

Obama is President of Extra-judicial Killing, says ex-Guantánamo Inmate

By [Mary Fitzgerald](#)

Global Research, November 14, 2010

Irish Times 14 November 2010

Region: [USA](#)

Theme: [Crimes against Humanity](#), [Law and Justice](#)

US president Barack Obama's attempts to reach out to Muslims have been an "utter failure" given his broken promises on several issues including closing Guantánamo Bay detention facility, former inmate Moazzam Begg has said.

Begg, a British national who spent two years in Guantánamo before being released in 2005, fears the detention centre may become permanent.

"People who were released from Guantánamo after Obama came to power told me that conditions had improved slightly but nobody there was under the illusion that [it] was going to close," Begg said during a visit to Dublin.

"It is like a town now and every thing around it has continued to expand. It seems that this is a permanent facility and they intend to keep it as such."

Begg, whose organisation, [Cageprisoners](#), recently expanded its work to include the highlighting of extra-judicial killings, particularly the use of drone strikes, argued little had changed despite Obama's promises. "We say that Bush was the president of torture, but Obama is the president of extra-judicial killing. The difference between the two is that while one used to extra-judicially detain people, the other has gone a step further and extra-judicially kills them."

Begg singled out Obama's decision to authorise the targeting of Yemen-based cleric Anwar al-Awlaki for assassination earlier this year. Cageprisoners took on Awlaki's case when he was detained in Yemen in 2006.

Awlaki has been linked to al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, which has been blamed for several terrorist plots. The group claimed responsibility for the two parcel bombs found on US-bound cargo planes last month. Last year, Awlaki praised Nidal Hasan, the US soldier accused of killing 13 colleagues at Fort Hood, Texas.

Begg said Cageprisoners was still campaigning against Awlaki's targeting by the US, but it was distancing itself from his calls for the killing of civilians. "I have said many times that I don't and we don't support the killing of civilians full stop, whether it is by B-52 bombers or suicide bombers; whether it ordered by Obama or Awlaki."

Begg, who has admitted attending a training camp in Afghanistan in 1993 before moving to the country with his family in mid-2001, was at the centre of a row earlier this year when Gita Sahgal, then head of Amnesty International's gender unit, said the human rights group

had been damaged by its collaboration with him. She alleged Begg was a supporter of the Taliban and Cageprisoners was a “pro-jihadi” organisation.

Begg says he later discussed the allegations with Sahgal. “Every argument she put forward seemed to fall apart completely. Because I advocate a negotiated settlement in Afghanistan, she portrayed me as the greatest supporter of the Taliban and therefore, by extension, a supporter of everything they have said in terms of rights of women and so forth. That’s not very clever, nor is it very honest.”

Begg said he would describe himself as “a human rights campaigner who is Muslim and who has a Muslim ethos . . . I don’t like the term Islamist in the way I don’t like the term jihadist or any other Islamic terms Anglicised with an -ist at the end . . . I don’t know what people are trying to compartmentalise me into.

“If you are asking me what are my feelings towards people fighting occupation, the answer is I completely support them. I believe in the inalienable right to defend yourself against foreign occupation.

“There is no doubt in my mind that if resisting the occupation of Afghanistan was not only considered good but lionised [in the 1980s] by the British government and US . . . then nothing has changed other than interests.”

The original source of this article is Irish Times
Copyright © [Mary Fitzgerald](#), Irish Times, 2010

[Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page](#)

[Become a Member of Global Research](#)

Articles by: [Mary Fitzgerald](#)

Disclaimer: The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: publications@globalresearch.ca
www.globalresearch.ca contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: publications@globalresearch.ca