so long when you have no idea when you will be released”; that “[t]he last year and a half have been particularly difficult because I have had limited contact with my family, and continue to be very worried about them given the pandemic”; and “what it is like to lose a parent or a young child, as I have, while you are in prison with no idea when you will be released.” He explained that, “[y]ou have no control over what matters most to you in life, you feel helpless.”

Current Status

Guled is approved for transfer from Guantánamo and continues to litigate his habeas case. He is willing to be transferred to any country where he can live a quiet life and be reunited with his family. Despite all that he has endured, he remains a gentle person and exudes a hopeful and positive attitude.

Legal Representation

Guled Hassan Duran is represented by the Center for Constitutional Rights, Sabrina P. Shroff, and the Military Commissions Defense Organization.



ASADULLAH HAROON GUL

- Detained at Guantánamo since 2007
- Status: Cleared for release by the Biden administration in October 2021

About Asadullah

Asadullah is the last “low-value” Afghan detainee in Guantánamo. He spent over nine years in U.S. detention before he was able to secure the assistance of an attorney. Asadullah has suffered severe physical and psychological torture. He has been beaten, hung by his wrists, deprived of food and water, and prevented from praying. He has also been subjected to sleep deprivation, extreme cold, and solitary confinement.

The U.S. Government’s basis for Asadullah’s detention was originally his membership in Hezb-e-Islami (HIA), a group that has formally been at peace with the United States since 2016, and on allegations that he had been a part of or substantially supported al Qaeda. After the completion of this peace agreement, the U.S. government withdrew HIA membership as a basis for detention, and shifted its case to claim Asadullah had been a member of al Qaeda.

In 2021, a federal district court determined that the United States does not have the legal authority to detain Asadullah and granted his Petition for a Writ of Habeas Corpus. The Periodic Review Board has also determined that Asadullah should be transferred out of Guantánamo.

His family in Pakistan is eager to welcome him. However, there is no indication that the United States

has taken meaningful steps to transfer this man whom it is detaining unlawfully.

With no legal barrier preventing his release, Asadullah eagerly awaits the day he is reunited with his wife and daughter, the most important people in his life. He is particularly excited to see his daughter, who was only an infant when he was detained. He takes great pride in her accomplishments and brags to his counsel that he helps her with homework during their family calls. His family has actively worked for his return and are committed to providing him financial and other support as he rebuilds his life.

With no legal barrier preventing his release, Asadullah eagerly awaits the day he is reunited with his wife and daughter, the most important people in his life.

Legal Representation

Asadullah Haroon Gul is represented by Tara Plochocki of Lewis Baach Kaufmann Middlemiss, Clive Stafford Smith, and Reprieve.

His family in Pakistan is eager to welcome him. However, there is no indication that the United States has taken meaningful steps to transfer this man whom it is detaining unlawfully.



SHARQAWI AL HAJJ

- Detained at Guantánamo since 2004, after over two years in CIA sites
- Status: Cleared for transfer by the Biden administration in June 2021

“Why are we still here? What have we done to die in this place?”

– Sharqawi Al Hajj

About Sharqawi

Sharqawi Al Hajj is a 47 year-old man from Yemen. He is from the city of Taiz, from a tight-knit family that is still advocating for his release despite thousands of miles of distance and two decades apart.

Sharqawi was transferred to Guantánamo in 2004, after being held in CIA sites for more than two years. In those sites he was subjected

to treatment that now seems from another era—for example, he was held in complete darkness while subjected to continuous ear-splitting sound. The cumulative effect of his torture there, and the toll of 18 years of imprisonment at Guantánamo, have over time had physical and mental health effects. In 2018, he began making desperate statements to his counsel about wanting to hurt himself and having no hope. In 2019 he cut himself for the first time in all his years of difficulty. In desperate moments, he has done it again and again. While the argument between his counsel and the government became about whether he wanted to kill himself, and whether the government has adequate measures to prevent him from doing so, the point is more fundamentally: the effects of his indefinite detention are cruel and at times unbearable

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after 20 years. Sharqawi is someone the government has never charged and has no intention of charging.

In June 2021, Sharqawi was cleared for transfer by the Periodic Review Board. He will need support for rehabilitation wherever he is sent, but he is open to transfer anywhere he has a meaningful chance at recovery and well-being.

