

PERIODIC REVIEW BOARD INITIAL HEARING, 15 MAR 2016
SHARQAWI ABDU ALI AL-HAJJ, ISN 1457
PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE OPENING STATEMENT

Members of the Board, we appreciate this opportunity to present you with the case for the transfer of Sharqawi Abdu Ali Al-Hajj. Sharqawi took the occasion of our first meeting to describe his experiences and his hope for the future.

In 1998, as a young man full of idealism and wanting to help oppressed people, Sharqawi travelled to Bosnia. While there, he met with forces from the United States and the United Kingdom and joined the Bosnian Army. After the war, he turned in his weapon and left Bosnia and the army. While being interested in the plight of the poor, meek and oppressed, Sharqawi has disavowed his involvement in war and aggression, because he believes it to be against the will of God.

Sharqawi will be able to rely on the support of his family, who are a respected family and have no relationships with extremists; they were against his leaving Yemen. He has prepared himself for the future, by taking many courses at Guantanamo, including Adobe Photoshop and English.

Sharqawi does not support extremist organizations. He does not approve of the recent acts by the Islamic State as he feels they have killed a lot of innocent people, creating instability in the region. He could never defend such heinous acts.

Sharqawi wants to make it perfectly clear to the Board that he is seeking to go to a stable, peaceful country to start his life over and that he is not a threat to the United States.