

NOWHERE TO GO

Sweden's complicity in the world-wide
detention of Monir Awad



About Cageprisoners

Cageprisoners is a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee which operates as a human rights NGO. The organisation seeks to work for political Muslim detainees, specifically those interned as a result of the 'War on Terror' and its peripheral campaigns, by raising awareness of the illegality and the global consequences of their detention. By promoting due process, the vision of the organisation is to see a return to the respect of those fundamental norms which transcend religion, societies and political theories.

Cageprisoners comprises of an advisory group which includes patrons, seasoned activists, lawyers, doctors and former detainees. From the group, a board has been elected which oversees the strategy and management of the organisation and its employees. By working in such a way the working environment of the organisation can constantly be reviewed in light of its aims and objectives.



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Introduction

Guantanamo Bay was the first visible symbol of the War on Terror to come to the world's attention. Its legality was immediately dubious to those versed in international human rights law. Its abuses became infamous; however it was only the beginning. Soon afterwards the existence of similar sights in Abu Ghraib, Bagram and Kandahar came to the world's attention. What has become apparent since 2001, in the past eight years, is that there is an entire worldwide network of prisons outside the realm of normal legal systems, which operate outside any legal jurisdictions, and with near impunity. The exact nature of the specific sites which make up this network vary from those best known such as the facility at Guantanamo bay to CIA black sites, whose inmates are nearly never known to those attempting to hold the authorities running these facilities to account.

The case of Monir Awad, a Swedish citizen of joint Palestinian and Lebanese descent, is an extremely interesting case study of the global detention network in the War on Terror which has come into existence since 2001. His case individually highlights nearly every aspect of this network and the specificities of its various permutations. These specificities include everything from detention without charge and the failure to produce any prima facie case for it, profiling, rendition, refoulement, abuse and torture whilst in detention, proxy prisons, the complicity of foreign security services in these detentions and lastly attempts to force links in interrogation between prisoners and Al-Qaeda. The case of Monir Awad highlights all these points, and how this system is beyond the law, operates with impunity, and with either the knowledge or at the behest of western governments and most importantly the injustice and human rights abuses it perpetrates.

Monir Awad has now been detained twice in the past four years. His first detention in 2006 occurred when he accidentally found himself in the conflict zone of Somalia when Ethiopian

forces invaded in December 2006. He was visiting there from the UAE for a short stay, evaluating whether it would be suitable for him and his pregnant wife (who was travelling with him) to settle. It was at this point that war broke out and in attempting to escape to Kenya, as the Swedish authorities advised, they were captured by Kenyan forces and their first experience of detention, rendition and abusive interrogations began.

After some time in Sweden and being reminded why they had originally decided that they should emigrate to a different part of the world, Monir and his partner along with their friend Mehdi Ghezali, a former Guantanamo prisoner, who shared their opinion of the intolerance of Swedish society again decided to try and find a place for themselves somewhere they would be comfortable settling. This time they decided also to couple this with a tour of the Muslim world to take in sites to see their heritage.

The interview conducted by Cageprisoners in Sweden with Monir Awad in October 2009 is the source for the information presented here. Our conclusions reached in this report have all been corroborated many times by various sources since the beginning of the "War on Terror".

[Asim Qureshi – Executive Director]

Horn of Africa detention

Monir Awad first left Sweden in October 2006 bound for the United Arab Emirates where his brother lived and worked. Here he was put in touch with a representative of the Union of Islamic Courts (UIC) which had come to power in Somalia earlier that year. The UIC had for the first time brought some semblance of order to the streets of Mogadishu after a 13 year civil war. There was a sense that this would be a crucial stage in building a stable and prosperous Somalia. In this period many Somali refugees and immigrants from other parts of the world travelled back to Somalia hoping to contribute to this developmental state-building process.

