

Center for Constitutional Rights

Discrimination, Detention, and Deportation: Immigration & Refugees

<https://ccrjustice.org/home/blog/2017/01/20/supreme-court-client-shares-his-story-anser-mehmood>

Public Facing Advocacy Writing

The CCR blog

On Wednesday, CCR Senior Staff Attorney Rachel Meeropol is arguing before the U.S. Supreme Court in CCR's case, [Ziglar v. Abbasi](#) (formerly [Turkmen v. Ashcroft](#)). Filed against Bush administration officials for the post-9/11 round ups of Muslim, Arab, and South Asian men and the last case heard under the Obama administration, in Abbasi the Court will decide whether high-level government officials can be sued for implementing clearly unconstitutional policies. Below, an Abbasi client, [Anser Mehmood](#), shares his experience of racial and religious profiling, imprisonment, abuse, and deportation.

What are some positive memories of your life in the United States?

I have many good memories of my stay in the US. When I went from Karachi to New York in 1988, Karachi was very much politically disturbed and my life and my business were not secure. When I reached the US in 1988, I met with a few American friends who advised and helped me make my life in the US. I started as a New York City cab driver. In 1994, I brought my family to the US. From the day I entered until 9/11, I never had a hard time. My kids were studying in US schools and life was very smooth. Until 9/11, I have all good memories.

What were some of your favorite activities or hobbies during that time?

Work, work, and work. That's all I had to do. I had to raise four kids and take care of my parents, so I didn't have any hobbies or other activities.

What would you want people to know about the hardships you faced while you were in detention?

I would like people to know that they arrested the wrong people and that the FBI also knew I was innocent. After picking me up from my home, not a single person came to me to ask me any questions during my entire time at the Metropolitan Detention Center (MDC) and Passaic jail. They arrested me because I am Muslim.

I was thrown into a cell, but I called it a grave. I was there for four months. Guards didn't let us sleep. They abused all Muslims. They called me and other inmates camels. I was very concerned for my kids who were at home. After two months, I was able to call home. I was very happy that at least I would know about the health of my kid, but on the first ring the call was dropped and they told me that I lost my chance to call and they would permit me another call the next month! I cried the whole night and kept asking All Mighty Allah SWT what I had done to deserve this type of punishment. The constitutional pillars of the US constitution and of human rights were gone. Those days were horrible. I can't explain how I spent that time in that grave.

On the other hand, good people were still outside who helped my family and me, and some friends are still fighting to get justice, which is really remarkable. It means people are very good, but there are problems in the minds of some high officials.

What was life like when you returned home? What were some of the challenges?

There were huge challenges when I returned home, and my life is still unstable. I was living in my own house in Bayonne, NJ, when I was in the US but, now, even after 15 long years I am living in a rented house in Lahore, Pakistan.

What is your life like now? Have there been positive developments? Do you still face challenges?

Yes, there are some positive developments. My kids got good educations and started their own businesses. And I hope from All Mighty Allah SWT that in few years my family and I will be in better position than before.

Why do you think this lawsuit is important? What would you like to see happen as a result of this lawsuit?

I am very interested in this lawsuit, because I'd like to see the government admit that they arrested the wrong people and admit that these people were innocent and didn't have anything to do with 9/11. I had never been handcuffed in my whole life but I was put in the hole in MDC because I am Muslim. Even after 15 long years, I still feel very embarrassed to have been hand cuffed and shackled.

[View the discussion thread.](#)

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