

Detainees in Britain

Between the Hammer of detention and the Anvil of forced repatriation

We do not know if there is a place where our case can still stir anyone in this world while they see the tragedies and catastrophes in Iraq, Afghanistan and Guantanamo. But regardless of whether people are stirred with our case or not, for us to record what is happening to us is a duty we must perform. Our tragedy and pain is part of the series of pains that is felt by people in cases like ours when laws are destroyed and flames ignited by politicians whose only desire is the achievement of their tyrannical subjugation and the spreading and domination of their lowly thoughts engulfs any notion of human rights.

In our case there is much that can be said. We can speak about the malicious racism against Muslims and we are witness against this crime. We can also speak about political oppression against weak minority groups and the bypassing of human rights law. We are witness against this crime. But our case has particulars which we will present to every free and honourable person so it can clearly be seen that high values, laws and principles are shattered in countries some would assume are firmly married to such principles. It will be shown that these principles are artificial and these countries' commitments to them are simply an illusion. They are deceptive mercenary slogans that are used as political tools to destroy opponents and to achieve oppression and tyranny.

Our case is as follows:

We are a group of individuals – our number now reaches around thirty – but sections of the security services and political world announces, on certain special occasions, that we are in our hundreds. We came to this country – Britain – for several reasons - every one of us has a different reason. What connects us, however, is that we all escaped the hell of our own countries, the torturous police and the suffocating prisons hopeful that in the land of the bastion of human rights and the rule of law, we will be free to exercise basic freedoms such as the freedom of thought and freedom of speech. This was our only ambition. Nothing more or less.

However, due to our childish naïve thinking we assumed that this right is granted to all regardless of origin, roots or creed. It was easy to be naïve. The slogans coming from these parts have filled the world. Was the first document on human rights not produced in Britain? The veiled truth is that we have fallen prey to these slogans.

Our countries – Libya, Algeria, Jordan and Tunisia are the countries of evil prisons and violent dictatorships. They are jungles ruled by monsters. This is the reality in which we lived and this Government declared these countries as inhumane. We assumed these declarations were being made for the sake of high principles which we thought were the highest authority in this land but we found this to be nothing but a façade in a façade.

The prisons in these countries have become safe abodes for their prisoners? Their judiciary – fair and just? Their police, humane, and their governments have come to respect human rights laws? For the sake of political and economic contracts, this is how this government would like to present tyrannical rulers. This new assessment of the same old oppression has no connections to reality or the principles of human rights.

All that has changed is the government of Britain and its head, Tony Blair, have signed papers which they call "Memorandums of Understanding" which have no legal weight and no enforceability whatsoever. Intelligent people the world over as well as international human rights groups have affirmed that these agreements are not worth the paper they are written on. In these memos – of which a copy is attached with this statement – our countries have made a commitment to the government of Tony Blair that they will not torture us in their prisons and

their detention centres. Our countries that do not respect international agreements they have previously signed and committed themselves to for decades will today, after being approached by Great Britain, be presented by the government of Tony Blair, which lies to its own people, as governments which are able to respect a paper that carries nothing but fantasy commitments on the part of those governments. This is a mockery of people and their rights that Britain has excelled in.

After signing this laughable Memorandum, our homes were raided and our sanctities were violated. Our women and children were traumatised and we were taken as hostages to detention centres with no access to any laws which respect our humanity. We are treated like drug dealers and criminal killers. Days go by to become weeks and months. It has almost been a year and we are living in oppressive conditions enforced on us by a secretive court that is a mockery of a court. Neither we, nor our lawyers, are allowed to see the evidence against us.

The final chapter in this tragic comedy about the tyrant and the oppressed is the insistence of a third party to act as guarantor to this Memorandum. Organisations were quickly set up and hastily registered themselves as companies like the Justice Organisation in Jordan. Governmental organisations like the Gaddafi Institute in Libya were talked of as being independent third parties, this organisation being from the same government that stands on the necks of our families. This is how the wolf is allowed to guard the sheep in these strange times.

Our condition is in decline, our families are pained and our only crime was we were deceived by the slogans this country held up in regard to respect for human rights. We have in fact been kidnapped and are being used as pawns in oppressive political contracts.

If we have committed any crime then let a just court rule in our case. But they know our only crime is that we pursued our right to expose the oppression of our governments and all those who are complicit in their crimes and we were involved in activities which would have been justifiable in this country if the slogans this country declared are to be believed. This bite of freedom that we tasted has become our offence.

We are well aware that our human rights have been violated by these western governments; the record of the British Government has matched the record of our countries from which we fled. This government no longer cares for the reports of international organisations. For there have been tens of international organisations that have issued their reports on these Memorandums and the arrests but these reports and opinions have been disregarded as was the opinion of millions in the war against Iraq which was waged based on lies pertaining to weapons of mass destruction.

What is the point of this statement? It is a testament which we want to record, hoping that we find attentive ears and that this statement is carried so that there can be no ignoramus who stands up to justify these crimes that have been committed against us.

Notice

Most of the detainees have been granted political asylum and legal residency and this confirms the British Government's assessment that these detainees were and remain at serious risk of torture if they are returned.

For more information please contact our *solicitors whose addresses are attached to this statement. Also please send your letters of support to them.

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