

DJAMEL BEGHAL  
British and French complicity in torture







## About Cageprisoners

---

Cageprisoners is a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee which operates as a human rights NGO. The organisation seeks to work for those killed or detained as a result of the 'War on Terror' and its peripheral campaigns, by raising awareness of the illegality and the global consequences of their detention. By promoting due process, the vision of the organisation is to see a return to the respect of those fundamental norms which transcend religion, societies and political theories.

Cageprisoners comprises of an advisory group which includes patrons, seasoned activists, lawyers, doctors and former detainees. From the group, a board has been elected which oversees the strategy and management of the organisation and its employees. By working in such a way the working environment of the organisation can constantly be reviewed in light of its aims and objectives.



Report Author: Arnaud Mafille

Copyright © 2011 Cageprisoners  
All rights reserved.

Cageprisoners  
27 Old Gloucester Street  
London  
WC1N 3XX

Telephone: 00 (44) 2031674416  
Email: [contact@cageprisoners.com](mailto:contact@cageprisoners.com)

# Table of contents

---

INTRODUCTION .....	4
CASE SUMMARY .....	5
ARREST .....	6
<b>Background</b> .....	6
<b>Arrest</b> .....	6
INTERROGATION .....	7
<b>First interrogation</b> .....	7
<b>Description of the torture rooms</b> .....	7
TORTURE .....	8
<b>Falaqa</b> .....	8
<b>Sleep, food and light deprivation</b> .....	9
<b>Centrifugal chair</b> .....	9
<b>Water</b> .....	10
<b>Nail ripping</b> .....	10
<b>Forced feeding</b> .....	11
<b>Mock execution</b> .....	12
BRITISH COMPLICITY IN TORTURE.....	13
<b>Description of the British agent</b> .....	13
<b>Interrogations</b> .....	13
<b>Mistreatment</b> .....	14
<b>Medical mistreatment</b> .....	14
FRENCH COMPLICITY IN TORTURE.....	15
<b>Arrests in Europe</b> .....	16
<b>Extradition</b> .....	16
<b>Arrival in France</b> .....	17
<b>Interrogation</b> .....	17
<b>Medical examination</b> .....	18
<b>Charges</b> .....	18
<b>Transfer to prison</b> .....	18
A FRENCH MISCARRIAGE OF JUSTICE.....	19
<b>Arrival in prison</b> .....	19
<b>Strip searches</b> .....	19
<b>Extradition to Netherlands</b> .....	19
<b>Trial of Nizar Trabelsi in Belgium</b> .....	20
<b>Trial</b> .....	20
<b>Appeal and miscarriage of justice</b> .....	20
<b>Solitary</b> .....	21
<b>Inhumane conditions of treatment</b> .....	21
<b>Wikileaks</b> .....	21
<b>Deportation</b> .....	22
<b>Rearrested</b> .....	22
<b>Falsification of evidence</b> .....	23

## Introduction

---

As part of the series of reports called *Fabricating Terrorism*, Cageprisoners took it upon itself, since 2005, to highlight the extent to which the British authorities had acted unlawfully in the treatment of terrorism suspects held abroad, but more importantly, their complicity in rendition and torture.

This report is an extension of the same theme, as the words of Djamel Beghal expose how not only the British, but also the French authorities were involved in his torture, dating back to just before 9/11.

The case is a horrific reminder of the policies that were used by European countries against those who were suspected of involvement in terrorism.

While the alleged torture described by Beghal is horrific, the consequences of the false confessions obtained by the UAE authorities have had a devastating impact on the lives of dozens of individuals who were linked to the case. Until this very day, there are many who have been given long sentences, simply on the basis of that torture evidence. As recently exposed through Wikileaks, a French counterterrorism judge, Jean-François Ricard, stated that the case of Beghal and those associated with him only led to convictions due to the reputation of the judges, and would never have taken place due to the actual evidence.

Such a clear statement has to be viewed through the lens of the way the War on Terror was prosecuted immediately after 9/11. With the world's attention on suspected terrorists, it would seem that France constructed an entirely false case against Beghal, thereby proving that they were actively involved in the fight against terrorism.

As further details come to light regarding the way in which these cases were prosecuted, serious questions will need to be asked of the way in which the French investigative judges

have acted, in particular Jean-Louis Bruguière. His role specifically has been key in the use of torture evidence due to his presence during the interrogation of suspects abroad.