Legal Representation

Sharqawi Al Hajj is represented by Pardiss Kebriaei of the Center for Constitutional Rights and Sabrina P. Shroff.

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ABDUSALAM ALI ABDULRAHMAN AL-HELA

- Imprisoned in secret prisons 2002-2004; imprisoned at Guantánamo since 2004
- Status: Cleared for release

About Abdulsalam

Abdulsalam Ali Abdulrahman Al-Hela is a Yemeni father, husband, businessman, politician, and sheikh. While on a business trip to Cairo in September 2002, he called his family to say he had met “some people” and that “the atmosphere is cloudy and dark over here.” Then he disappeared. He was held by the United States in secret prisons for two years, kept in total darkness and subjected to loud noises for days at a time, chained to walls and floors in painful positions, and hung from the ceiling, among other abuse. He was taken to Guantánamo Bay in 2004. According to the [Senate Torture Report](#), he was in CIA custody for over 500 days.

In the nineteen years that Abdulsalam has been in U.S. custody, he has not been charged with any crime. He has not been found to have been a part of al Qaeda, the Taliban, or any terrorist organization. The U.S. Government has never disclosed why he was abducted and held in the first place. In June 2021, almost two decades after his abduction, the U.S. Government determined that his detention was not necessary and that he could be released. Yet he remains imprisoned six months later, an imprisonment unnecessary even in the eyes of his captors.

Abdulsalam filed a petition for a writ of habeas corpus in 2005. He was finally given a hearing on the validity of his detention in 2017. At the hearing, the court explicitly denied Abdulsalam the right to due process of law. He was never allowed to see the document laying out the case against him. The United States presented no witnesses. His detention was upheld on secret evidence that was never revealed to Abdulsalam or his counsel. His appeal of this unconstitutional decision is pending before the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit in [Al-Hela v. Biden](#), No. 19-5079.

In the time he has been imprisoned, Abdulsalam has lost his mother, a brother, and both of his sons. His only surviving daughter has grown up and gotten married. His country’s government has collapsed, and he cannot be home to care for his wife and family. His sole desire is to be reunited with his family and to begin the process of rebuilding their lives together.

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Legal Representation

Abdulsalam al Hela is represented by Covington & Burling and Beth D. Jacob from Healing and Recovery after Trauma.



SANAD AL-KAZIMI

- Detained at Guantánamo since 2004
- Status: Cleared for transfer by the Biden administration in October 2021

“Oh how I wish to put your hand in my hand and walk together. I wish we could live as any happy family in any happy place.”

—son of Sanad Al-Kazimi

About Sanad

Sanad al-Kazimi, husband, father of four and grandfather to four grandchildren he has never met, was disappeared and tortured by the United States, then caged without trial or any semblance of due process for nineteen years. Despite years of threats to prosecute him for war crimes, military prosecutors never brought charges.

Yet, the empty threats blocked Sanad’s release for over a decade. Sanad’s detention, ostensibly for the sole purpose of preventing return to the battlefield, has instead been punishment. From the physical torture to the psychological torture of indefinite detention to the nineteen years of incarceration, Sanad has been punished severely.

Finally, the national security agencies that make up the Periodic Review Board and oversee release decision-making at Guantánamo have determined that Sanad, now over 50 years old, should be released. As Sanad has told his lawyer, Martha Rayner, clearance is just a piece of paper. He well knows that despite being cleared for release, many men have languished for years at Guantánamo, living under the psychological pain of uncertainty as to when, if ever, release will be made real. Sanad now enters this new stage of his detention, which may be the most painful of all—being cleared for release yet still locked up thousands of miles from home with no control whatsoever as to when that will change.

What happens next is especially uncertain because Sanad is from Yemen, a country deemed unsuitable for transfer by the Biden administration because of the ongoing civil war and instability. The national security agencies that cleared Sanad for release recommend his resettlement in Oman, which is adjacent to Yemen and known to have a strong resettlement program. Sanad would welcome this opportunity to reintegrate in a culture close to his own. But just as his release is wholly out of his control, so, too, is where he will be sent.

Whenever and wherever he is sent, his family has pledged support. His youngest child was not yet two when Sanad was grabbed by shadowy operatives in early 2003. His wife and his children, now adults, have worked hard to maintain contact with Sanad despite challenges due to the civil war in Yemen. As his son has expressed it: “Oh how I wish to put your hand in my hand and walk together. I wish we could live as any happy family in any happy place.”

