

CLOSING GITMO: UNINTENDED (?) CONSEQUENCES

As you all presumably know, I've been in the city of sin all week, doing two days of training and then, yesterday, attending some really good panels at Netroots Nation.

One highlight of the week for me will surely be my panel Saturday at 1:45 Las Vegas time (4:45 ET). Congressman Jerrold Nadler, Center for Constitutional Rights Director Vince Warren, Matthew Alexander, American Prospect's Adam Serwer, and I will talk about why we need to close Gitmo and how we can do it.

I fear we're going to be talking as much about unintended consequences as we will about closing Gitmo the right way.

Take the case of Abdul Aziz Naji. He's the Algerian who had been detained at Gitmo, who objected being sent back to his home country because he feared torture. Though he appealed his repatriation all the way to SCOTUS (here's Balkinization on the legal issues), he ultimately lost his bid to stay in Gitmo rather than be returned home.

And now, after being returned to Algeria on Monday, he has apparently disappeared.

The New York-based Center for Constitutional Rights, which represents many Guantanamo detainees, said Naji's lawyers and family have been unable to locate or contact him since he was repatriated by the U.S. government.

"His whereabouts and well-being in Algeria are currently unknown," it said in a statement. "Mr. Naji has disappeared since his return to Algeria, and is presumably being held in secret detention by Algerian state security

forces.”

Pardiss Kebriaei, a lawyer with the center, said: “We know that he’s been transferred. But as for where he is ... we don’t know. It’s very concerning.”

Now, Algeria’s government has denied that he was detained. Which is interesting since—as the Long War Journal points out—our own government called his repatriation a transfer, not a release. That usually means transfer into custody. That seems to suggest we did intend Algeria to hold him.

So where is he?

Anyway, hopefully CCR’s Warren will have an update when he speaks on Saturday.