

Center for Constitutional Rights

Discrimination, Detention, and Deportation: Immigration & Refugees

<https://ccrjustice.org/home/blog/2017/01/25/supreme-court-client-shares-his-story-hany-ibrahim>

Public Facing Advocacy Writing

The CCR blog

On January 18, CCR Senior Staff Attorney [Rachel Meeropol](#) argued 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 original Turkmen client, [Hany Ibrahim](#), shares his experience of racial and religious profiling, imprisonment, abuse, and deportation. Hany and his brother [Yasser](#) were detained at the Metropolitan Detention Center in Brooklyn, New York, where they were held in harsh and punishing solitary confinement in the Administrative Maximum Special Housing Unit.

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

The United States is the best place I have ever lived in, especially New York City where I have so many sweet memories in the neighborhoods, the loving people, and my friends.

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

I wanted to be able to see everything in this lovely city, I visited all the different touristic attractions like the Statue of Liberty. I enjoyed the long walks in the streets of Manhattan.

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

My detention was one of the worst times in my life, and everything I believed the US to be has changed. I used to believe that America was the role model for democracy. I had the worst treatment from the guards. I have seen all the values of freedom and human rights being violated just because I was an Arab and Muslim.

How did it feel to be targeted by the U.S. government just because of your background, religion, or the way that you looked?

At first I did not expect or even imagine that this could happen to me; it was a big shock to me. Even after my arrest I believed that it would take a day or two because I was innocent. However, as the days went by things kept getting even worse; I always felt that these days would not pass peacefully on me. To me the biggest shock was that I was detained because I was a Muslim; it was a very sad feeling. Before all that happened I never felt any racism or persecution from the American people who I believe are better than that.

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

When I went back home I was so depressed, the worst ever. I was constantly seeing doctors and I was not able to sleep for days. I could not leave home, I could not talk to family and my friends; I was unable to sit and talk to them. I could not even get a job because my reputation was damaged.

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

My life now is much better, I am married and I have a daughter. I think people forgot about my story but I never did; I never forgot what happened to me. But regardless of all that happened, I still wish I could turn back time and live in America again, even though what happened to me was really tough. I am currently self-employed because I could never get a job because of what happened.

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

This lawsuit is very important to me because I want to see the America that I used to know before; the land of freedom and democracy. Now I know and respect the US and its judicial system; they are always fair and just. I hope there will be no discrimination because of race, religion or origin.

Today, we continue to see anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant rhetoric. You've seen firsthand the very real and harmful effects of those attitudes, policies, and practices. Do you have any advice to give to the U.S. public?

The most important thing I want to say to the American people is that we are all humans, there are no differences because of religion or race or anything. I was done great injustice in America but I know this is not the attitude of the American people as I never experienced that before my arrest. I honestly wish for America to always remain in the front and be a role model to all other countries in the field of

human rights. I still love and cherish your country and your people.

[View the discussion thread.](#)

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