Monir Awad left Sweden and initially travelled to the UAE where his brother was living. While there he was given the contact details of the UIC representative in the country who he arranged to meet before he travelled to Somalia. He was told by the UIC representative about the future developments of Somalia and that security in the country was now fine for people to return or settle in Somalia. He was told he and his family would be provided work permits and visas. Safia Benaouda, Monir Awad's wife was four months pregnant at this stage and they were seriously considering raising their family in Somalia. Monir, spurred by these promises, he with his wife and friend travelled from the UAE to Somalia for a short two week visit to attempt to ascertain the suitability to settle there.

In Somalia they were met again by officials from the Somali government – of most significance was that the head of the welcoming committee was Sheikh Sharif, the current President of Somalia. They were welcomed and escorted by guards to a house where they were provided for comfortably. However it was not soon after their arrival that the Ethiopian invasion and occupation of Somalia began. They like all other foreign nationals followed the advice of their embassies and tried to move south to safety in Kenya.

Monir and his wife were separated for the journey on the recommendation of their hosts who felt it would be safer if the women travelled separately. The group that they were part of travelled via the port town of Kismayo to Afmadow and on to Ras Kamboni. Their situation was made worse when their guides left them stranded in the middle of nowhere. They found themselves in a barren land with no water and no food. Things reached their most dire when members of the group were forced to drink their own urine.

It was in this period that the area that the group of foreign nationals found themselves in was bombed by the Ethiopian military. Monir found himself running through the jungle and in his own words was “hunted” for two weeks. This period was made worse as he had been separated from his wife and he had no way of knowing what had happened to her. Eventually a small group of fifteen people, a much smaller group than the group that had originally set out together, reached the village of Kiunga, in northern Kenya. Here they were welcomed by the village's people given food, water and shelter. The group was told that they could stay in the village for the night and that in the morning a bus would take them to Nairobi. Here it must have seemed that their ordeal was nearly over.

The group, including Monir, were sitting in a mosque discussing their situation when one of the people present looked out of the window and starting telling everyone to get down. The mosque they were in had been surrounded by Kenyan soldiers who the villagers had called secretly. This was in fact the beginning of their detention in the Horn of Africa. The group were told that they could not stay in the village and removed from the mosque and made to take off their clothes. They were then taken to a ‘station’ in the jungle where interrogations and accusations of being terrorists and criminals began.

Here we can draw out the first important irregularity in the detention the group underwent and therefore also of the entire system of detention in the Horn of Africa. They were interrogated here by people who spoke perfect English or more precisely and verbatim in the words of Monir Awad:

“They were black people but they were speaking English. Some of them could speak perfect American. Maybe they were American, who knows.”

This initial interrogation which lasted for two days focused around the issue of why Monir Awad had been in Somalia. The core allegations levelled against him were that he was working for the UIC, that he was a terrorist and that he was a member of al-Qaeda. Importantly and in contravention to international standards of due process not a single shred of evidence was presented to justify their detention. They were, after these two days, transported by a bus, two helicopters and a warplane to Nairobi. From the airport in Nairobi they were taken in cars to a prison in Kenya.

Though Monir and his fellow captives were unaware at the time, they did discover later that the Swedish government was aware of the presence of its citizens in Nairobi and of their illegal detention:

“They knew it because another Swedish brother was in prison too. He was kept in an open prison. He had reached to a camp of foreigners. There he met with the Swedish embassy. The Swedish embassy had told him that there were other Swedish citizens.”

It was in this period that the extent of the involvement of various European or American Intelligence services in their detention became apparent to Monir. In one incident related by him the British citizen in his group was led away to a ‘big house’ where he met with MI5 representatives. Upon his return this British citizen was then ‘given new shoes’ whilst the guards at the facility ‘treated his wounds’:

“Firstly they took British citizen to meet MI5. They took him to a big house. When he came back he was given new shoes and they treated his injuries. Everyone thought this will happen for them too and they will get to go home.”