When Sanad’s lawyer met his wife in Aden, Yemen in 2007, she had the most reasonable of questions: when would Sanad be released? Fifteen years later, with the war in Afghanistan over, the United States must answer that question.

Legal Representation

Sanad al-Kazimi is represented by Martha Rayner, Clinical Associate Professor of Law, Lincoln Square Legal Services, Fordham Law School.



MAJID KHAN

- Detained at Guantánamo since 2006
- Status: Awaiting transfer upon completion of Military Commission sentence in February 2022

“I am a husband, a son, a father, and a brother. My only wish is to be released so I can see and hug my daughter for the first time. I have so many wrongs that I wish to right.”

– Majid Khan

About Majid

Majid Khan is a Pakistani citizen who has political asylum in the United States. He grew up outside of Baltimore, Maryland, graduated from Owings Mills High School, and lived and worked in the area. Most of his family members still live there and are U.S. citizens. He also has a wife and a daughter he has never met, who live in Pakistan. Imprisoned at Guantánamo since September 2006, Majid is serving a military commission sentence that should conclude in February 2022.

CIA Torture

After the death of his mother in 2001, Majid’s life spiraled out of control. He was captured in Pakistan in March 2003 and disappeared into the CIA Rendition, Detention, and Interrogation program, where he was brutally tortured. His torture is documented extensively in the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence [report](#) on the CIA program. Among other cruelties, the Senate report describes instances where Majid was beaten, starved, hung by his arms and sleep-deprived for days on end, waterboarded, and sexually assaulted. Majid also described his torture at length in his [statement](#) to the military jury that sentenced him at Guantánamo in October 2021.

Majid has written several poems in Guantánamo, reflecting on his life, his family, and his experience in detention.

Guantánamo Military Commission

After more than three years in CIA detention, Majid was transferred to Guantánamo in September 2006, where he was denied access to his counsel at the Center for Constitutional Rights until October 2007. Majid was

charged and pled guilty to various offenses before a military commission at Guantánamo in February 2012, pursuant to a plea agreement, and has cooperated with U.S. authorities for a decade.

In a practice common to military justice, Majid was sentenced by a jury of senior military officers in October 2021. The jury sentenced him to 26 years of imprisonment within a possible range of 25 to 40 years, which, under the terms of his plea agreement, the Convening Authority for Military Commissions must reduce to a maximum of 11 years because of his cooperation.

Seven of the eight members of the jury who heard Majid’s statement about his CIA torture and the parties’ sentencing arguments wrote a letter to the Convening Authority requesting clemency on his behalf. The [letter](#) condemned Majid’s treatment as similar to “torture performed by the most abusive regimes in modern history”; “a stain on the moral fiber of America”; and “a source of shame for the U.S. government.”

Current Status

Majid should complete his military commission sentence in February 2022 and will then need to be transferred from Guantánamo in a manner that recognizes the U.S. government’s humane treatment obligations and his cooperator status.

Legal Representation

Majid Khan is represented by the Center for Constitutional Rights, Jenner & Block LLP, and the Military Commissions Defense Organization.



ABU FARAJ AL-LIBI

- Detained at Guantánamo since 2006
- Status: Not charged with a crime

“I wish to spend the rest of my life with my family in peace and in worship of Allah.”

-Abu Faraj Al-Libi

About Abu Faraj

Abu Faraj Al-Libi is a 51-year-old Libyan citizen who lived with his wife and children before he was subjected to extraordinary rendition, torture, and interrogation. He has been imprisoned incommunicado and without charges for over sixteen years. Seized in Pakistan on May 2, 2005, Abu Faraj was held by the United States in secret black sites where he was tortured and interrogated. In September 2006, he was transferred to the detention site in Guantánamo Bay. He arrived physically wasted and malnourished, weighing only 98 pounds.

