

US and European Union grant unlimited powers to police and secret services

The Incredible Story of Youssef Nada

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Under the cover of the "war against terror", the United States and the European Union have granted unlimited powers to secret services and police. Emergency measures which were introduced on a provisional basis in 2001, outside any judiciary control, have become permanent. Since September 2001, at least 80,000 people, mainly Muslim, would have been kidnapped, kept in secret prisons, and tortured by CIA and FBI agents. Hundreds of others have been put on the UN « black list ». That's what happened to the businessman Youssef Nada, 77 years old, an Italian citizen of Egyptian origin, accused by U.S. President, G.W Bush of financing Al-Qaeda. Two judiciary investigations resulted in a non-suit, but Mr. Nada didn't get his name deleted from the UN « black list » (). His assets remain frozen; he is barred from travelling to or transiting in any country. He can't go outside the tiny enclave of Campione - an Italian enclave inside Swiss territory - where Silvia Cattori went to meet him.*

18/07/08 "ICH" — -Silvia Cattori : Once he knew, in detail, your incredible story, Mr. Dick Marty denounced the injustice which is inflicted on you. He reported on your case, 19th March 2007 to the Council of Europe [1]. Despite his report, you remain on the « black list » of people suspected of assisting terrorism, deprived of freedom because my country continues to uphold the UN sanctions against you. You are living in Italy, yet being kept as hostage by Switzerland?! I want to tell you that many of us are outraged by the martyrdom that Switzerland continues to inflict on you.

Youssef Nada : You can't say that it is "the country, Switzerland". The citizens are one thing, and politics is another. It is true that, in Switzerland, the people here are tolerant and peaceful, and neutral. Not only is the Government neutral, but the people themselves are neutral. But Mr. Dick Marty proved that he is one of the best Swiss citizens. Really, you feel when you read and hear what he says, that he is a humanitarian. The risk he took when he followed the "Extraordinary Renditions" case [2], nobody took before him. All the politicians know what is going on, but no one has the courage to speak. He was the only one who had the courage. Although I respect all the Swiss people, I respect Mr. Marty more, and not only because of the attitude he had towards me. His courage when he talks about people who are helpless in front of the biggest power is unique.

Silvia Cattori : Mr. Marty's behaviour was exemplary; but unfortunately not the behaviour of the media. You implicate them on your personal website [3]. Does that mean that the journalists are apologists in support of this war?

Youssef Nada : Some journalists do have a special agenda, which they just mix up. They

take part from me, part from their preconceived ideas, and make their own story. However, most journalists and media are honest. You can't generalise. There are a lot of honest people within the media, doing their job and looking for the facts and for the interest of the public. Every month, I speak to about 15 to 20 journalists. TV journalists came: two from France, two from England, one from Austria, two from Germany, two from Italy, one from Spain, others from the Middle East and from the Far East. Some of these journalists are very honest. In fact, some of them, even without seeing me, defended my case in a correct way.

Silvia Cattori : It must have been a terrible hardship for you. Every day, you were confronted by new accusations, all more unlikely and overwhelming than the last, without being able to answer them!

Youssef Nada : In business, we have a lot of surprises. I was in business for about 55 years: naturally, every week, I had a surprise. After many years, I became anti-surprise. I am at the end of my life. For me, what happens now is as important as what could happen tomorrow or the next day.

Silvia Cattori : On your website, among those journalists who must have hurt you, you mentioned Guido Olimpio [4], Richard Labévière [5], Sylvain Besson [6]. How do you reproach them in particular?

Youssef Nada : Those journalists that you just mentioned may have their own hidden agendas or they may be full of hate. They attacked me with lies. I have explained it on my website.

Silvia Cattori : Mr. Sylvain Besson wrote a book in which he makes serious accusations against you. And this book was published after 2005, when all the prosecutors' files against you were closed for lack of evidence, plus the Swiss Federal Court blamed the Swiss Federal Prosecutor for his actions. Did you meet Mr. Besson?

Youssef Nada : I never accepted. He tried. Not only did he try; he came to the door, and rang the bell. I said to him: "I am sorry. I have already said to you on the phone that I shall not receive you".

Silvia Cattori : According to you, why so many journalists were so dead set against you? Was it a mistake? Or had they a special agenda?

Youssef Nada : Some have a special agenda, and some might be working as spies for foreign services. I don't know who is working for whom. But, they definitely made mistakes; definitely they were out of line. There is no doubt that they had a special agenda. I don't want to elaborate more here, since I have a case against Mr. Guido Olimpio, and the Court is still working on it [7]. There is another big civil case for damages. The Court has accepted that the case will be transferred to the Milan Civil Court.

