



## The Erosion of Justice

### Case Study: Babar Ahmad

On 17<sup>th</sup> May 2005, Judge Timothy Workman ruled that the extradition charges against Babar Ahmad should be allowed to proceed, and thereby threw away a valuable opportunity to stand up for justice, freedom and Britain's independence. After months of delay (largely due to insufficient evidence from the prosecution) the promptness with which the verdict was delivered took the crowds gathering outside the court in support of Babar by surprise. The verdict itself was bitterly disappointing; the outstanding performance of the defence team, and the lack of conviction among the prosecution had allowed for a degree of optimism. However, with the judge referring the case back to the Home Secretary for the final decision in July, there remains another chance to appeal against the extradition.

Babar Ahmad, 31, was born and lives in south London and is a graduate from Imperial College, where he was working until his arrest. His good conduct, concern for others and proactive role in helping the community has had a lasting impact on all those who know him and his family; the unrelenting and genuine support from all generations and backgrounds of people throughout this campaign is testament to that. His first arrest in December 2003 sent shockwaves through the community: if such a person with a clean record as Babar could be targeted, and in such a brutal and inhumane way, it seemed that no one was safe. During the arrest he was brutally beaten by eight armed officers, and put in a mock prayer position while being asked "Where is your God now? You are in payer!" His ordeal left him with over 50 injuries, some potentially life threatening, and yet he received no proper medical attention while he was in custody. Despite an extensive report by independent medical examiners verifying these injuries plus photographic evidence, the Police officers involved in this act of savagery were cleared of any wrong-doing and were in fact praised for their courage!

After being questioned for six days, his house intensively searched and his possessions taken away for analysis, Babar was released on 8th December 2003 **without charge**. To the irritation of the authorities, Babar did not remain silent and chose to speak out against the injustice he had suffered. However, three days before he was due to speak at a 'Stop Political Terror' conference he was rearrested, this time on extradition charges from the US alleging links with Chechen fighters and the Taliban. Even though the date he was supposed to have contacted them was in fact his wedding day, and though the other allegations such as travelling on a false passport were simply false, Babar's defence team has not been allowed to challenge any of the flimsy accusations and has had to focus on the technicalities of the extradition instead.

During the hearings, the Defence team convincingly challenged the extradition on the grounds of four major threats to Babar's human rights: He is at risk of being tried in a US military court, which has no jury or rights to appeal, uses evidence from torture and may send him to Guantanamo Bay; a military verdict could result in the Death penalty; he is also at risk of 'Rendition', i.e. transferral to a third-party state to obtain evidence through torture; and lastly, there is a 'virtually 100%' chance that Babar will come under 'Special Administration measures' (SAMs) which enforce solitary confinement and deny access to lawyers, phone calls or letters. Notably, SAMs have only ever been used against Muslims in the US. The Prosecution's assurances that Babar would not be at risk from the above are unreliable, have received no authoritative confirmation from the US and furthermore could be overruled by a new indictment once Babar has been extradited and



is in the hands of the Americans. Despite flagrant abuses of similar promises made in the past, the judge accepted the written assurance as 'satisfactory'.

It would have been easy to become disheartened by such a verdict, not least for Babar and his family. But they have not lost hope and we should not either. If anything, the ruling seemed to add even greater impetus and urgency to the campaign. The fight for justice will need to reach a new level in determination, perseverance and reliance in Allah.

If the extradition goes ahead, the Muslims in Britain will be collectively responsible, and we will find that as a result of our silence our own families will be targeted next. But if by the Mercy and Power of Allah, Babar wins back his freedom, each person who helped in any way during the campaign will have played a major part in stopping oppression and protecting justice for all, an act immeasurable in rewards.

After the verdict Babar gave his reaction, saying, "*By 16th July 2005, there will either be two winners or two losers. A decision to extradite will mean loss of Britain's sovereignty in front of the U.S. and defeat for the British people. Refusal to extradite will mean victory for Britain's sovereignty and victory for the British people. After the General Election, Tony Blair said that he had, "Listened and learned." Let him now prove it; in action, not words.*" The same applies to every one of us. Let us act before it is too late.

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The Free Babar Ahmad Campaign is launching an action plan with ways in which people can help, including a new MP lobby pack. This should be available by Tuesday 24th May 2005 on the website [www.freebabarahmad.com](http://www.freebabarahmad.com). Please keep checking the site regularly for updates.

## **What you can do to help**

For all those who want to make a difference, now is the time for action. There are several practical ways in which people can help the campaign:

- Filling in petitions against the extradition; the aim is to obtain 100,00 signatures by 7<sup>th</sup> June.
- Writing to local MPs urging them to write to the Home Secretary and campaign to overturn the extradition.
- Writing to Babar Ahmad to show your support.
- Raising awareness on campus and in your communities to generate support for the campaign.

*MP packs with sample letters and copies of the petition forms are available on [www.freebabarahmad.com](http://www.freebabarahmad.com). There you can also obtain Babar Ahmad's contact details to write him letters of support. Further enquiries can be made by contacting [info@freebabarahmad.com](mailto:info@freebabarahmad.com) or by calling 07963537779.*