In United States custody, Abu Faraj was repeatedly subjected to degrading, cruel, and inhumane treatment, including “walling,” a practice of slamming prisoners against a wall. Abu Faraj is permanently injured and disabled. He suffers from complete hearing loss in his left ear and 50 percent hearing loss in his right ear. He incurred traumatic brain injury; scans show over 100 injuries. He did not receive treatment for the damage done to him. To the contrary, when Abu Faraj voiced complaints,

“On a number of occasions, CIA interrogators applied the CIA’s enhanced interrogation techniques to Abu Faraj al-Libi when he complained of a loss of hearing, repeatedly telling him to stop pretending he could not hear well.”

he was further brutalized. As reported by the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, “On a number of occasions, CIA interrogators applied the CIA’s enhanced interrogation techniques to Abu Faraj al-Libi when he complained of a loss of hearing, repeatedly telling him to stop pretending he could not hear well.”

In addition to permanent hearing loss and brain damage, Abu Faraj suffers myriad chronic medical problems that have not been adequately addressed, including frequent debilitating migraines; inability to gain and maintain more than twenty pounds; chronic neck pain due to spinal damage; painful gastrointestinal maladies; declining eyesight with dry eye; dry throat; foot and joint pain; and sleep disruption.

Although Abu Faraj lives with persistent pain caused by his mistreatment, he expresses no ill will toward the United States. He says he is thankful for every day that he can continue to study and worship God, and he wishes to live the rest of his life in peace with his family.

Legal Representation

Abu Faraj Al-Libi is represented by Michael Murali, Esq., attorneys at Federal Defender Services of Eastern Tennessee, Inc., Dana Hansen Chavis, Molly Kincaid, Luke Ihnen, and the Military Commissions Defense Organization.

SAIFULLAH PARACHA

- Detained at Guantánamo since 2004
- Status: Cleared for release by the Biden administration in May 2021

“I hope to see my family again before I die.”

– Saifullah Paracha

About Saifullah

At 74, Saifullah Paracha is the oldest man detained in Guantánamo. He was cleared for transfer in May 2021 by the Periodic Review Board. His family in Pakistan is ready and willing to welcome him home, and the Pakistani government has expressed its willingness to accept him.

Saifullah was born in 1947 in a rural village in the Punjab province of Pakistan. He grew up as an orphan in poverty with 9 siblings. Saifullah immigrated to the United States in 1971 to study at the New York Institute of Technology. After college, Saifullah started a series of successful businesses and helped raise four children. He became a legal permanent resident of the United States, and to this day considers the country his second home. He returned to Pakistan in the 1980s.

Wanting to share his success, Saifullah always devoted a significant portion of his time and money to charitable causes. He was the chairman of the Counsel of Welfare Organizations, a charitable organization composed of Pakistani businessmen and politicians. He also played a significant role in the construction of the Fatima General Hospital and Maternity Home and was on its Board of Trustees until 2003.

In July 2003, based on false testimony provided by men as they were tortured by the United States, Saifullah was abducted in Bangkok, Thailand while on a business trip. His wife and family spent an agonizing month not knowing where he was. He later explained the treatment he had endured upon his kidnapping: “Back hand/leg cuffed, black big mask on my head up to neck, was thrown on floor of station wagon facing down. I am a heart patient/

diabetic/high blood pressure / skin disorder, gout, it could have been fatal.” “There was,” he concluded, “no human consideration at all.”

Saifullah was detained by the U.S. at the Bagram military prison in Afghanistan for more than a year and held in solitary confinement. In September 2004, he was put on a plane to Guantánamo Bay, where he has been held without charge or trial ever since. At Guantánamo, Saifullah is well-respected and liked by fellow detainees and guards, who have referred to him as the grandfather of the detention center.

Saifullah suffers from a host of medical conditions which, combined with his advanced age, makes his release all the more urgent. He has suffered three heart attacks, two while in United States custody. The most recent was in June 2020, and it is unlikely that he would survive another. Saifullah suffers from a range of other medical problems—many related to the abuse he has suffered in U.S. detention—including diabetes mellitus, coronary artery disease, angina pectoris cardiac diastolic dysfunction, hyperlipidemia, diverticulosis, allergic rhinitis, gout, and gastroesophageal reflux disease. He is on several daily medications, but Guantánamo lacks proper medical facilities to provide adequate treatment for these conditions.

Still, Saifullah remains hopeful that he will be returned to his family in Pakistan and reunited with his now-adult sons and daughters.

Legal Representation

Saifullah Paracha is represented by David Remes, Clive Stafford-Smith, GT Hunt, Shelby Sullivan-Bennis, and Reprieve.

