

Center for Constitutional Rights

Torture, Former Combatants, Political Prisoners, Terror Suspects, & Terrorists

<https://ccrjustice.org/home/press-center/press-releases/ccr-seeks-outside-medical-evaluation-ailing-guant-namo-client>

Public Facing Advocacy Writing

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September 7, 2017, Washington, D.C. Yesterday, the Center for Constitutional Rights (CCR) filed an emergency motion asking for an independent medical examination and medical records for Sharqawi Al Hajj, a Yemeni who has been detained without charge in Guantanamo since 2004 and was held in secret detention and brutally tortured for over two years prior.

The filing comes after Al Hajj lost consciousness and required emergency hospitalization after going on hunger strike and refusing to submit to force-feedings. His hunger strike compounds long-standing concerns about his health. Prior to his detention, Al Hajj was diagnosed with the Hepatitis B virus, an infection affecting the liver that can be life-threatening, and experiences chronic, potentially ominous related symptoms, including jaundice, extreme weakness and fatigue, and severe abdominal pain.

As a medical declaration submitted in support of the motion states, Al Hajj's symptoms may also be associated with his prior torture which, together with his hunger strike, could lead to total body collapse.

Center for Constitutional Rights counsel visited Al Hajj in Guantanamo last month, where they saw his deteriorating condition.

As it has virtually every time we have sounded an alarm about detainees, the government will deny there's anything wrong, as if captivity for over 15 years with still no end in sight, on top of the documented torture these men have been through, is healthy, legal, and, moral, said [Pardiss Kebriaei](#), a senior staff attorney at CCR. The human experiment at Guantanamo where the government tests how far it can go, first with torture and now with hopeless, perpetual detention, before breaking human beings must end. Since the Trump administration will do nothing to respect human rights and the precarious health of our client, the courts must order it to.

As of a recent phone call with his attorneys, Al Hajj was still on hunger strike and weighed 104 pounds.

Al Hajj was arrested in Pakistan in 2002 and rendered by the United States to secret prisons, where he was interrogated under threats of electrocution and physical violence, subjected to regular beatings, and forced to endure complete darkness and continuous loud music. His brutal treatment is detailed in a [ruling](#) by the district court in Washington, D.C. striking statements from certain of his interrogations as tainted by torture.

In February 2017, a Periodic Review Board (PRB) conducted a review of Al Hajj's detention and recommended him for continuing indefinite detention. His next full review by the PRB will be in 2020.

For more information, visit the Center for Constitutional Rights [case page](#).

The Center for Constitutional Rights has led the legal battle over Guantanamo for more than 15 years representing clients in two Supreme Court cases and organizing and coordinating hundreds of pro bono lawyers across the country, ensuring that nearly all the men detained at Guantanamo have had the option of legal representation. Among other Guantanamo cases, the Center represents the families of men who died at Guantanamo, and men who have been released and are seeking justice in international courts.

The Center for Constitutional Rights works with communities under threat to fight for justice and liberation through litigation, advocacy, and strategic communications. Since 1966, the Center for Constitutional Rights has taken on oppressive systems of power, including structural racism, gender oppression, economic inequity, and governmental overreach. Learn more at ccrjustice.org.

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