However even though he and his companions hoped that their treatment as EU citizens would be similar to their British counterpart, this was simply not to be. After approximately 10 to 15 days in this facility in Kenya they found themselves suddenly being put on rendition flights to Somalia – still a conflict zone at the time. This was and is illegal under international law and is termed *refoulement*, the forceful removal of a person to a place where they will face danger. Monir was able to establish to where he was rendered to when he caught a glimpse of a sign at Mogadishu airport.

In Mogadishu they were kept at first in relatively good conditions. Here also the presence of a third intelligence agency became apparent to those detained with Monir Awad; they were filmed by French security services who made a type of documentary though it seems they did not interrogate them. It was not until they were back in Sweden that they again had any sort of contact with the French security services.

However their stay in Somalia was even shorter than their detention in Kenya and it was not long before Monir Awad and his companions were rendered from Somalia to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. This time they were again cuffed and hooded on the journey. On arrival in Ethiopia Monir and his group were taken in coaches from the airport to a place that was described as “where people throw garbage”. Here they encountered the worst conditions of their detention.

“So we end up in this garbage place. It is rotten. We were asking each other to look at the state of the place. We felt so sorry that we were put in there. There rats or some other things. It did not even have the windows. It was an old rotten place may be like an old prison. So they put us in there, four or five people in each room. Then they started working on this building every day. For two weeks they worked day and night. They put up snipers, they put wall around this prison, and they put up electricity around it. So they were building up everything while we were there.”

According to him there were rats, no windows, and four or five people to a cell. For the next two weeks after their arrival there was constant around the clock construction taking place, as a purpose built prison was erected. This new facility, quite literally constructed around Monir and his fellow prisoners, had new walls, windows, electricity and even sniper positions added after they arrived. It was not until sometime after that they started to construct extremely small isolation cells and move people over to them.

It was the Ethiopians who first began to interrogate the prisoners being held at the site. Monir notes the level of kindness and compassion showed by the Ethiopians whom he quotes as saying “you are our brothers” and who mentioned that in the Muslim faith and in the life of the prophet Muhammad there is extensive mention in a positive light of the justice of the Ethiopian king at the time, the Najjashi. One of his Ethiopian jailers on one occasion even asked if he needed anything and when he replied that he wanted his wife the same Ethiopian soldier took him to meet her. This was made possible by the fact that in Ethiopia everyone was kept in the same prison. The facility had two different rooms one for the men and the other for the women. Previously to this, since their ordeal began, Muneer and Safia had been separated in their travel to Kenya and had lost track of where the other

was. It was not until they were both being held in Kenya that they had learned that the other was alive. After their brief meeting in Kenya, Monir had only been able to speak to his wife once in Somalia.

After the first round of interrogations conducted by the Ethiopian intelligence services, people from the facility started to be taken to other places for interrogation. Again these people were hooded and cuffed and were gone for a variety of lengths lasting up to four or five days. According to the testimony of Monir these people were abused and tortured wherever it was that they were being taken. He describes the people who were returned to their cells as being “in their graves”. Monir described the situation as the following:

“...one of those brothers he came into our room. He was so bad miskeen (poor guy) subhanallah. He was just crying and he just fell down. When they brought him in he just fell down. We asked what happened. We still had no idea. We thought we were in good hands, do you understand? We did not think that it was something or that we were terrorists or other. When we saw him I said, “It’s done!” y’ani we are in big, big trouble. I asked him what had happened and he told me that he was taken to a big house. There were Jewish people from Israelis, Mossad, MI5, MI6, CIA, and FBI. I said, “Are you saying the truth?” he said, “wallahi [by God] ya akhi[oh brother]” and he started crying. I asked him what they had done to him. He said; they beat me, they did this and this. They give you some medicine and you start to talk. You tell them everything. Then he said to me, these are his words, “they put stuff in your food, they make you sick, and you sleep for days on.”