MOHAMMED AL-QAHTANI

- Imprisoned at Guantánamo since 2002
- Status: Not charged with a crime

“I was all alone in the world. I couldn’t find a way to stop the torture.”

- Mohammed Al-Qahtani

About Mohammed

Mohammed al-Qahtani was born in Saudi Arabia in 1979 to a large family. Over the 20 years of the U.S. “Global War on Terror,” Mohammed remains the only person that the United States government has publicly admitted torturing. In an interview with [The Washington Post](#), Susan Crawford, a senior U.S. Department of Defense official at the time, acknowledged that crime: “We tortured Mohammed al-Qahtani... His treatment met the legal definition of torture.” Mohammed was subjected to a systematic and sadistic regimen of physical, psychological, and sexual abuse, known as the “First Special Interrogation Plan,” that had been personally reviewed and authorized by U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld.

As a young adult, Mohammed suffered greatly from mental illness, culminating in psychotic episodes and even involuntary commitment. The U.S. government was aware of Mohammed’s condition when the military and the FBI began to interrogate and torture him shortly after his transfer to Guantánamo. In August 2002, he was placed in solitary confinement—itsself a form of torture—and held there for nearly six months. The FBI observed Mohammed “talking to non-existent people” and “reporting hearing voices” even before military interrogators and medical personnel implemented the torture plan that was designed to break him.

Interrogation logs leaked to *Time* magazine in 2005 detail Mohammed’s harrowing experience in U.S. custody, which included prolonged solitary confinement, sleep deprivation, physical violence, and grotesque sexual humiliation, along with other forms of psychological torture. One of the psychiatrists who helped design his torture program was reportedly in the room during his torture. The government’s mistreatment of Mohammed capitalized on his medical vulnerability. The

torture he experienced exacerbated the hallucinations, suicidal thoughts, and depressive episodes caused by his pre-existing mental illnesses. It also caused him to develop Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

In 2020, a [U.S. federal judge](#) issued an unprecedented ruling in Mohammed’s habeas corpus case, holding that he was entitled to an evaluation by a Mixed Medical Commission—a body primarily composed of independent experts from neutral countries to evaluate whether prisoners are entitled to repatriation on medical grounds. Given the complicity of U.S. military medical personnel in his torture, Mohammed does not have enough trust for effective treatment while he remains imprisoned. Dr. Emily Keram, a civilian psychiatrist who has conducted an [independent examination](#) of Mohammed’s mental health, has repeatedly concluded that any recovery from PTSD cannot take place at Guantánamo, where Mohammed was tortured; that he needs to be treated by Saudi doctors who understand his culture and speak Arabic; and that effective mitigation of his schizophrenia, a life-long condition, requires the involvement and support of Mohammed’s family and community.

Even though the U.S. government dropped all charges against Mohammed in 2008 based on its admitted torture, it continues to imprison him arbitrarily and without fair process. Mohammed must be repatriated to psychiatric care in Saudi Arabia, where his family eagerly awaits his return and would be able and willing to provide support for him as he recovers and seeks to rebuild his life.

Legal Representation

Mohammed al-Qahtani is represented by the Center for Constitutional Rights and the [CLEAR](#) Clinic at CUNY School of Law.

KHALID QASIM

- Detained at Guantánamo since 2002
- Status: Not charged with a crime



“Each of my paintings was executed in a crucial time of tense conditions. They each carry several meanings ... The more one reflects the more meaning one finds.”

- Khalid Qasim

About Khalid

Khalid Qasim has been detained at Guantánamo since May 2002. Originally from Yemen, he left in 1999 as a young man. This was not uncommon as unemployment in Yemen then stood at 40%, and thousands of Yemenis were leaving the country in search of a better future.

Khalid was captured by the Northern Alliance in Afghanistan in October, 2001. At the time, the United States widely distributed bounty fliers in Afghanistan and Pakistan. U.S. Department of Defense data shows that 86% of Guantánamo detainees were arrested by either Pakistan or the Northern Alliance. Khalid came into U.S. custody because local groups were seeking a pay-out, and the United States frequently detained people on minimal or no evidence.

