

Center for Constitutional Rights

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

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Public Facing Advocacy Writing

Contact: press@ccrjustice.org

Habeas Relief Sought for Eight-Year Hunger Striker

June 25, 2015, Washington, D.C. Today, attorneys at the Center for Constitutional Rights (CCR) are seeking a court order granting his habeas petition and compelling the government to facilitate the immediate release of cleared Guantanamo prisoner Tariq Ba Odah. Mr. Ba Odah has been on hunger strike since February 2007 to protest his continued indefinite detention and solitary conditions of confinement at Guantanamo. According to information disclosed by the government, Mr. Ba Odah weighs only approximately 75 lbs. 56 percent of his ideal body weight a weight that experts say puts him on the precipice of death. Medical experts in today's filing confirm the military's force-feeding regimen is failing to keep him alive. Mr. Ba Odah has been imprisoned at Guantanamo for 13 years, yet despite the fact that he was cleared for release by top U.S. security agencies more than five years ago, the U.S. has refused to repatriate him to Saudi Arabia where his family resides or resettle him in a third country.

I visited Tariq on April 21, and he was nearly unrecognizable to me. He is now enduring more suffering at Guantanamo than he has ever known, **said Center for Constitutional Rights Attorney Omar Farah**. All the bones in his midsection are visible through his skin, his jawline and teeth protrude, and he says he is losing sensation in his hands and feet and his memory is fading. Despite having been cleared for release more than five years ago and despite his shocking condition, he is still being held in solitary confinement in Guantnamos Camp 5 facing irreversible harm and possibly death.

Dr. Jess Ghannam, Clinical Professor of Psychiatry and Global Health Sciences in the School of Medicine at the University of California, San Francisco confirms that the memory loss, the pain in Mr. Ba Odah's stomach and back, and the loss of sensation in his hands and feet described by his attorney are symptoms consistent with the extreme malnutrition often seen in end-stage cancer and AIDS patients.

Three medical experts submitted declarations in Mr. Ba Odah's case today:

Mr. Ba Odah's attorney, Omar Farah, continued, Tariq must be released immediately. The Obama administration has seen prisoners die at Guantanamo on its watch before. If it had foreseen those deaths, would it have done anything differently? For the sake of Tariq who is now 75 pounds and in immense suffering and for justice, I hope the answer is yes.

Tariq Ba Odah was picked up in Pakistan by local authorities and turned over to the U.S. military, then sent to Guantanamo in 2002 at age 23. He is now 36. He is one of 70 Yemenis currently held at Guantanamo, though he has residence and family in Saudi Arabia. Of those, 43 are cleared for release. Only 18 Yemeni men have been released from the prison since 2011. Today's filing sought to reopen Mr. Ba Odah's habeas petition, which had been voluntarily withdrawn last year.

Read today's filing and learn more about Tariq Ba Odah's case [here](#).

The Center for Constitutional Rights has led the legal battle over Guantanamo for more than 13 years representing clients in two Supreme Court cases and organizing and coordinating hundreds of pro bono lawyers across the country, ensuring that all the men detained at Guantanamo have had the option of legal representation. CCR is responsible for many Guantanamo cases in many venues, representing men in their habeas cases in federal court and before the military commissions and Periodic Review Boards, the families of men who died at Guantanamo, and men who have been released and are seeking accountability 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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666 Broadway
7th Floor
New York, NY 10012

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