Not long after this it was Monir Awad’s turn to be interrogated. Hooded and cuffed he was taken from the facility where he was being held to a house. In this house he explained about the Ethiopians role there:

“They do nothing. They are just like slaves. They have nothing to talk about. They are just slaves in this house. They guard you, they take you to the interrogation, and they take you to the bathroom. They do nothing. They don’t beat you.”

In this house not only do the Ethiopians do nothing but according to Awad “It’s the Americans who beat you”. Awad’s case highlights just one of the possible configurations of the relationship that has developed in many parts of the world between various states and western intelligence agencies. In some places for instance the entire prison is run by the host state and the only presence of western intelligence services is in an extremely background role where they rarely partake in interrogations or are seen by the prisoners; but their presence can be deduced from the information that interrogators have about the prisoners lives in their own countries such as phone contacts and emails they have sent, or by the occasional view of a foreign face which does not belong there. However this was not the case in the interrogation centre that Monir was in, in Ethiopia. Though all the various configurations on the spectrum of western involvement can be termed as “proxy prisons” this form of detention was more akin to a black site. Here the host state’s role was minimal, in the role of simply administration, but the entire interrogation process was conducted exclusively and directly by members of foreign intelligence agencies. This however is not a surprising revelation but only reiterates a now established point. For instance a report published in April 2009 by Cageprisoners, *Fabricating Terrorism II: British complicity in renditions and torture*¹, established the fact that the British intelligence services had been complicit in torture and/or rendition in Pakistan, Egypt, Syria, Jordan, the UAE, and Kenya. This point was further reiterated in a recent report published by Human Rights Watch, *Cruel Britannia*².

These interrogations took place with about eight interrogators at a time seated casually on comfortable couches and with tea and coffee available for the interrogators. The interrogators themselves were predominantly Caucasian, although there was mention of a single black individual and were predominantly western:

“As I went in the white people said, “Hello Monir, how are you?” I said I do not know who you guys are. They said that finally they had caught me and this and that. And then they started this lie that you are part of al-Qaeda and this and that. And then it started. They were bringing up all the accusations; false accusation and they were lying. They tried as if they were doing an experiment. They said you did this and this and this. You work for this and this. They put up so many stories. These people stayed for about three weeks then the investigator team changed. A new team came. They stayed for some time then changed and a new team came on. And this went on.”

As with the interrogation of Monir’s companion, his interrogation was also conducted by a variety of intelligence agencies including the British (it is not clear whether it was MI5 or MI6), Mossad, and the Lebanese whom Monir suspects were included as he is of Lebanese descent. In the exact words of Monir “they were from all over the world”. They alleged that he had travelled to Beirut to get military training and that he had then travelled onto Somalia to fight alongside the UIC. It is possible that these forum type interrogations were either experimental in nature or training exercises of some sort as this type of interrogation has been totally unreported until now. Further to this Monir Awad himself believes this to be the case.

¹ Cageprisoners, *Fabricating Terrorism II: British complicity in renditions and torture*, April 2009

² Human Rights Watch, *Cruel Britannia*, November 2009

It was in these interrogations which lasted from dawn till dusk, with the prisoners moved in the dark before the dawn prayer and after the dusk prayer that the abuses truly began. Firstly they would make him stand for the entire duration of the interrogation from arriving till leaving. Secondly he was beaten. If he tried at any point to sit, he would be beaten even more:

“I was not supposed to sit down. If I sat they would beat me up. So I got used to standing all day. They used to say to me that you are a dog and you can’t sit down. You have to keep standing. Sometimes they used to come and beat me up. There was a big black American guy, his name was Dennis. He used to come and beat up often. He would try to choke you.

They wanted to know everything from you, from the beginning to the end. Where you were born, who do you know and who you do not know. They give you all the telephone numbers you had in Sweden and ask questions.”