Silvia Cattori : Don't all these anti-Muslim campaigns have a common root: the war of dispossession that Israel has been waging against its Arab neighbours since 1948? The accusations that Mr. Olimpio made against you in his article of 20th October 1997, where he claimed that you were financing Hamas might well have come from the Israeli secret services?

Youssef Nada : When Olimpio wrote this article, he was working in Milan for “Il Corriere della Sera”. In court, he said that he testified, in 1996 if I am not mistaken, in front of the U.S. Congress and at the Treasury department, about terrorism financing, and he included us [the Al-Tawqa bank and Mr. Nada] in it.

Silvia Cattori : Thus, one can guess that the baseless accusations of some journalists such as Guido Olimpio and Richard Labévière have been helping develop Islamophobia?

Youssef Nada : I don't know if we should mention only those two names; it is a group of journalists and their accomplices, a spider's web connected together [8]. I don't trouble myself looking for them. Actually, I have to defend myself; that's all. What they are doing, and for whom, is not interesting for me. Definitely, they have a special agenda. Which agenda? I don't know. I never met them. If I saw them, maybe I could understand something. I don't consider them very important. It is true that their accusations put some oil on the fire, but they are nothing for me.

Silvia Cattori : The aim of those who were campaigning against you, was it not to damage and to compromise, by using information coming from intelligence circles, the influential opponent to President Mubarak that you are? An opponent who belongs to the Muslim Brotherhood who happen to be combated by Mubarak as well as by Israel? They spread the rumour that your bank was “giving money to Hamas” – a political group that Israel qualifies as a “branch of the Muslim Brotherhood”. Was it not a way to give President Bush a pretext to accuse Muslim charities of being linked to terrorism, thereby convincing the European countries to close them down? And, it did happen.

Youssef Nada : I'm not going to guess who is behind them . I don't have the means to examine these questions.

Silvia Cattori : The strategy of the United States and Israel is very clear: to maintain an atmosphere of fear about “terrorists”, even if they have to fabricate them, in order for the public to accept the establishment of measures “to fight terrorism” outside of any legal framework.

Youssef Nada : What we heard, came from the US administration, not from Israel. Everyone accepted Bush's comments: “Either you are with me or against me”, from the beginning. Then the followers said: “We are with you”.

Silvia Cattori : But, if the European States accepted so easily the establishment of emergency measures was there not a successful propaganda campaign regarding the “Islamist threat” aided by the media, of which you are also a victim?

Youssef Nada : That “terrorist threat” is nonsense. In Europe, for example, in the last 30 years, we struggled against Baader – Meinhof, the Brigade Rosse, the ETA, Cosa Nostra, and the IRA. All these terrorist events that happened in Europe, Europe was able to absorb. It didn't ruin the life of the Europeans. The governments took special measures; they contained them, and absorbed them. And it passed. There has been a wave of crimes – criminals were there, and it's true that it was organised crime – but the democracy and the States with legal measures were able, through the law, to absorb and to contain them without going outside the law.

But, when something happens in the United States – nobody knows even now who was

behind the September 11 attacks, maybe Usama Ben Laden, maybe others, I don't know – then the entire world has to pay the price!

Silvia Cattori : In his book entitled “Innocent Victims in the Global War on Terror”, Dr. M. A. Salloomi [9] has documented that the United States and Western countries are freezing the funds of Islamic NGOs, and of Muslim Charity Organisations, under the pretext that they finance terrorism. One understands very clearly, through this study, that one of the aims of Israel and the U.S. was to ban all NGO financial and humanitarian aid to the victims of this “Global War on Terror”. These restrictions are part of the war waged by Israel and the United States on various fronts. They attack a country, starve its population, and wait for them to surrender. Today, the Muslim charity organisations in Palestine are penalised by these antiterrorist measures, which hit also Hamas. Their funds are frozen.



Youssef Nada : Unfortunately, this is a misunderstanding from the West. If it is true that some of those terrorists happened to be Muslim, that doesn't mean that they are following Islam.

I don't speak about Hamas; it's another case. The word “Hamas” is not part of my dictionary. Hamas anyhow is out of the question; I don't talk about them, absolutely, because I don't want more problems, and my case is still open. I don't speak about this movement, because, as you know, one of the main accusations that the US authorities made against me was the one made by Olimpio that we were helping Hamas.

The US treasury copied what this journalist falsely said that “the Bank, Al-Taqwa, donated 70 million dollars to Hamas”. First of all, how is that possible, when the capital of the bank was just 50 million dollars? The second thing is that we are regulated, we have an auditor, and the auditor is one of the great three auditors in the world: Deloitte & Touche. They aren't blind; when they investigate and audit our accounts, they can see everything. Finally, we are presenting all our auditors' reports to the Central Bank of the Bahamas, they are also not blind.

