

Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR)

Torture, Former Combatants, Political Prisoners, Terror Suspects, & Terrorists

https://www.cair.com/cair_in_the_news/ny-muslims-struggle-for-justice-in-america/

Public Facing Advocacy Writing

Yassin Aref is a 37 year old Albany, New York resident and one of many Muslim victims of police state justice in post-9/11 America. They've been hunted down, rounded up, held in detention, kept in isolation, denied bail, restricted in their right to counsel, tried on secret evidence and trumped-up charges, then incarcerated as political prisoners or deported to where they face possible arrest and torture.

Because of his faith and ethnicity, Aref was victimized by US justice in a post-9/11 climate of fear. Hes an Iraqi Kurd who emigrated to the US as a UN refugee in 1999 with his wife and three young children. Hes now in federal prison but committed no crime. Hes also the author of a poignant memoir/autobiography titled Son of Mountains: My Life as a Kurd and a Terror Suspect. He wrote it in custody at Troy, New Yorks Rensselaer County Jail after his wrongful conviction in October 2006.

Its his story in prose and poetry covering much more than his arrest, conviction and imprisonment. Its an account of an early life in poverty, his struggle to survive, his time in exile, of a two-time immigrant, and a UN refugee who sought peace and freedom in America but instead was persecuted. Its his story of wrongful conviction, of grave injustice, of a militarized state, of his constitutional rights denied, of despotism run amuck, of a nation where no one is safe, where many hundreds like him are imprisoned, and where were all Yassins in police state America.

The story concludes with a powerful essay by pro bono lawyer, Stephen Downs, that details how Yassin was framed and wrongfully convicted. It explains how he never before in (his) professional life (of over 35 years) encountered a deliberate frame-up. (He) was familiar with prosecutorial abuses wrongful convictions, sloppy police work, concealment of errors, hubris and arrogance, but what happened to Yassin was (much) different.

The government deliberately fabricated bogus charges and plotted to convict a man they knew was innocent. It was a cold, calculating plan carried out over a long period of time, costing millions of dollars and involving dozens of agents, prosecutors, and the acquiescence of high-level officials, to convict two men of terrorism who had no involvement or interest in (it). I could not adapt to this new reality. For me, Yassins case (wont end) until (his) injustice (is) corrected. Besides, (hes) now my brother. Today, were all Yassins brothers and sisters and must stand with him for justice.

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