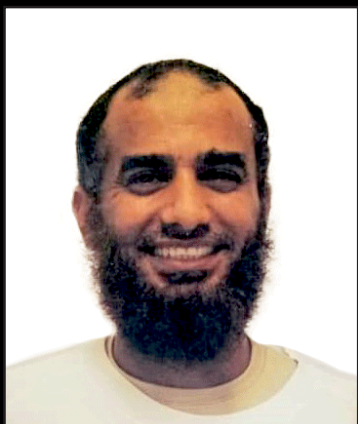


# PROFILES: FACES OF GUANTÁNAMO

2023

CENTER FOR CONSTITUTIONAL  
RIGHTS



“They leave us in prison for years, uncharged,  
Because we are Muslims.

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

UPDATED JANUARY 2023

**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 have died while  
in custody at Guantánamo

**35**

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

**More than twenty years** after the opening of the **Guantánamo Bay prison**, Adnan Latif’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. Since George W. Bush’s declaration of the so-called War on Terror in 2001, 780 Muslim men and boys have been imprisoned at Guantánamo.

In January 2023, Guantánamo entered its third decade of operation with 35 men remaining, separated from their families and communities, and isolated from the world. The majority of the men are cleared for release, and only a handful have been charged with a crime in the unjust military commissions system. All have been subjected to torture and abuse by the U.S. They are aging – some with serious medical conditions – and they are hoping to be reunited with their families before they die.

Yet numbers can never convey the devastating human toll of this prison, designed to evade the law and inflict human suffering. The Center for Constitutional Rights, together with our clients, co-counsel, and partners, honors the human beings behind the numbers. Below are some of the stories that we, as lawyers and advocates, have the privilege to hold and share – our clients’ rich lives that have been suspended for more than two decades. Their resistance to the inhumanity and injustice of Guantánamo reaffirms our commitment to fighting for 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 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,

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

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 toothache. 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."

**"there is no information indicating that [Zakaria] engaged in activities against the United States prior to detention."**

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.





# GULED HASSAN DURAN

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

“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.



# SHARQAWI AL HAJJ

- Detained at Guantánamo since 2004, after over two years in CIA sites
- Status: Cleared for release

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

– Sharqawi Al Hajj

## About Sharqawi

Sharqawi Al Hajj is a 48 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 19 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 after more than 20 years. Sharqawi is someone the government has

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.

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.

...the point is more fundamentally: the effects of his indefinite detention are cruel and at times unbearable after more than 20 years.



# ABDULSALAM 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.

His sole desire is to be reunited with his family and to begin the process of rebuilding their lives together.

## 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 release

“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? After twenty years of detention and with the war in Afghanistan over, the United States must answer this question.

## Legal Representation

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





# MAJID KHAN

- Detained at Guantánamo since 2006
- Status: Awaiting transfer after completing 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 completed a military commission sentence 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.

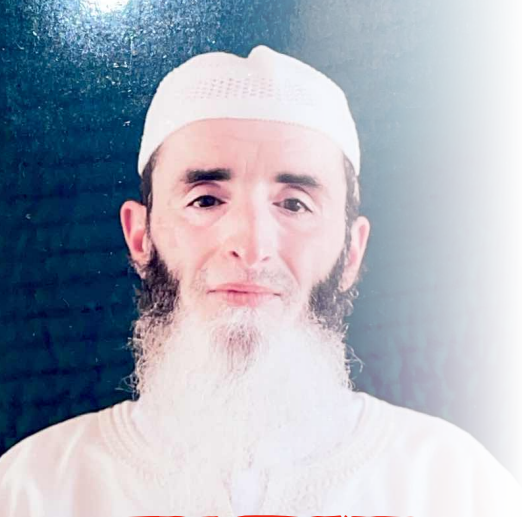
Seven of the eight members of the jury who heard Majid’s statement about his CIA torture and the parties’ sentencing arguments wrote a letter to the Convening Authority requesting clemency on his behalf. The [letter](#) condemned Majid’s treatment as similar to “torture performed by the most abusive 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 completed his military commission sentence in February 2022 and must 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 53-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 at Guantánamo Bay. He arrived physically wasted and malnourished, weighing only 98 pounds.

In U.S. 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, he was further mocked and brutalized. As

“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.”

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.”

Abu Faraj is the most severely impaired and incapacitated detainee at Guantánamo. Physical findings, radiological evidence, and laboratory studies are consistent with post-concussion syndrome and progressive chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE). The reports and evidence provided to the public by U.S. authorities indicate that Abu Faraj’s impairments and symptoms are the consequence of interrogation and torture. 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 weight; 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 attorneys at Federal Defender Services of Eastern Tennessee, Inc., Dana Hansen Chavis, Luke P. Ihnen, and the Military Commissions Defense Organization.

# KHALID QASIM

- Detained at Guantánamo since 2002
- Status: Cleared for release

“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.”

In July 2022, the Periodic Review Board cleared Khalid for release. He looks forward to being transferred from Guantánamo, and continuing to pursue his art and contribute to his new community.

## Legal Representation

Khalid Qasim is represented by Tom Wilner of Sherman Stearling, Neil Koslowe, Mark Maher, Clive Stafford Smith, and Reprieve.



# AHMED RABBANI

- Detained at Guantánamo since 2004
- Status: Cleared for release

“[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.

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.

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

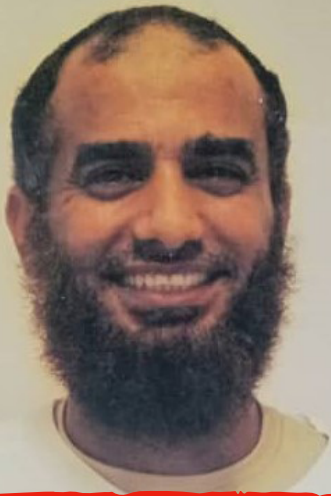
reproductions, but come completely from his imagination.

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, Kristin Davis and Gary Thompson of Thompson HD and Reprieve.





# 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 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.