But if we come back to the question of the “terrorists”; those people have nothing to do with Islam; those people, if they are indeed Muslim, well, they took Islam in their hands and twisted it to serve their agenda.

As for me, I have been a member of the Muslim Brotherhood since I was 17 years old and will be until I die. This is one thing. But to say what some criminals are doing is accepted by Islam is completely incorrect. We don't accept it, we condemned them – we aren't afraid – we face everything, and we are ready to face even death. When we say that we condemn them, that means that we condemn them. And when we say that Islam doesn't accept that, that means that the Islam, which we know and believe in, doesn't accept what they do in the name of Islam.

Silvia Cattori : When Mr. Olimpio alleged that a member of the Muslim Brotherhood, you, was financing Hamas, it was not yet formally on any kind of “terrorist list” [10]. At the time, Israel's propaganda was working to de-legitimise it, to try to force international bodies to consider it as “terrorist organisation”. You know what followed. Israel and the United States succeeded to brand Hamas beyond anyone's expectations. [11]

Youssef Nada : When he said that I financed Hamas, he couldn't prove it. That means that their accusations were false. If it were true, they should have been able to prove it. Let me tell you that I have been prosecuted in two countries, in Switzerland and in Italy. In Switzerland, the investigation of the Swiss prosecutor took from 7th November 2001 until 31st May 2005, when he was forced by the Federal Court to close the file against me.

In Italy, the Court also opened a file in November 2001, when Switzerland asked them to storm our house and bank, to raid it, and to take any documents they could find. When Switzerland closed the file, we asked the Italians to close the file as well and they closed it, without interrogating me ever.

The Swiss interrogated me about all the "Islamists" everywhere: about my taxes, about my nationality and how I obtained it, about my family, about my fortune; about everything, but they never said to me a single word about Hamas. Because they know that I have nothing to do with it.

Silvia Cattori : Unfortunately, the harm is done. The journalists that you have denounced made of you a suspicious person, just because you belong to the Muslim Brotherhood! This is a movement that these self-proclaimed "experts in terrorism" have been trying to say is inspired by an ideology that leads to fanaticism.

Youssef Nada : I am honoured to be part of the "Muslim Brotherhood". I don't see that it is something wrong. It's an honour to me. Those who write these things about the "Muslim Brotherhood" are ignorant people who copy and repeat what the tyrant rulers of the Middle East say. Those are people who know nothing about the Muslim Brotherhood.

In politics, you'll find a lot of things. That's politics. When you add a political aspect to justice, everything will crash. That's what is happening now.

Silvia Cattori : When you read articles trying to show that the Muslim Brotherhood is linked to Hamas, or Al-Qaeda, how do you respond to this kind of nonsense?

Youssef Nada : That's their ignorance showing. Those who try to make that connection are ignorant. The Muslim Brotherhood is a philosophy, not one organisation. Every part of the Muslim Brotherhood, in any country, is completely independent from the others. I'll give you an example: the Muslim Brotherhood in Morocco is in the government, not in the opposition. It's not a matter of "branches".

The Muslim Brotherhood is not an organisation; it's a way of thinking. You can find, in the United States, people thinking the same way, convinced about this way of thinking, so they belong to the Muslim Brotherhood; you can find some in Russia, in China, in Indonesia, and that's a fact. The CIA says that we are in 70 countries, and this is true. They miss only two, because we are actually in 72 countries. But every Muslim Brotherhood, in any country, is completely independent. No one can influence them. They may be together in their way of thinking, but not together in their actions.

Silvia Cattori : Today, the associations assisting the most deprived people in Muslim countries have no more money to distribute, because their funds have been frozen, criminalized. The population of Gaza, deprived from any assistance, is slowly dying.

Youssef Nada : Again you come to Palestine and Gaza; this subject I don't want to talk about

it. But when you talk about charity in any other places, charity is always in two parts: personal, and governmental. Governments can stop their aid, but personal charity? Nobody can stop it, because it's going directly from the wealthy to the poor.

Silvia Cattori : Those who attacked you knew what political profit they could make by criminalizing a banker of Egyptian origin who happened to be a member of the Muslim Brotherhood. Spreading the idea that this Arab-Egyptian bank, based in Lugano, was financing terrorists, was that not their main objective? They would make an "example" of you, thus giving them a case for some kind of planetary control?

Youssef Nada : But my case ended, my file is closed. No one could ever prove that I was linked to any terrorists or assisted terrorists anywhere in the world. My case is completely closed.