The UK government's Detainee Inquiry promised to look into cases where the British security agencies had been involved in rendition and torture. Due to the terms of reference, 9 human rights organisations including Cageprisoners had to withdraw from the process as the Inquiry did not provide enough scope for reasonable accountability and openness. Djamel Beghal's case is an all too poignant reminder that without true accountability, the lives of many can be destroyed.

Through this report, it is hoped that both the British and French authorities will take stock of their involvement, and reassess the way in which they have treated such men. Beghal's case deserves nothing less than a complete re-examination, with the hope he and others will be able to receive some semblance of justice.

**[Asim Qureshi – Executive Director]**

## Case Summary

---

### Arrest

**29 July 2001**—Djamel Beghal, a dual French and Algerian national, was detained by the Emirati authorities on his way through UAE to Morocco.

**29 July 2001**—Beghal is taken to a secret detention facility which is later identified as the headquarters of the Abu Dhabi police. For the next two months, Beghal alleges he was tortured by the Emirati police with the complicity of US, British and French security agencies.

### French complicity

**29 July 2001**—The Emirati intelligence call both the CIA and French DGSE to inform them of Beghal's detention according to *The Observer*.

**Beginning of August 2001**—Emirati police share with the French DST copies of their interrogation as reported in *Le Point*.

**23 August 2001**—Friends and acquaintances of Beghal are placed under surveillance by DST.

**7 September 2001**—A DST report references statements taken from Beghal during his unlawful detention. The report is the basis for the opening of an investigation by the French authorities on 10 September 2001.

**20 September 2001**—*Le Monde* announces publicly the arrest of Djamel Beghal. The following day, Beghal's friends were all arrested.

**21 September 2001**—The *juge d'instruction* Bruguière arrives in UAE to interrogate Beghal but never directly met or spoke with him. On the 22 September 2001, Bruguière receives a signed confession of his involvement in the alleged US embassy bomb plot.

**1 October 2001**—Beghal is placed on a CIA rendition flight back to France.

### British complicity

**8 August 2001**—a British security agent interrogates Beghal about his activities in Afghanistan, but in particular focuses on the UK and his relationship with various figures.

During the two months of his detention he was interrogated at various points by the British agents.

### Return to France

**1 October 2001**—On his arrival, Beghal was taken immediately to be interrogated by Bruguière after a 22 hour flight. The interrogation by Bruguière lasted 19 hours and included threats against him and his family.

**2 October 2001**—A doctor examines Beghal and finds evidence of ill-treatment he alleges.

**15 March 2005**—Djamel Beghal is convicted of criminal association in relation with a terrorist undertaking. He was sentenced to 10 years imprisonment.

**9 May 2005**—Judge Jean-François Ricard makes a statement to Poloff, a US political diplomat stationed in France, that Beghal's case would never have led to a conviction based on the evidence, had it not been for the reputation of France's anti terrorist judges.

**July 2006**—The French authorities remove Beghal's citizenship. On the day of his release on 30 May 2009 they attempted to deport him to Algeria, however they were stopped due to the legal implications of *refoulement*. He was eventually released under house arrest conditions in Murat.

**18 May 2011**—Beghal is rearrested for allegedly directing a terrorist group, he continues to challenge that charge.

## Arrest

---

Djamel Beghal is an Algerian with French citizenship condemned for being the head of a “criminal association in relation with a terrorist undertaking”. He was presented as a major figure of Al Qaeda in Europe. He was arrested in the United Arab Emirates a month before the 9/11 attacks. He was tortured there for two months with the complicity of American, British and French services. He was eventually deported to France. Beghal was sentenced to ten years in prison, which he spent in solitary confinement. According to Wikileaks an investigating judge admitted to a US embassy officer that Beghal had been convicted despite the lack of evidence. After his release, he was placed under house arrest. In 2010, he was re-arrested and placed in solitary confinement again.

### Background

Djamel Beghal was born on 2 December 1965 in Bordj bou Areridj (Algeria). He migrated to France in 1987 to pursue his studies. In 1990, he married a French citizen with whom he has four children and in 1997, the family left France to live in Leicester (UK). During his time in France, he was employed as youth worker in Corbeil Essonnes, near Paris. He also used that time in order to preach to French citizens about Islam.