Upon transfer to U.S. custody in January 2002, Khalid was taken to the notorious U.S. military prison at Bagram in Afghanistan. At Bagram, Khalid was kept in a fenced area with his hands and feet shackled. He was unable to walk for two months as a result. The conditions at the prison were freezing cold, and people were given only one light

Khalid has never been afforded a meaningful opportunity to contest the allegations against him. His case is emblematic of the lack of judicial review within Guantánamo.

blanket and forced to sleep standing up. Khalid endured extreme sleep deprivation throughout this period.

Khalid has never been afforded a meaningful opportunity to contest the allegations against him. His case is emblematic of the lack of judicial review within Guantánamo.

His work, in his words, is “powered by optimism rather than despair.”

Still, Khalid has persevered. He has learned English; he can speak and write the language

fluently. Further, he has developed into an incredibly skilled artist. Khalid’s art is marked by inventive uses of colors, and he has been known to make use of unusual materials, such as the gravel that litters the prison ground. His work, in his words, is “powered by optimism rather than despair.”

Legal Representation

Khalid Qasim is represented by Tom Wilner of Sherman Stearling, Neil Koslowe, Shelby Sullivan-Bennis, Clive Stafford Smith, and Reprieve.



AHMED RABBANI

- Detained at Guantánamo since 2004
- Status: Cleared for release by the Biden administration in October 2021

“[My] torture has still not ended: the mental torture of indefinite detention is equal to any of the physical torture [I] experienced.”

- Ahmed Rabbani

About Ahmed

Ahmed Rabbani is a 51-year old Pakistani national who was captured in Karachi in September 2002 and has spent the last 19 years in custody, most of that time at Guantánamo. He is cleared for release, and his family in Pakistan—including his 18 year old son Jawad whom he has never touched— anxiously await his return.

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His story is one of the darkest in the history of Guantánamo. Ahmed only came into U.S. custody because he was mistaken for another man, Hassan Gul, and sold for a bounty by the Pakistani government. This was confirmed in the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence report on the CIA Rendition, Detention, and Interrogation program. Hassan Gul was himself later captured and detained in the “Dark Prison” before ultimately being released.

Ahmed is one of the detainees who was tortured, a fact also confirmed in the Senate report. He has described in detail his horrific treatment in CIA custody. He was strung up by his hands, with his feet barely touching the ground. He was kept completely in the dark so that he could not tell day from night. His only sensory experiences besides

pain were the smell and taste of the blood trickling down his face. He was left there for days on end. He lost consciousness many times during this ordeal. When he was awake, he tried to hit his hand against the wall, hoping to break the shackles or cut off his hand to stop the pain. He says that he hoped for death.

His attorneys at Reprieve have documented 62 methods of abuse used on him. But Ahmed says his torture has still not ended: the mental torture of indefinite detention is equal to any of the physical torture he experienced.

Nevertheless, Ahmed refuses to be defined by these experiences; he has spent his time in Guantánamo

Nevertheless, Ahmed refuses to be defined by these experiences.

developing his skills as an artist. His paintings are highly detailed and large-scale. He takes great pride in the fact that they are rarely

reproductions, but come completely from his imagination.

He is also a talented cook, and he hopes to open a restaurant when he is released and to continue to develop as an artist. His children are anxious to welcome him home and “finally try his cooking.”

Legal Representation

Ahmed Rabbani is represented by Beth Jacob from Healing and Recovery after Trauma, Clive Stafford-Smith, and Reprieve, Kristin Davis and Gary Thompson of Thompson HD.



UTHMAN ABD AL-RAHIM MUHAMMAD UTHMAN

- Imprisoned at Guantánamo since January 2002
- Status: Cleared for release

“A person who wants to make changes in his life should not expect other people to do it for him, but he should make it in his life. I made these changes in myself. I don’t expect others to praise me, because the change is for me.”

- Uthman Abd al-Rahim Muhammad Uthman

About Uthman

Uthman is now in his 40’s and has spent his entire adult life in Guantánamo. He was captured at the Afghanistan border and (it appears) sold to the United States by Pakistani bounty hunters, as were so many other men who were taken to Guantánamo. But allegations based on statements elicited through the torture of other detainees—a fact that the government does not contest—have kept Uthman imprisoned for decades.

Nevertheless, Uthman has never been resentful because of his imprisonment, recognizing that he also made mistakes.