In spite of the fact that the enquiries opened against me resulted in no actions, I have no bank account. I don't have even a credit card. I don't have money [12]. I can't go out of Campione. I have to fight, not only to get my name off the black list, but fight for my honour and my name as well.

Silvia Cattori : You are innocent, we know that today. But those who attacked you knew perfectly that you were not guilty at the time; I am trying to understand why they chose you as a target?

Youssef Nada : If you find out, let me know.

Silvia Cattori : Everything was so well organised! It can't have been by chance?

Youssef Nada : It is the so-called "Intelligence", who did the organising; not some individuals; it came from the States.

Silvia Cattori : «One is using terrorism to frighten people and to restrict fundamental freedoms» observed Mr. Dick Marty [13]. The United States and Israel – because your case started in 1997, years before the New-York attacks – needed to block any financing to Muslim charity organisations in order to hit resistance movements such as Hamas, They needed an example, which, amplified worldwide by the media, would prepare the world for future repressive measures.

Youssef Nada : But the file is closed. If, as you said, they wanted to make this as a case, it didn't work. My case is closed.

Silvia Cattori : Your case is closed, true; but the Bush administration has succeeded in getting all the antiterrorist laws approved that it wanted. It has established surveillance systems designed for controlling all financing and to cut off most Muslim charity organisations from their financial resources. It has succeeded in destroying you, in preventing you even from traveling, and from enjoying your own assets.

Youssef Nada : OK, but there is a difference between whether they succeeded with me, or with the others. With the others, I'm not the advocate, because I don't know. For me, they succeeded, yes. They succeeded to destroy me completely, yes.

But they didn't prevent me from making charitable contributions; I had no charity organisation. I was a banker not a charity organisation. Originally, I am Egyptian. Egypt is

full of poor people, people who are sleeping in the street and in the mud and who don't have a loaf of bread. And I can assure you that, even when I had money and was assisting poor people, not even one penny went to anyone who is connected to violence, or working with those who were using violence.

Silvia Cattori : Since Mr. Sarkozy was elected to the French presidency, he has showered praises on the Egyptian President [14]. In a press conference at the Palais de l'Elysée, in January 2008, he declared: "We must help Mr. Mubarak in Egypt (...) because, what do we want over there, the Muslim Brotherhood?" What does that say to you?

Youssef Nada : That he is ignorant; he doesn't know what is going on there. He doesn't know who Mubarak is, and he doesn't know what the Muslim Brotherhood is. He just adopted what other people have said; and that's exactly what I wrote on my website. He is asking other people to inform him; he is ignorant, and he owes his ignorance from others who are more ignorant than him, who hand him the information so he sounds knowledgeable.

Silvia Cattori : But why always stigmatise the Muslim Brotherhood and portray M. Hosni Mubarak as some kind of savior?

Youssef Nada : You'll have to ask them whether they are committed to democracy, or to tyrants and dictatorships. If they are committed to democracy, they will never say that Mubarak is good. If they accept dictatorship, it is clear why they support him.

Do you know what happened to me, in April, although I am barred to move from Campione? Mubarak sent me to a special military court [15] with another 40 people, and he said that I financed the Muslim Brotherhood with 1 billion dollars. Can you imagine that? I am here, confined, I can't go out of Campione, I have no bank account, everything is frozen and controlled because of the UN sanctions, and Mubarak said that I financed the Muslim Brotherhood with one billion dollars!

How is it possible to affirm such a thing? The Court rejected the case and said – in the words of the Court – there is no case, and they dismissed it, and asked all 40 people to be released immediately. At the gate of the Court, they arrested the 40 people again and sent them to another Court. The second Court said the same. They re-arrested them three times. After the three times being rejected by the normal Courts, Mubarak decided on a military court; Mr. Mubarak sent civil people to the military court! The military court announced the sentence, which was written by Mubarak.

So, if M. Sarkozy said that he is supporting Mubarak, he obviously likes dictatorships. I guess that's his kind of democracy, that's his personal opinion about democracy. What can I say?

I received the verbal information which was presented to the Court; that came from Security. It is written: "After careful investigation, which took from us a long time, we discovered that Mr. Nada has the Swiss nationality" – which is a lie because I have the Italian, not the Swiss nationality. And secondly it is written: "He came out in Aljazeera attacking the President".

Silvia Cattori : And this is true?

Youssef Nada : Yes.

Silvia Cattori : It is for your interviews on Aljazeera that Mr. Mubarak considers you an

enemy?

Youssef Nada : He doesn't say I'm an "enemy of a dictatorship", but "enemy of Egypt". He summarised for all of Egypt, 80 million Egyptian people in one person...himself.

Silvia Cattori : Are you well known in Egypt?