This is a key point in proving Swedish complicity in the detention of Monir Awad in Ethiopia in 2007. Those who were interrogating Monir Awad would not have been able to have gotten the telephone numbers without the complicity of the Swedish authorities and security services. When asked about this Monir Awad stated that:

“...this is a good question. I asked this from Thomas Butson, who is a big lawyer in Sweden and used to be a politician. I asked him once that how they could know all those things. He said that you have to know that there is not only Swedish intelligence inquiring its all the intelligence agencies from around the world. They get information from each other. But I was like; I told SÄPO (Swedish security police) when the tough time was going on, and at one point I was feeling really, really bad. I told this officer from CIA, she was a black woman; she was the in charge in those three weeks. She was the in charge of interrogation. She asked me that why I thought they had

been doing this. I told her that they were doing this because they hated Muslims and it was a war against Islam. I said that we are like Jewish people in this time. We are the Jewish people of today. She said, no, no. It is not like this. She asked if I wanted to know why they were doing it. I said yes and she said, “We do this because the Swedish asked us to do this. This is the Sweden who is afraid of you. You are a danger to Sweden. And we have to prove to Sweden, with your help, that you are not dangerous for Sweden. You have to convince us that you are not a danger to Sweden.”

Other than this point, there was also one other incident which throws into connection the level of involvement that the Swedish had with the detention and thus also the abuses which Monir Awad suffered.

“And I told SAPO police that there is a woman she is some kind of in charge over CIA and she told me all this. They said that this was very strange. One other time when I was standing up; I was not supposed to sit down but I used to sit down anyway and they would come and kick me, the Ethiopian soldiers would come and kick me and order me to stand up, I refused to stand up, I could not stand up because of a problem in my stomach, so one American guy he came up and said, “what is wrong with you?” I told him that I was sick and had pain in my stomach. He said that he would bring me the doctor. Then a woman came. I could not see her. Then she asked in Swedish, “Monir, do you have pain in your stomach? Oh did I speak Swedish?” then she started laughing like ha, ha, ha and went away. And I was sitting there waiting for her to come back. And I was thinking all the time that who was this woman.”

These interrogations lasted for five or six weeks, becoming slightly less frequent towards the end. At first they were every day. After this they became three times a week, and sometimes they were “a week on and a week off”.

During this entire process of detention, abuse and torture there was an ongoing process whereby they were periodically taken to a court where the intelligence services would claim that they needed more time to gather evidence. It is interesting to note the use in these proceedings of the term “enemy combatant”. This term was a term first introduced into the vocabulary by the US in justifying its illegal detentions in Guantanamo Bay. They found it useful to use this term as if the prisoners in Guantanamo Bay were designated as POW’s they would have been subject to certain articles of the Geneva Conventions which the US found it expedient to deny those they had detained. It is telling that this term has since then travelled across the world to be used in the illegal detention of people in the Horn of Africa; it is perhaps a subtle indication to the direction from which the war on terror, its directives, methods and narratives actually flow.

After a detention of approximately three months they were released and returned to Sweden.

Harassment in Sweden

As with most people who are detained and then deported, when Monir Awad and his family arrived back in Sweden they were immediately interrogated by the Swedish security agency, SAPO. Further to this it also transpired that all of his friends and acquaintances whom he had mentioned in his interrogations in Ethiopia had in his absence been questioned and interrogated – further implicating the Swedish in the detention and abuse of Monir. However their questioning did not end there and in what has also in the past few years become common place the friends of Monir have now also become targets for regular harassment by the security services in Sweden.

Monir himself started to be harassed by the security services everywhere he went: they came to his house; they tried to talk to him in the street. When Monir refused to cooperate with them, the security services began to show another side and the harassment and intimidation became far more targeted. Monir Awad was having some difficulty with his contract in terms of finding accommodation. A friend of his had thus found a place for him to rent under his name. The security services visited the landlord who was renting out the property on many occasions, showing him a picture of Monir and asking him questions about him. On one occasion he got curious and inquired as to why they were interested in him: their response was to say that he was a very dangerous terrorist who they were watching closely. Not long after this incident not only was Monir evicted from his place of residence but the SAPO also made sure that his friend who had tried to help him was also evicted from his residence.