It was in 1997 that he chose to move his entire family to the UK and then decided to settle in Leicester. Initially he earned a living making sandwiches, but after tried his hand working for a homeless charity and also pursuing a vocational course in IT.

By November 2000, they decided to move to Jalalabad (Afghanistan) as they wished to live

### Arrest

On 29 July 2001 Beghal was on his way from Pakistan to Morocco in order to accompany the wife and children of a friend, who were unwell. At 11pm, he was arrested in Abu Dhabi Airport for an identity check. He had a valid passport. However, the men who arrested him ordered that he follow them.

*“I was at the boarding office at 23:00. Shadows with sunglasses surrounded me and invited me to follow them to an office. This was followed by a verification of my documents, which were valid, but then started the intimidation and provocation which I did not want to comply with...I was asked to follow them. I requested to see my friend's wife and children which they granted - the children were screaming, crying, seeing me escorted in that manner. I reassured them saying that after few verifications, everything would be back to normal...I did not know at that moment that I would never see them again.”<sup>1</sup>*

He was then forcefully put in the back of a black truck and blindfolded. On the way to the place of detention, he was mistreated by his captors. He was taken to an unknown location.

*“I was put on the back of a 4x4 which was blacked out. Then, I was blindfolded and never saw the light again for two months of horrific and intense torture. During the journey, in my humble opinion, the vehicle was only going in circles, my two guards with sunglasses (in the back seat) hurt my knees using intense and painful electric shocks, probably to confuse me and to put me under stress for what was still to come.”<sup>2</sup>*

A French newspaper identified the secret place of detention as the police HQ of Abu Dhabi<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Beghal D., 2009. Le onze septembre et le Guantanamo made in France. La Vérité sur l'attentat du réseau « Beghal » contre l'ambassade des États-Unis à Paris et ses conséquences. (9/11 and Guantanamo made in France. The truth about the attack against the US embassy in Paris by the “beghal network” and its consequences) written in Châteauroux prison on Friday 26 Jummada I 1430/ 22 May 2009. p.10

<sup>2</sup> Beghal supra n.1 at p.11

<sup>3</sup> L’Economiste “Feuilleton de l’été: Les coulisses de la terreur. Quatrième partie” by Richard Labévière. 05/08/2005



## Interrogation

---

### First interrogation

As soon as he arrived to his place of detention, Beghal was stripped-naked and given a two-piece blue suit.

*"I was undressed straight away. A Guantanamo-style suit, but blue and in two pieces, was imposed on me. I've had more than a dozen during my stay, because they used to tear it on my back during their torture sessions. What I learnt from their techniques, was that tearing the clothes on my body, gave me a sense of vulnerability. That was the purpose of my torture, in order to create in me a feeling of submission and to try to please them, to obtain their "favours" in return."*<sup>4</sup>

He then experienced his first interrogation.

*"A first interrogation was initiated: "Who are you? What is your mission? Why did Abu Abdallah (Osama bin Laden) send you? Your friends betrayed you and we know everything that you will eventually confirm to us!"*

After that, a heavy object was placed on his head. He was threatened with torture if this object was to fall down.

*"A very heavy seat was placed on my head. They were forcing me to keep it in balance while making threats of the worst torture if I ever dropped it! Worn out by fatigue and tired of their silliness, I decided to take a shortcut and to get to the real purpose of their "dance around the sacrificed" (they were walking around me like American Indians, bombarding me with questions and jostling me without giving me the chance to say anything). I hesitated, then I threw the seat at them, and the real torture began...They prepared their equipment in front of me like butchers in a slaughter house."*<sup>5</sup>

### Description of the torture rooms

*"All the sessions took place in two different rooms. The first was wide. There was a desk with a computer, a simulator of noise, a filing cabinet and a picture of Prince Zayd Ibn Al Haiyan (now dead, in the hands of Allah Almighty's justice). That's all I could glimpse during my enforced stay."<sup>6</sup> The second room was smaller with a mirror on the opposite wall. It was probably a sort of studio to listen and record. Several times, a voice came out of a microphone from that direction.*

*In the middle of the room, there was a horrible removable chair. It had a high back on its seat with multiple straps to engage the arms and chest. The basis on which one is supposed to lay the bottom is at 45° to the backseat, so that the edge cuts the blood flow in the middle of the thighs. The bottom, being in suspension, offers a most uncomfortable position - the legs also would remain suspended without being able to touch the ground, strapped, and so engorged with blood that the pain would become a torture sufficient in itself to make anyone admit, without blinking, that he is the assassin of Kennedy. There was a hole in the seat of the chair that gave access to the private parts."<sup>7</sup>*

---

<sup>4</sup> Beghal supra.n.1 at p.11

<sup>5</sup> ibid at p.11-12

<sup>6</sup> Beghal was able to see despite being blindfolded by looking through the space between the blindfold and his nose.

