



Dipesh Gadher, Chief Investigative Reporter at the Sunday Times, has recently been turning up at my home address and sending me messages requesting a response to a number of accusations against me which he intends to publish in this week's edition of the Sunday Times.

This has left me feeling harassed, but it turns out that I am not the only person Gadher has been accused of harassing. In the past he has attempted to criminalise innocent former Guantanamo Bay prisoners. He has also previously sent direct messages to the wife of a British aid worker in Syria, claiming that her husband's passport had been confiscated and that this meant they were both soon to be the victims of a drone strike.

In an interview with Asharq al-Awsat newspaper, 10 August, 2015, when asked what he enjoys most about his job, Gadher said, "I still love tracking people down for a story and turning up on their doorstep unannounced and asking them to speak to me. It's still a buzz if it works out well."

I've received several messages from Gadher, as well as a hand-written letter. In one message he appears to threaten to have my social media accounts shut down.

Since I don't generally trust journalists, not to mention an individual like Gadher, I decided instead to write a public response so as to clarify my position in my own words.

It seems that Gadher for some reason takes issue with the way in which I've been using my social media accounts to speak about injustices being perpetrated around the world, violations of human rights, misconceptions about Islam within the Muslim community, as well as the way I encourage the help and support of prisoners and their families.

He claims that I have:

"Endorsed jailed terrorists and hate preachers, including Ali al-Tamimi, Ahmad Musa Jibril, Nabil al-Awadi and Musa al-Qarni."

With regards to Dr. Ali al-Tamimi, I've been following his case for many years and have always believed in his innocence.

Dr. Al-Tamimi has been detained in extreme solitary confinement and the Supreme Court is now overturning convictions of co-defendants one after the other. At the time and until now, the case raised important issues of religious freedom for Muslim clerics, entrapment and illegal surveillance. Judge Brinkema has issued the US government with orders to explain why she should not strike the convictions of Dr. al-Tamimi and three other defendants.

In the past I've shared a number of Dr. al-Tamimi's quotes in effort to refute sectarian and extreme ideas, especially in relation to takfeer (excommunication). These views have even affected some individuals who claim to follow al-Tamimi. That's the reason why I quoted him specifically.

Dozens of scholars and ordinary men and women are detained in Saudi Arabia without charge or trial. Many organisations, such as "Prisoners of Conscience" (@m3takl_en) based in Saudi Arabia, have documented the torture and inhumane conditions of detention. One scholar even died recently. The picture I posted of al-Qarni was a rare image personifying the issue of mistreatment.

In May, al-Qarni had reportedly suffered a brain clot due to medical negligence in prison. The fact that Gadher takes issue with my sharing of this type of news indicates that he has no concern for justice nor any compassion for humanity whatsoever. Prisoners have human rights.

As for Ahmad Musa Jibril, the media has painted him as a hate preacher but after listening myself to a number of his lectures, I found that it's nothing but a slur. I don't believe most of what I read in the media. Even the current President of the United States himself has described the media as totally dishonest and the enemy of the people. The quotes I've shared of Shaykh Ahmad Jibril were to do with helping widows and orphans, extremism in takfeer, and another which was relevant to Salafis who claim to be followers of the scholar Ibn 'Uthaymeen.

Nabil al-Awadi is a mainstream Muslim speaker, renowned across the Muslim world. To my knowledge, he has never been convicted of a crime. I've only ever shared one video of his in which he discusses, during a TV interview, if criticising or going against the ruler of a Muslim country is part of the doctrine of the Khawārij, or Kharijites. It was a theological discourse. Also, what and who is a hate preacher? Is it any person whose views we find distasteful, even if they've not broken the law? If that's the case, then there's no such thing as free speech. The second accusation is that I have "encouraged followers to raise funds for terror suspects including Samiun Rahman and a woman deported from the UK to north Africa on 'national security' grounds."

I don't see what the problem is with this. If Samiun Rahman is a "suspect," that means he ought to be deemed innocent until proven guilty. Rahman is a British national who was at the time in custody in Bangladesh and reportedly being tortured. I shared an appeal for his legal defense. He was eventually granted bail but was rearrested months later. I believe I shared a similar appeal during that time as well.

Having been to prison myself in the past, I believe it's extremely important that prisoners do not feel neglected or abandoned by their communities, as this could add to feelings of alienation. That's the reason why I often encourage people to write to prisoners, especially during festive periods such as Eid. Helping their families is another way of providing relief. Every human being is entitled to justice and a fair trial.

As for the woman deported from the UK to north Africa, I have no idea who Gadher is talking about. It's possible that I shared someone else's appeal in the past by clicking the share or retweet button.

The third accusation is that I've "continued to propagate hardline views, including the stoning to death of adulterers, opposing man-made laws, banning music and condoning polygamy." This is an extremely ironic remark because all these things, and more, take place in Saudi Arabia, an ally of the UK government. If these are hardline views, why does our country continue to deal with Saudi Arabia? If Gadher has no intention of writing an article about Theresa May and her relationship with a government that not only has "hardline" views but actually implements them by force, I don't think it's appropriate that I am asked such questions.

I cannot recall ever speaking specifically about stoning adulterers. I've spoken about the reason why adulterers are punished in Islam, but not stoning specifically. So this is a lie. As for my position on man-made laws, I've never encouraged people to go out and break the law of their respective countries. I've only shared what renowned scholars, such as Shaykh Muhammad al-Amin al-Shinqeeti, have said about replacing Shari'ah with man-made laws in Muslim countries, and how such an act is kufr (disbelief) according to Islam. A Muslim is obliged to refer only to Shari'ah law in matters of dispute, unless he is compelled to do otherwise.

I don't expect anti-Muslim extremists to understand the context, relevance and meaning of most of my posts, as the majority of them are written for Muslims.

Quoting someone doesn't mean one agrees with all their views, especially if it's to make a specific point, otherwise it would be impossible to write an essay on any subject.

I am not a supporter of nor do I affiliate myself with any group today. I am just an individual who follows Islam. I've not been a part of any group for well over ten years.

I grew up and have lived in a world pre- War on Terror, and I'm sure many would agree that the world was a much better and safer place than it is today.

I have my own way of dealing with problems such as extremism (ghulū in Arabic) within the Muslim community, and it's not the methodology of Prevent, which has clearly failed.