Youssef Nada : My case is known. Those who are following my case there know that I am innocent. I can hold my head up high and will never back down.

Silvia Cattori : The Court didn't find anything against you, and you are imprisoned here in your house. How do you feel about that injustice?

Youssef Nada : I am used to it. Before coming to Europe – I came in 1969, I was 28 years old – I lived 20 years in a dictatorship. I am used to it. If they went against the legal action to put me in a trap here illegally, I am already accustomed to being treated illegally by dictators.

The Swiss Federal Court wrote in their decision to the Swiss prosecutor:

The accused must know what he is accused with, and you never told him what he is accused with.

It could be allowed to take a longer time, because you asked several legal assistants from a lot of other countries. Maybe they were late to give those answers. One year, two years, three years could be accepted but, after that, you aren't allowed to keep the file open. Either you have evidence against Mr. Nada, and you present it to the Court, or, if you don't have, close the file.

And on 31st May 2005 the Swiss Federal prosecutor declared there was no evidence and closed the file.

Silvia Cattori : You are deprived from your freedom but at least, you aren't like the Egyptian prisoners, tortured!?

Youssef Nada : No, I have never been tortured. Mr. Besson claimed that I said that I was tortured. That's not true; I never said that I had been tortured. I was arrested in Egypt. They just took us and put us in a concentrating camp, without any trial. The only question they asked me was "What is your name, father's name, mother's name, what is your address". And, after two years, they released me, without any reasons.

It was repeated here in Switzerland; they confiscated my documents, blocked my account card, my movements, held me under house arrest in 1,6 square kilometers in Campione. Then they closed the investigative file and said that there is no evidence for illegal or wrongdoings; but here I am, still in the same position, as if there is evidence that I am guilty.

Where is the law? Where is democracy? Is it democratic Switzerland, the country that is famous for being committed to the law and human rights? If this injustice isn't rectified, it will be a black point on the clean white history of this great country.

Silvia Cattori : You have lost everything because of journalists who linked you to Ben Laden,

you and your bank. Do you intend to take a legal action against those people who completely ruined your life?

Youssef Nada : It is not the journalists; it was done by much bigger interests than those small people. They just threw some stones at me. The harm was done. My life is short. But I have to fight until I die. I have to fight in the courts to correct the injustice. I have good lawyers. They are assisting me where it is allowed, on condition that, when the court will decide damages, they will take their money owed to them for my defence. For example, in the case where I won in Bellinzona, the Court decided to pay the lawyer; they paid him about 80,000 Swiss francs.

I have no money, but I am one of a tribe of about 10,000 persons. They'll never let me go hungry. They give me food but no money.

Silvia Cattori : Mr. Guido Olimpio, who is the origin the untrue accusations which were made against you, did he ever request to forgive him?

Youssef Nada : I don't know whether he is actually the source of the accusations; but, as I told you, my head is up and will never come down. I was used to live under dictatorship, and I consider myself now under dictatorship.

Silvia Cattori : And Mr. Labévière, when you were declared not guilty by the Swiss and Italian Courts, did he ever show up to correct what he had said before, or did he disappear?

Youssef Nada : He disappeared. For me he is nothing more than a liar and not noble, I have forgotten about him; only when you or others bring up his name do I remember his lies and character.

Silvia Cattori : But the way in which some have described you is stupefying!

Youssef Nada : It is part of the wave of "Islamophobia". We have a lot of examples for injustice in history. The Jews confronted it in the past; they were not treated as human beings. They were treated with injustice. And, by time, from down they came up. I believe, for those who treated them like with injustice, that there is a day of justice for what they did to the Jews.

Now, if it is happening with the Muslims, the same that what happened with the Jews will come. It is a circle; you don't know what will come out. Justice is justice. It should be there for everyone, whether they are Jews, Muslims, Christians or others.

When I was born, I was born human, not Muslim. After that, I became Muslim. We have a lot of things that bind us together. I share the humanity with all those others who are there.

Now, there are some troubles with some Muslims in Europe, and all the concentration is on the behaviour of people of the lower class who are ignorant, poor, helpless, and couldn't get an education or even bread in their countries, as their corrupt governments robbed all the wealth from them. On the other hand, Europe is full of educated Muslims in every part of society and professions, wealthy and middle class engineers, doctors, lawyers, businessmen, bankers, professors, etc. They are law-abiding citizens, convinced about democracy, respecting others and open to them, serving the societies; there are millions in Europe but the emphasis is only on those who cause trouble.

