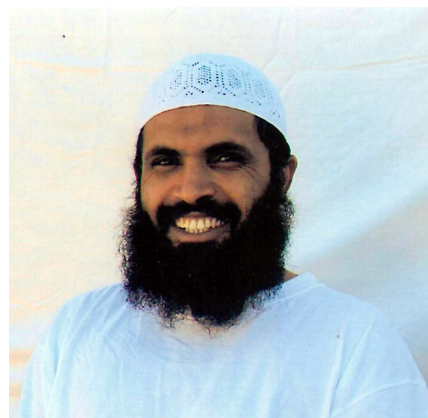


## Saad Al Qahtani

Saad Al Qahtani, ISN 200, was one of the first prisoners taken to Guantánamo and held in an open-air cage in Camp X-Ray. He arrived at Guantánamo on January 16, 2002, and he remains there today – even though United States military, law enforcement, and intelligence officials decided many years ago that he should be sent back to his home country of Saudi Arabia.



Saad is 34 years old, and he has spent one-third of his life detained without charge at Guantánamo. He is bright, engaging, and speaks at least six languages fluently. While at Guantánamo, he taught himself to speak, read, and write English. Saad's extraordinary language skills and his ability to mediate disputes between prison staff and other prisoners have made him a favorite among his guards and interrogators.

Saad's father died when he was eight years old, and his mother and grandmother raised him and his five siblings in Khamis Mushayt, Saudi Arabia. Saad's mother and his grandmother both died in November 2007. As of that time, Guantánamo prisoners were not allowed to speak with their families by telephone or videoconference. As a result, his mother was unable to see Saad or hear his voice in the last 5½ years of her life. Saad and his siblings are extremely close, and the family anxiously awaits Saad's return home.

Saad is not and has never been a threat to the United States or its allies. He has never engaged in hostilities or combat operations, never fired a weapon at anyone, and never had any intention of taking up arms against the United States or its allies. Long before September 11, 2001, Saad travelled to Afghanistan because he was curious about the Taliban government (recognized by his home country as legitimate), and because he wanted to help the Afghan people, who had endured decades of war. The only time Saad fought anyone was when he intervened to stop Taliban soldiers from beating an Afghan truck driver. Unwilling to participate in the fighting that erupted in Afghanistan during the second half of 2001, Saad made his way to Pakistan, went to the first police station he could find, and asked for help in returning home. Instead the Pakistanis turned Saad over to U.S. forces, who were then offering generous bounties for foreigners captured in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Saad was transported to Kandahar prison and then to Guantánamo.

Over the past eleven years, numerous American guards and interrogators have told Saad that his release from Guantánamo was imminent. Within the first year of his imprisonment, United States and Saudi authorities determined that Saad did not belong in Guantánamo. The Administrative Review Board established under the Bush Administration approved Saad to return to his home country in 2008. In 2009, the Review Task Force established by President Obama also determined unanimously that Saad should be repatriated. Saudi government officials told Saad and his family in the spring and summer of 2012 that he would return home very soon, and guards told Saad the same thing. Because of these repeated promises of release from Guantánamo, Saad agreed to stay the court proceedings on his petition for habeas corpus.

Saad refuses to complain about the harsh and degrading treatment he has received at the hands of U.S. forces in Kandahar and at Guantánamo. Having suffered from depression and insomnia for several years,

Saad is now sinking into despondency over the repeatedly broken promises to release him from Guantánamo. Saad wants only to return to his family and homeland where he can continue his studies, work, get married, and resume his life.

Patricia A. Bronte