



Shaker Aamer says what many UK Muslims dare not in his first interview since release

Briton Shaker Aamer, 48, was held at Guantanamo Bay for 14 years. He's given a series of world exclusive interviews - the first since his release. Aamer said that Muslims who support terror have no right to live in the UK. Father-of-four added he was repulsed by the murder of hostages by ISIS. By DAVID ROSE FOR THE MAIL ON SUNDAY

The Briton held at Guantanamo Bay for 14 years said last night that Muslims who support terror attacks have no right to live in this country "and demanded would-be jihadis 'get the hell out'". Shaker Aamer has spent five days talking to The Mail on Sunday in a series of world exclusive interviews "his first since his release.

Courageously, he made his angriest comments about Muslims who plot terror in Britain, even though he was tortured, beaten and held for 5,007 days at Guantanamo under suspicion of terrorist activities without ever being charged. He has been cleared by the US twice.

He also expressed revulsion at the murder of hostages by Islamic State, saying the extremist group's treatment of prisoners had abused basic principles of Islamic law.

The difficulties he faces in building a relationship with his children, which he is starting to overcome. The horror of his capture in Afghanistan, and details of the brutal tortures he endured at a US air base "witnessed by a British intelligence officer.

The violence meted out by the Guantanamo 'goon squad', which once beat him up because he kept an apple stem to use as a toothpick.

His conviction that Tony Blair and Jack Straw, Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary at the time, must have been aware that he was being tortured, describing how British agents who witnessed his treatment arrived at Bagram on a Government flight with Blair.

How he was denied the right to make a dramatic video appeal to stop Jihadi John beheading British aid worker Alan Henning, which could have saved his life.

How he led a mass hunger strike despite being held in solitary confinement, and then came close to death.

Claims that US authorities infiltrated Guantanamo cellblocks with agents who posed as prisoners to gather intelligence.

The interviews with Aamer, 48, mark the culmination of a campaign by this newspaper which has lasted almost as long as his unjust imprisonment. He thanked The Mail on Sunday and his other supporters for keeping the 'flame' of his morale alive.

And to those who claim he still has ‘questions to answer’ about his supposed support for terrorism, he produced the strongest possible riposte – an unequivocal denunciation of terror attacks on the streets of British cities, such as the 2013 murder of Fusilier Lee Rigby and last week’s stabbing at Leytonstone Tube station.

Mr Aamer said: ‘How can you give yourself the right to be living here in this country, and living with the people and acting like you are a normal person, and then you just walk in the street and try to kill people?’

‘In Islam, he went on, the killing of civilians was simply wrong, whatever the supposed cause. ‘According to my knowledge of Islam, it’s not allowed.

‘Even if there is a war you cannot kill just anybody, you cannot kill kids, you cannot kill chaplains, you cannot just go in the street and get a knife and start stabbing people. If you are that angry about this country, you can get the hell out.’

Aamer said one of his lowest points at Guantanamo came in the autumn of last year, when IS extremists in Syria were threatening to murder the British aid worker Alan Henning. ‘When I heard, I said I would love to help him out. IS said he was a spy, but that was bull****. Why should they want to kill a man who was just trying to help?’

‘The concept of war in Islam is not about indiscriminate killing. It is governed by rules that also cover how you should treat prisoners. If a man is innocent, a man who went to help the people, then you must share your own food with him, and treat him decently.

‘Even if a human being is fighting against you, he should be treated humanely, not tortured or beaten up.’

The head of Aamer’s Guantanamo legal team, Clive Stafford Smith of the human rights charity Reprieve, said Aamer had wanted to issue a statement on video, pleading for Mr Henning’s release. But the Guantanamo authorities ‘showed no interest and made no response. It’s a pity, because it might have saved Alan Henning’s life’.

A short time later, in early October 2014, Mr Hemming was beheaded by the British terrorist Mohammed Emwazi, better known as ‘Jihadi John’.

In his MoS interviews, Aamer speaks of the moment he realised he was home, when his plane door opened, and he told the policeman next to him: ‘That is my first breath of freedom.’

He added: ‘Everything looked British. I was overwhelmed.’

Later that day he was reunited with his wife, Zinneera: ‘That instant washed



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away the pain of 14 years. It washed away the tiredness, the agony, the stress. It was like it no longer existed. I hugged her, she hugged me, and we just wept.â€

He not only describes but re-enacts how he was brutally â€hog-tiedâ€ by US interrogators in Afghanistan and left in agony. He also speaks of the savage, assaults he endured at Guantanamo, where he did not even hear his wifeâ€™s voice for seven years.

Aamer also voiced fears about the rift between Muslims and non-Muslims, as shown by last weekâ€™s calls by US presidential candidate Donald Trump to ban Muslims from entering the US.

â€It worries me,â€ he said, explaining it is what extremists want. â€It helps their causeâ€ if you keep looking at people like they are terrorists before they do anything, then you will push them towards violence.â€
SOURCE:
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