But, tell me, when you are in need of some workers for dirty jobs, for example the rubbish, no Swiss wants to go collect the rubbish, then you bring in these people coming from a dictatorship, coming from poverty, coming from no health care, coming from no education, and used to being treated less than animals. When you bring them here – they are the poor people among the Muslims – if you concentrate on this category and show all the bad things about them and their behaviour, and then no one can defend or deny that it exists. It would be better to avoid that from the beginning and to educate these immigrants when they come here where there is democracy, there is law, there is no dictatorship, and you have to obey the law; and then they can do the dirty jobs that you want them to do.

But you bring them from a dictatorship, and you expect that they will be like you, without doing anything to help them change. The basic problem, the core of the problem is the dictatorship. For example, to come back to what you said about Sarkozy; he encourages Mubarak, he encourages the dictatorship, and he is the President of a democratic country!

Silvia Cattori : Does he encourage him because Mr. Hosni Mubarak is defending the interests of Israel and of the United States in the region? Mr. Sarkozy is today their best ally.

Youssef Nada : You are jumping to another subject.

Silvia Cattori : These subjects are linked together.

Youssef Nada : Not for me. This is dirty politics. If you forget the democratic principles, which you came to defend, and you support dictatorship, that's not a clean agenda

But, for me, I am a special case.

Tell me, you know that the list at the United Nations concerning so-called "terrorists" includes 400 persons and entities. Do you think that the world, the democracies are threatened by 400 people? Which democracy is threatened? Is it so fragile that 400 criminals can make the democracy change to become a dictatorship? This Ben Laden, who is in a cave, in a mountain, and he can't come out, you consider him to be a very big threat for democracy in the world? Inflating a small creature to make him a giant, and you are afraid of the giant!

Silvia Cattori : That's the reason why it is so worrying, because these are lies which are preparing for another war, against Iran maybe, and your case is part of that long war which started in Iraq in 1991.

Youssef Nada : My case is completely different.

Silvia Cattori : So, it was just by mistake that you were charged?

Youssef Nada : No, it is intentional. But I have nothing to do with the other cases.

Silvia Cattori : But your case is a political case?

Youssef Nada : Yes. It is a political case, that's true.

Let me tell you: all my life, since I was a child, even before joining the Muslim Brotherhood, I was open to my friends in a primary school where there were orthodox Copts, and Jews. I was open to them and still am. I share with them, our humanity, we are human. We differ; a

Chinese, a Japanese, differs from me, but still he is a human; I share with him so many things. I differ from him on some points, one of them is religion; it doesn't mean that he is my enemy.

Silvia Cattori : Why a person who is so smart and mild like you...

Youssef Nada : (laughing) When you know, let me know.

Silvia Cattori : You seem not to be angry with these people who made you suffer.

Youssef Nada : As I told you, if I lived for 29 years under a dictatorship, I am used for it . It is not new. For you, it is new, because you lived in a democratic country, but, for me, I am used to this, that the things will happen outside the legal area. I was treated outside the legal parameters.

Silvia Cattori : What is the most difficult for you?

Youssef Nada : My freedom. I was born a free man, and now I am not a free man. My rights have been taken from me.

Silvia Cattori : And now your phone is being monitored?

Youssef Nada : I don't care about that, because I haven't said anything wrong. But I am not a free man. If I am not a free man, then I have to expect everything or my freedom to be taken away. And that's what happened. I am not a free man, and I am not happy without my freedom.

Silvia Cattori : What about your health: are you still preoccupied with health problems?

Youssef Nada : My hand is broken, and I have bleeding in my eyes and arteries in the neck, but I can't go to the doctor. I can't go to see specialized doctors, because they don't exist in Campione. I need to go, but they refused to let me. I asked them several times for permission, but they refused. Even the Federal Court in Lausanne said to them: « this man's rights were abused ». And, since Switzerland investigated the case and found nothing, the emigration office in Switzerland must not prohibit me, when it is allowed, to go to the doctor, they have to assist me at the United Nations Security Council and convince them. It is true that what happens to me is not justified, but Switzerland has to follow the Security Council rules. So I sent them a letter asking them for the authorization to go to the doctor outside Campione; they refused. Even after what the Court ruled. In a democratic country, one has to go to the Court; there is no other way.

Silvia Cattori : Do you think that you'll be able to soon get these UN sanctions cancelled against you and finally see your name taken off this list which designates you as "assisting terrorists"?

Youssef Nada : I applied for it; they refused. They wrote that the designating country refused my request. I can't go out of Campione. Italy is my country. I am Italian. Campione is an Italian enclave inside the Swiss territory.

Silvia Cattori : You feel as though you are in prison?

Youssef Nada : Yes, naturally. I am in a “Swiss Guantanamo”. The Court said that with this action, and because I am living in Campione, it means that I am under house arrest. I am on the so-called “assisting terrorists” list.

