

Truth about detention

PC MORING (Bay prisoners do not deserve decency, letters, January 23), is filled with 'disgust' at readers writing to your paper about the injustice being meted upon Guantanamo detainees.

In January, at the House of Commons, I witnessed several family members of British detainees give testimony to their daily anguish at their loved ones' detention without charge, without trial, and without access to any form of contact with the outside world.

I have heard Azmet Begg, father of one Briton, speak in public on three separate occasions about the circumstances of his son's kidnap from Afghanistan.

I have been moved to tears by the story of how Moazzam was snatched in the middle of the night from his family dependants and offloaded into the boot of a car.

The last time Azmet spoke with his son was when, over two years ago, Moazzam called his father in London from the darkness of that car in Afghanistan.

'Father, why are they doing this to me? Where are they taking me?' was all he could say before the mobile phone connection failed them.

Azmet has received only the occasional censored letter since, and heard nothing for the last six months. Moazzam has said that his 'nails are being treated' and that he has 'received oil for his skin'.

While the US transgresses every international human rights statute in the book (including one that they, together with Somalia, have not ratified, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child), the UK government is complicit through its reprehensible inaction.

And PC Moring is content to peddle disinformation about this unconscionable state of affairs. Conditioned no doubt by the Criminally Incompetent Agency (CIA) and Feathered Bird of Indulgence (FBI).

I myself have faced unlawful detention. In September 2002, whilst returning to London from Brussels via Waterloo International, I was held by no less than six immigration officers and two police officers. I know what arbitrary detention for nearly two hours without production of any reason feels like.

But I can hardly imagine what arbitrary detention for two years feels like, with no end in sight. Can any of us? Lights have been kept on round the clock and 32 suicide attempts have been reported.

If PC Moring would like to get in touch with me, I shall endeavour to have him meet with Azmet Begg. Rarely will one encounter a more dignified, yet emotionally exhausted father.

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