Then came the final incident which occurred which convinced Monir that he could not stay in Sweden and that his family would have to find somewhere else to settle. The incident that occurred came when one of the men who had been detained with him in Ethiopia was arrested in France.

This in turn prompted the French security services to come to Sweden to question him. The Swedish authorities started it seems to hunt Monir and even came to his house informing him that the French wanted to question him:

“Yes, I felt like I was hunted. I told them, “if French people come here and want to interrogate me, maybe next time Spain come, next time maybe Britain this, it will never end. They still, they will continue with this. I said, “I’ve had enough of this. I don’t want to have any contact with you”

This was the final impetus in convincing him to leave Sweden once more in an attempt to find a suitable place for emigration. It was in Monir’s attempt to do this that he found himself illegally detained without charge and abused once more, this time in Pakistan.

Pakistani detention

Monir Awad left Sweden with his family and his friend Mehdi Ghezali and first headed for Saudi Arabia in 2008. The reason they chose the time and place that they did was to coincide their trip with being in the Holy Places of Islam within the holy month of Ramadan. The reality was that they simply wanted to be in a Muslim country in which they would not face xenophobia and harassment.

From here they decided to take a tour which took them for two weeks to Turkey, and then onto, Iran and eventually Pakistan. In Iran they found a small Sunni community in the eastern city of Zahedan. Here they decided to stay for a while and found a place to stay next to the University in Zahedan. Here they socialised with many of the local people with whom they often and most predominantly discussed their common religion. Zahedan is very close to the Iranian border with Pakistan and by a process of osmosis across the border they found that they were drawn to what they heard about Pakistan. For this reason they decided that the next place on their tour would be Pakistan. As far as Monir Awad was concerned there was no better reason for this than to simply be among other Muslims; after all, their purpose was to find a place suitable to settle amongst other Muslims.

However it was not long after entering into Pakistan that the group was stopped at a checkpoint by the police. Here they were initially told that there was no problem even though they had no stamps in their passports as these could be given at any time. This however was not the case. By the next morning the same policemen who had detained them the previous day had gone from wearing the uniforms of ordinary policemen to wearing the uniforms of special anti-terror units. That day the group was photographed by Pakistani journalists. In the exact words of Monir Awad:

“They wanted to make it seem like they had caught big terrorists”

It is interesting to note that the initial arrest and detention of the group occurred in Dera Ghazi Khan (DGK), In Punjab. If one was to examine a map you would see how far this was from any of the regions in the northwest where there was unrest and fighting. Coming from Zahedan in Iran they could have been going anywhere. Basically put their location alone in DGK would not constitute grounds for reasonable suspicion that they had an intention to engage in any violent activity in the northern regions as their entry point in Pakistan was through the Balochi border which has the most convenient access point to the troubles regions.

On that second day Monir and his family were still in a single cell when the guards came with approximately ten women and did a full body search of Monir’s wife, Safia Benaouda. After this, at the end of the second day at about 11pm Monir was taken to his first interrogation. After this initial interrogation him and his wife were separated and put into different segregated cells, one for men and one for women. It should be remembered that at this point Monir’s two year old son was with his wife, and that his wife was also five months pregnant with their second child. Monir and Safia Benaouda were repeatedly interrogated during the duration of their detention in DGK sometimes separately and other times together. At no point was a single shred of evidence presented to justify this detention.

After the initial detention in DGK they were hooded and cuffed and taken to a place where they were flown in a helicopter to Islamabad and another detention facility there. It felt to Monir as if this detention facility may have been underground but he told Cageprisoners that he could not be sure as they were hooded throughout the journey.