Silvia Cattori : Why do they still keep your name on that list?

Youssef Nada : I don't know; if you know, tell me.

Silvia Cattori : What helps you to face this adversity?

Youssef Nada : My connection with who created me. He created me, and I believe I will go to Him.

Silvia Cattori : Is there anything one can do to help you get out of this situation ?

Youssef Nada : Nobody can do it, except justice. It is still in the hands of dirty politics. When they stormed my house, and offices, Mr. Roshacher made a declaration to “Swiss info”. That same day, on 7th November 2001, Bush came out on television and spoke about me. It was morning here when they raided my house and, in the evening, it was thus morning in Washington, Mr. Bush came on television and talked about us (our bank and its partners), and he said: « We are going to starve them».

Silvia Cattori : If these lies have been fabricated by certain Intelligence Services, and not by Mr. Olimpio, would that mean that he has been just a puppet in this story?

Youssef Nada : He and the others are tools, used for this case. As I said to you I forgot them; only when you mention them do I remember them.

Silvia Cattori : How long since you can't leave Campione?

Youssef Nada : Actually, nobody said that I was forbidden to leave Campione, until I went to London on 10th November 2001, three days after they stormed my house and offices. I said to the Substitute of the Prosecutor of the Swiss Confederation, Mr. Claude Nicati that I had to travel and that I was going to London. He said: “There is no restriction (he gave it to me by writing), but when I call you, you must come, otherwise I will arrest you”.

I went to London again in 2003. For 6 months continuously I was on Aljazeera, every week, on the screen, (and it was translated by the “Wall Street Journal” and by the “Washington Post”). I came from Aljazeera to the Hilton; my door was not opening and I went to see the concierge. He said to me “Just a moment Mr. Nada” and he kept me about five minutes, and he brought me another key saying “Sorry, sometimes the magnetic strip is not working”. I went up to the 5th floor. When the lift opened, 5 people stormed in and yelled: “Scotland Yard!” I said: “What is wrong?” He said: “Let us go to your room”. We went to the room and then he said: “Mr. Nada, bring your bag”. I said: “Sorry, I have to make my prayers at first”. He answered: “We don't have time”. I said to him: “Make what you want but I am going to make my prayers; if you want to force me, force me, but I have to make my prayers before leaving”. Then I went to the bathroom; one of them wanted to come, I said “No, but I'll leave the door open”. And then I made my prayers, and he said, “Bring your bag”. I replied, “I am the age of your grandfather, I can't carry it. You carry it if you want or throw it through the window”. They carried it and brought it down.

Silvia Cattori : You are a very strong man!

Youssef Nada : I am burned already. What can they do more?

Silvia Cattori : Are you writing your story?

Youssef Nada : Yes, I am very busy. I have a lot of things to do. I have to follow the lawyers, because the lawyers can't work alone; I must give them the documents. You know after closing the files, Swiss law allows you to go and see them and make copies. They gave me that permission. I went, with my lawyer, two times. The first time, we copied the indexes. It was 40 boxes, with 10 files in every box. And a second time, I took 2500 copies. I have all the documents. The lawyers come here, from time to time.

Silvia Cattori : When I think of all what you are suffering because of the attitude of my country, I feel ashamed...

Youssef Nada : No. Don't be ashamed because, I tell you frankly: the respect that I have for this country, Switzerland, is more than for any other country. The mistakes they've made, it is another thing. But the respect that I received here, from the normal people, from the prosecutor, from the lawyers, from the parliamentarians, from the doctors, from some journalists, from the workers, engineers has been wonderful. I had the full respect for and from everyone. After they stormed the house, when I went down, in the street. Three persons stopped me saying « Viva Signor Nada ».

It is true that, in the media, there were a lot of bad things written. As I told you, the ignorant people are using people more ignorant than they are. And that's what happened with Richard Labévière. When he went to Egypt, he used ignorant people, more ignorant than him, who gave him some information, and he put them in his film and in his book; all rubbish.

Can you imagine that he wrote that Youssef Nada assisted Hadj Amin al-Husseini, the Mufti of Palestine, to flee Germany after meeting with Hitler, through Switzerland, then to go to Egypt and from Egypt to Palestine!? I was 13 years old when the Mufti fled Germany! Richard Labévière, when he wrote that, didn't say that I was 13 years old at that time. When I wrote it, everything came out; even in Wikipedia, you can see it. And they also said that "Nada was working with the admiral SS Canaris in Egypt, during the war". They forgot my birth date and that Canaris and the Mufti didn't need a 13-year-old child to assist them!

Silvia Cattori : I can imagine how tough all that has been for you.

