

The Unresolved Issue of Dr Aafia Siddiqui

The shocking case of Dr Aafia Siddiqui the esteemed Muslimah and neuroscientist who became the poster girl of America's 'War on Terror' is one of the most horrendous examples of American exceptionalism in recent years.

In 2003, Aafia was kidnapped by the Pakistani security service, the ISI, under the Musharraf government, and handed over to the American authorities to be held in the notorious Bagram prison.

Her three young children were missing for years, allegedly incarcerated too, but the whereabouts of her then newborn baby has to date never been established.

Aafia's link to a 9/11 suspect was enough to warrant the brutality and injustice she has suffered ever since, and it was Yvonne Ridley the British investigative journalist who uncovered the truth about Aafia's whereabouts, calling her "the most wronged woman in the world". She discovered that Aafia, prisoner 650, was known as the grey lady of Bagram as her screams from the five-year long torture and repeated rape haunted the corridors of the military prison she was held in for years.

As though this wasn't enough after the long years in Bagram, Aafia faced trial in the US on the most dubious of charges - this petite 44kg young woman allegedly took up arms against prison guards in a bid to escape! - No evidence associated with being a high level Al Qaeda operative as is alleged was ever found. The case itself bought international condemnation, a wave of emotion and criticism of America's War on Terror.

Yet unbelievably our sister Aafia was sentenced to 86 years of incarceration in a high level prison, FMC Carswell in Fort Worth, Texas. Making it glaring obvious to all commentators that despite the dubious evidence, and the disproportionate sentence which did not fit the alleged crime - as well as the obvious torture and abuse she had already suffered, the US was intent on making an example of Aafia to silence their own Muslim population. Thus securing their agenda against any voice of truth about the malicious war of hegemony that US troops inflicted upon the entire populations of Iraq and Afghanistan.

The devious plans of President Bush and his hawkish government was continued by subsequent governments. The 'long war' intended to suppress the rise of Islam and Muslims globally ensured that Aafia's case went largely unmentioned within the US. British charities Cage and Jfac have ensured Aafia has had access to lawyers who received funding for her case throughout this time, maintaining contact with her family, and always at the forefront of generating global awareness and concern for Aafia.

However despite the sincere efforts of even the most aware and accomplished individuals and notable organisations, Aafia continues to languish in the Texas prison. Kept in solidarity confinement for years at a time, beaten and tortured into near insanity; she was also brutally attacked last month by an inmate who smashed a mug of scalding coffee into her face, "almost blinding" her as she herself stated, and "unable to walk", so that she "had to be removed in a wheelchair".

Dr Aafia Siddiqui is the most honourable of Muslim women. A dedicated mother and noble dawah carrier she excelled in her profession and was an inspiration to all who knew her. She perfectly epitomised the many roles and responsibilities of a pious Muslimah; yet despite the huge honour and value Islam places upon every woman, this exceptional lady has been completely abandoned by the Muslim leaders who have never even bargained for her release let alone demanded it.

Muslim rulers and the Pakistani government in particular have the diplomatic clout to threaten the withdrawal of the political and military support they give the US throughout the AfPak region.

It is after all, every nation's prerogative to demand the release of its prisoners through measures if not diplomacy. Securing the release of prisoners is a universal law, a norm and a right that has existed throughout the civilisations. One which maintains that the true legitimacy of any leadership rests with the measures it takes to secure its own people.

So why are Muslim governments impotent in the face of the West? When will their fear and awe of the West be replaced with fear and awe of Allah (swt)?

Abu Bakr As-Siddiq (ra) reported, **«إِنَّ النَّاسَ إِذَا رَأَوْا الظَّالِمَ فَلَمْ يَأْخُذُوا عَلَى يَدَيْهِ أَوْشَكَ أَنْ يَعْتَهُمُ اللَّهُ بِعِقَابٍ مِنْهُ»** **“When people see an oppressor but do not prevent him from (doing evil), it is likely that Allah will punish them all.”** [Abu Dawud and At-Tirmidhi].

In light of this, Muslim prisoners and all men and women subjected to oppression and injustice, patiently await the return of a truly Islamic authority. The Khilafah (Caliphate) on the way of the Prophethood will prioritise the Muslim Ummah according to the perfect speech of Allah (swt) the Quran - and be a leadership that is willing and courageous enough to confront the evil and greed of man which drives him repeat great injustice.

The Shariah mandates that the Muslim armies are dutied with showing their strength to the oppressors, in order to free our prisoners and carry out what is necessary to make Allah's Word the highest, as He (swt) says in the Quran... **﴿وَمَا لَكُمْ لَا تُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَالْمُسْتَضْعَفِينَ مِنَ الرِّجَالِ وَالنِّسَاءِ وَالْوِلْدَانِ الَّذِينَ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا أَخْرِجْنَا مِنْ هَذِهِ الْقَرْيَةِ الظَّالِمِ أَوْلَاهَا﴾** **“What is the matter with you that do not fight for the cause of Allah and those oppressed men, women, and children who cry out, ‘Lord, rescue us from this town whose people are oppressors! By Your grace, give us a protector and give us a helper!’”** [Surah An-Nisaa: 75].

So this must be the call of this great global Ummah, that reverberates in the palaces and corridors of power. The call to, and conviction in the Khilafah - a traditional and holistic Islamic form of ruling which fulfils our collective duty to obey Allah (swt) regarding the matter of Islam, and to firmly re-establish this Deen in the lands of the Muslims, and returns the honour of so many innocent souls, honour that is snatched away by the imperialist oppressors and their gruesome Capitalist ideology of self-interest.

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