Instead, he has spent the years in reflection, growing up and maturing, and taking advantage of opportunities to learn. He now

is thoughtful, polite, and open-minded, with a very dry and satirical sense of humor. Recently, he has learned calligraphy.

Uthman’s father was murdered by extremists when he was a youth, but his mother, siblings, and their children form a large and supportive family that deeply misses him. And he misses them, especially the food that his mother prepares on her decades-old stove that she refuses to replace. (He keeps a photograph of the stove which he is happy to show visitors.) Despite the war in

...he has spent the years in reflection, growing up and maturing, and taking advantage of opportunities to learn.

Yemen, his family is ready to help him start his business and rebuild his life.

Uthman created

a business plan to start a food truck when he is released, and his family already has purchased a van for him to use.

Especially with the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan, it is past time for Uthman to be released.

Legal Representation

Uthman Abd al-Rahim Muhammad Uthman is represented by Covington & Burling and Beth D. Jacob from Healing and Recovery after Trauma.

Despite the war in Yemen, his family is ready to help him start his business and rebuild his life.



ABU ZUBAYDAH

- Detained at Guantánamo since 2006
- Status: Not charged with a crime

About Abu Zubaydah

About six months after 9/11, CIA and Pakistani forces in the dark of night gunned down Abu Zubaydah (AZ), a Palestinian man who grew up in Saudi Arabia, during their sweep of guest houses in Faisalabad, Pakistan, wounding him so grievously that he came within a hair's breadth of dying. The CIA then reversed course, flying a top trauma surgeon from Johns Hopkins thousands of miles to his bedside in an ultimately successful effort to save his life. As soon as the medical team permitted, FBI Special Agents began interrogating him with its time-tested technique: rapport building.

Though AZ was cooperative when interrogated by the FBI, the CIA chose to think that he was only pretending. Clinging to this belief, the Agency soon pushed the FBI aside, insisting that he had crucial information about where and when the next attack on the United States would be coming. Soon, the CIA retained two psychologists, James Mitchell and Bruce Jessen, who had no experience in real-life interrogation, to devise a program—the “enhanced interrogation techniques” (EITs), now recognized by courts as torture—to wring the “truth” out of AZ.

Since torture was illegal, the CIA came up with a so-called Psychological Assessment (PA) of its captive, which fashioned a panoply of falsehoods in an attempt to justify his torment. A few particularly egregious examples follow:

[AZ], though only 31, rose quickly from very low level mujahedin to third or fourth man in al Qaeda. He has served as Usama bin Laden's senior lieutenant... [AZ] has been involved in every major terrorist operation carried out by al Qaeda... Moreover, he was one of the planners of the September 11 attacks.

All of these statements were false. Even the CIA finally admitted that its captive was never a member of al Qaeda.

But the PA convinced the Justice Department's compliant Office of Legal Counsel to approve ten EITs in an August 1, 2002 memo to the CIA's top lawyer. For the next three weeks, the CIA subjected AZ to its EITs around the clock: 83 waterboarding sessions (one nearly killed him); a 20-day period during which he was forced to spend 266 hours (11 days, 2 hours) in a coffin-size box, and 29 hours in a far smaller confinement box; sleep deprivation for as long as 180 hours, usually while standing or forced into stress positions, and much more. At last, the Agency conceded that AZ had been truthful when he claimed that he did not possess any information about potential threats to the U.S.

Mitchell and Jessen nonetheless deemed AZ's interrogation a great success, recommending that the “aggressive phase (when the EITs are used continuously) should be used as a template for future interrogation of high value captives,” not because the CIA's EITs produced useful information, but rather because their use confirmed that AZ **did not** possess the intelligence that CIA HQ insisted he had.

Nonetheless, Mitchell's recommendation became a reality. But the final irony was revealed by Ron Suskind in his book *The One Percent Doctrine*. When advised that al Qaeda experts at the CIA had concluded that AZ, after all, was nothing but a small fry, President Bush's private disappointment fell on CIA Director George Tenet: “I said he was important,” Bush told Tenet at a daily briefing. “You're not going to let me lose face on this, are you?” “No sir, Mr. President,” came the dutiful response.

After nearly 20 years of captivity by our government, during which AZ has been charged with no criminal offense, AZ is still imprisoned.

Legal Representation

Lead counsel Mark P. Denbeaux; Charles R. Church; Max Sirianni.