

Center for Constitutional Rights

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

<https://ccrjustice.org/home/press-center/press-releases/new-release-hearing-held-cia-tortured-gitmo-forever-prisoner>

Public Facing Advocacy Writing

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February 28, 2017, Guantanamo Today, an attorney from the Center for Constitutional Rights (CCR) urged a Periodic Review Board (PRB) at Guantanamo to recommend that CCR client [Sharqawi Al Hajj](#) be cleared for release. The hearing is the second held under the Trump administration. Mr. Al Hajj has been detained without charge at Guantanamo since 2004. Before being sent to Guantanamo, he was tortured for two years in secret prisons. As detailed in an unclassified district court opinion in his habeas case, in Jordan, Al Hajj was beaten and interrogated under threats of electrocution and violence. He was then transferred to an infamous dark prison in Kabul for five months, where he was held in complete darkness and subjected to continuous loud music. He is among 26 remaining detainees the Obama administration designated for continuing detention without charge.

Mr. Al Hajj is among those prisoners the government might as well say are too tortured to charge but won't release, said Center for Constitutional Rights Senior Staff Attorney [Pardiss Kebriaji](#). It remains to be seen whether the PRB exercises real discretion in reviewing his detention or will be reduced to a rubber stamp under Trump, if the boards continue at all.

A federal court [ruled](#) in 2011 that the torture tainted subsequent interrogations of Mr. Al Hajj in Bagram and Guantanamo and prevented the government from relying on information obtained in them to justify his detention. Despite that ruling, during Al Hajj's initial PRB hearing the government drew upon information that had been previously discredited. While Al Hajj was subsequently [granted a new PRB hearing](#) in November, the hearing date was deferred until this month, and Mr. Al Hajj's request to expedite his hearing before the end of the Obama administration was denied.

Mr. Al Hajj, a citizen of Yemen, is 43 years old and in poor health. He traveled to Afghanistan in 2000 for reasons having nothing to do with the U.S., and fled to Pakistan when the U.S. invaded after 9/11.

The PRB is a forward-looking, administrative process to determine whether detention is necessary to protect against a continuing significant threat to the security of the United States.

For more information, see [Mr. Al Hajj's profile](#).

The Center for Constitutional Rights has led the legal battle over Guantanamo for over 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 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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We can connect you with just the right person at CCR for the story you're working on.

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