Here they were placed in cells, two to a cell. These cells were kept fully illuminated and there was a camera watching the inmates around the clock. It is important to note that though this may not sound severe it is a central part of modern interrogation techniques, labelled by the US administration as “enhanced”. There is now an emphasis on sleep deprivation and extremes of temperature over long periods of time to confuse and break prisoners. The effect of constant light destroying the perception of a night and a day, should not be underestimated:

“You know, they drive down, like it’s under the ground. It’s like you go in a tunnel and then they take you off. You can’t see of course, you have the hood on and cuffs. Then they take you in they are different rooms, there are different rooms and every room, they have seven rooms. Seven rooms. Each room, two person. So they put you there. You have no light, you can’t see the sun, it’s always light on. 24 hours. There is a camera in the room 24 hours. You basically, you live there. You have to. This is the area you live in. You just, ya’ani you’re just two in this area, you can, you sit there 24 hour a day. When you go to the toilet they put this hood on, take you to the toilet, then take you back. They have two doors. First iron door, then they have another door so they slam it. So it’s two doors. You can’t breathe ya’ani properly.”

This vein of psychological torture is amplified further in many ways. For instance there are two doors to the cell of which one is a big iron door. These doors are of a nature that they allow only a very low level of oxygen into the cell, and as there were no windows, it became extremely asphyxiating, hot and uncomfortable. Surprise interrogations are carried out at absolutely random times increasing the discomfort and confusion felt by the prisoners.

“They take you, they came in the morning. Morning or anytime. Sometimes in night, sometimes in day. They came you wear this cuffs normally from nowhere they open the big iron door”

At the time of these interrogations prisoners are hooded (for some reason with two hoods) and cuffed and taken into a room which is kept at a freezing temperature. Extremes of temperature are another key aspect of this emphasis on psychological manipulation. Whereas for instance in the cells it would be hot and asphyxiating, in the interrogation cells it was kept freezing. The prisoners are made to sit for hours at a time in this room before the actual interrogation begins; in this period, and not by accident, the prisoners are allowed to hear other interrogation taking place where they hear people screaming and crying. This is what Monir Awad was forced to endure repeatedly:

“...then you hear they, you hear them when they come. So they go to this particular room, if it’s you they open this. They say “stand up.” You stand up. They put on a hood then put one so it’s two hoods you put on your face. Then you put your cuffs on. Then they say “sit down”, you sit down. You wait for another guy to come back and take you. Then they place you in a room. A cold room. Ice cold. You sit there, maybe sit there sometimes for an hour, two hours, three hours. I don’t know, but you sit there a long time. It became ice cold, then they came. So you stand up. When you hear the other interrogations, you hear people screaming, you hear people crying. So they come and take you, they take you into interrogation into this small room like an American room or something. It could be an interrogation room in Europe. They have a big desk and a guy sitting in front of you and he start to interrogation interrogate you. He asks you question, you don’t answer, he beat you”

He was threatened with the use of electric shocks, and his interrogators employed a variety of methods when beating him, including three different types of stick: the first is a standard police baton; they then have an almost identical one which is just longer; and lastly they have a thinner snappier stick which bruises almost immediately.

To increase to the trauma of the situation not just for himself but also his entire family, some of Monir Awad's beatings took place in front of his wife and son. This has implanted a form of trauma which can and may become generational in nature. Of these interrogations which lasted every day for two weeks Monir says:

"But they beat you....they beat you in your head. They smack you in your head. Like this baton it's like a baseball stick. And he, he use it on your head. He don't care. He told me, you die here."

The most important questions for the duration of the interrogation were what they were doing in Pakistan, if they had come to fight in Pakistan or Afghanistan and were they terrorists or not.

In his detention in Pakistan in 2009 there was only one factor which could be considered a saving grace, however it was too little too late. At some point, without the knowledge of Monir, his wife and family were moved to another safe house along with a German woman and her three year old. Here they were kept in clean rooms where they had a television, beds, toilets and showers and when they needed anything they could simply ring a bell and it would be provided to them. At this new safe house it seems that they were not even interrogated once.