Youssef Nada : I was working in 27 countries just to find myself isolated here in one and a half square kilometers. But thanks to God, I have visitors from all over the world. I know my values that give me strength to stand up during the bad days as well as the good days. My head is up and will continue to be up until I die.

Silvia Cattori : Thank you for having given us this interview.

NOTES

(*) See: Video of the testimony of Youssef Nada on the refusal of the United Nations to cross his name off the black list.

Reviewed by Greta Berlin and Monica Hostettler.

[1] See :

«UN Security Council black lists – Introductory memorandum», by Dick Marty, Rapporteur, Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, 19 March 2007.

« Dick Marty dénonce la 'liste noire' du terrorisme », Swissinfo.ch, 25 avril 2007.

[2] See :

«Alleged secret detentions and unlawful inter-state transfers of detainees involving Council of Europe member states», by Dick Marty, Rapporteur, Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, 12 June 2006

« Secret detentions and illegal transfers of detainees involving Council of Europe member states: second report », by Dick Marty, Rapporteur, Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, 11 June 2007.

[3] See : « Official site of Youssef Nada ».

[4] See, notice about Mr. Olimpio, on the Official site of Youssef Nada.

Guido Olimpio, was the correspondent of the Corriere della sera. He stated on 9-10-2002 in Milan criminal court before being indicted that he has contacts with the USA FBI, and that ' he gave an audience at the USA congress 1996 and that he testified in front of the security commission of the USA congress'. Presented as an « expert in international terrorism », Mr. Olimpio writes on the Middle East since the Eighties. From 1999 to the summer 2003, he was chief correspondent for the Corriere della Sera in Israël.

[5] Regarding Richard Labévière, author of the book « Dollars for Terror: The U.S. and Islam », see notice about him on the Official site of Youssef Nada.

[6] Sylvain Besson, journalist for the Swiss daily Le Temps. Author of the book : «La conquête de l'Occident», October 2005.

[7] It is the article « Hamas perde meta' del tesoro », by Guido Olimpio, Corriere della Sera, 20 October 1997, which started the accusation of a financing of Hamas by the bank Al Taqwa of Youssef Nada.

Mr. Youssef Nada wrote on his Official site : « It took from 1997 until 2005 to obtain condemnation from the Milan criminal court against the writer of the article Guido Olimpio of "Corriere Della Sera", and a civil case against him is in the pipe line. The lies of Guido Olimpio article in "Corriere Della Sera" were defused, and spread everywhere. ».

[8] Mr. Youssef Nada wrote on his Official site : « Among those who participated in defusing the lies, whether for envy or hate, whether knowingly or not, whether intentionally or not, whether hired to corner the Islamist activists, or motivated politically or financially, or for their own professional agenda, or misled, are the following names: Richard Labeviere, Roland Jacquard, Leo Sisti, Kevin Coogan, Paolo Fusi, Daniel Pipes Victor Comras, Sylvain Besson, and others whom will be named later ».

During those years where Israel and the United States were waging their war against Islam,

experts in terrorism and theorists of Islamophobia have appeared, such as Daniel Pipes in the United States. See « Daniel Pipes, the expert of hate », Red Voltaire, 2 March 2006.

[9] Book published in Arabic. Under translation in English, French and German.

[10] The resolution 1267 of 1999, concerns Al-Qaïda and the Taliban. The Security Council of the United Nations has started the practice of sanctions against people (and not States) in October 1999, to fight the Taliban's regime in Afghanistan .

[11] The resolution 1373 of the Security Council of the United Nations, adopted after the 11 September 2001, put the emphasis on the struggle against the financing of terrorism by introducing a general obligation to freeze the assets and the economic resources of people and entities involved in acts of terrorism. The Council of the European Union has established its own list after the 11 September 2001.

[12] See : « Swiss firm shuts down after terrorism probe », swissinfo.ch, 9 January 2002.

[13] See :« On se sert du terrorisme pour faire peur et pour restreindre les libertés fondamentales », Interview of Dick F. Marty, Horizons et débats, 28 January 2008.

[14] See :

« Official visit to Egypt – Statements made by M. Nicolas Sarkozy, President of the Republic, during his joint press briefing with Mr Hosni Mubarak, President of Egypt (excerpts)», 30 December 2007.

« Interview given by M. Nicolas SARKOZY, President of the Republic, to the “Al-Ahram” Egyptian newspaper (excerpts)», 1st August 2007.

[15] See :

« Des cadres des Frères musulmans devant un tribunal militaire », El Watan, 17 June 2008.

« Egypt: Sentences against Muslim Brothers a perversion of justice », Press release, Amnesty International, 15 April 2008.

Article in french: [L'incroyable histoire de Youssef Nada](#), 13 of June 2008.

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