However Monir was not aware of the positive nature of the place his wife and son had been transferred. For him it was another psychological torture as he was totally unaware of where his wife had gone. This was also the case for his friend Mehdi Ghezali whom he admits he thought was dead for three weeks. His interrogators taunted him even further by telling him to forget about Sweden and that he would die there.

Monir Awad's detention in Pakistan was just like his time in Ethiopia some of those detained at his detention facility were taken away to be interrogated at other locations. Monir was able to find out from a group of Turkish prisoners that these interrogations were being conducted by US agents of an unknown agency. In these interrogations it seems that they were tortured, beaten, and that electric shocks were used on them. Monir Awad remembers one young Turkish man of about 20 years old who used to come back from these interrogations crying.

As in Ethiopia, no evidence was presented to justify their detentions, and eventually all of Monir's companions were released without charge. Since arriving back in Sweden Monir, his wife, and his friend Mehdi Ghazali have faced demonisation and misrepresentation in the Swedish Media. They have unsurprisingly been labeled as terrorists and members of al-Qaeda- all false and unsubstantiated allegations. The media even went as far as to print pictures of Safia Benaouda without her hijab (a serious affront to a Muslim women) with the caption suggesting that she was the "al Qaeda terrorist mother".

Conclusion

The case of Monir typifies that of so many who have fallen victims to the illegal nature of the global detention network. As his case shows, innocence is no defence against this system as there is simply no due process to ensure this; this system truly operates beyond the law. However the lack of due process is only made possible because it is embedded in a wider set of social constructions, narratives and discourses which allow this to be justified and accepted; these constitute a new discourse on what is acceptable practice in the alleged interests of achieving security.

The details of what has occurred to Monir Awad, and the nature of Sweden's role, highlights something which should be very worrying to the interested observer of democratic politics; that is that being the citizen of a country such as Sweden (which scored the highest ranking in the world on the Economist democracy index) means little if you are also a Muslim. The protection accorded to a citizen generally when he is detained abroad illegally is simply no longer extended to those who are overtly Muslim. This should call into question the very value and nature of Swedish citizenship, or in fact the citizenship of many countries from which Muslim citizens have faced similar treatment with none of the aid accorded to their fellow non-Muslim citizens. The question to be asked here is why? The answer is simple: because they are Muslim and this group is now perceived as a suspect and dangerous community threatening the peace and stability of their host nations. Like the African-Americans in the US during the civil rights movement or the Irish in Britain during the Irish Troubles. They are for this reason no longer accorded the respect that is required it seems to apply the rule of law to them. This truly points to the erosion of the principles of 'universal citizenship' and 'one law for all men' as foundational tenants of the democratic state and essential points in its justificatory schema.

The main aspects of this illegal detention network which are so well demonstrated by an examination of Monir's case are as follows: The illegal nature of detention without charge and the many areas in which it takes place; the disregard for conventions against refoulement; the disregard for the conventions against rendition; the proxy nature of much of the system with prisons in various parts of the world being run by the host states but in accordance with directives coming from elsewhere; the ad hoc nature of much of this system with even prisons being improvised when and where need be; the complicity of western intelligence services in these detentions and in abuse and torture (and in fact the complicity of western governments as these are unlikely to be clandestine operations); the transformation of torture to finely tuned environmental control to subtly create over a long period acute psychological anxiety; and lastly, the harassment of innocents by security services with no evidence against them.

These are however thematic points analysing the nature of the system that has come into existence, but what about the locations in question? The two places where Monir faced detention are areas that Cageprisoners and other NGO's feel are particular areas of concern. Pakistan particularly is a country which is off growing concern. The problem of the disappeared in Pakistan as well as its complicity in rendering peoples to US custody has reached fever-pitch proportions.

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