<sup>7</sup> Beghal supra.n.1 at p.13

## Torture

---

*“Each time I thought we had reached the pinnacle of atrocity, they made me discover a new technique more atrocious than the previous ones.”<sup>8</sup>*

### Rape

Beghal was placed on the special chair described above. He claims a sort of probe was introduced in his urethra and rectum in order to induce intense pain.

*“I would never have imagined that it was possible to introduce a kind of very thin catheter into the urethra or rectum and cause terrible pain.”<sup>9</sup>*

### Falaqa

He was also regularly subjected to the beating of the sole of his feet (falaqa). After each session of falaqa, his feet were submerged in ice.

*“With a stick, which I suppose was in ebonite, voluntarily rounded and without salient angle to avoid cutting the skin, but hard and effective enough to make painful the sensitive soles of the feet. I was struck with all the strength my torturers had, to the point that I would hear them faltering and eventually handing over the stick to other colleagues. For a long time, the burns of the hits on my swollen, blue and bloody soles prevented me from walking or even standing. The agents who had to move me would drag me, grabbing me by the armpits. The intense pain, after the whistling of the stick falling on my soles, reaches the brain so suddenly that the only alternative left is to pass out! Fainting became a strange release. It does not last long because some doctors were there to wake me up with camphor or something else. At the end of each session, they would soak my feet in bowls filled with ice, making the blood clot under the skin.*

*Then, the beating would start again. The sole of my feet were congealed with violet and greenish liquid and the intensity of the pain was doubled.”<sup>10</sup>*

Beghal also added:

*“During these sessions of falaqa, my torturers would sometimes add an “artistic touch”. The biggest among them, a 120kg hippo, would sit on my back, my body stretched out, crushing my lungs, out of breath already. As soon as I breathed out, I could not catch my breath and respire because of the behemoth over me. I was horribly lacking air. This technique also prevented me from screaming and relieving a little of the pain.”<sup>11</sup>*

### First glance of his cell

He was dragged to his cell. He managed to see it despite being blindfolded.

*“I was thrown in the very last cell. I raised my blindfold just to find square room, a camera in a corner, half a foam mattress as thin as a single blanket and a ceiling with protruding forms, representative of coffins.”<sup>12</sup>*

---

<sup>8</sup> Beghal supra.n.1 at p.11

<sup>9</sup> ibid

<sup>10</sup> ibid p.13-14

<sup>11</sup> ibid p.15

<sup>12</sup> ibid p.14

### Deafening sounds and suffocating smells

In his cell, he would have to suffer permanent noise. Strong and unpleasant smells would fill the cell, sent through the air duct and causing him to suffocate.

*“In this coffin-cell, I would be assailed with all sorts of noises: the crash of large iron chains, keys being thrown on the cement...there was even, for a long time, the arrival of very strong, stinky and suffocating smells in the cell through the air duct. On rare occasions, they sent a good perfume of roses and suddenly, they would send horrible smells..”<sup>13</sup>*

### Sleep, food and light deprivation

During his secret detention, Djamel Beghal was prevented from sleeping and was inappropriately fed.

*“Prolonged lack of sleep, hunger without desire to eat, stress reaching its peak, pain shivers in my body, the pitch black in which I was immersed, the anxiety of the unknown future, the thousands of questions that abounded in my head, the constant feeling of being in a nightmare that will stop short for a happy awakening, the permanent thought to find a solution, an escape, to get ahead of their schemes and manipulative interrogation techniques...all that, and many other things, were jostling in my mind and were eroding my strength and endurance.”<sup>14</sup>*

### Centrifugal chair

Beghal was also placed on a “centrifugal chair”. After very rapid rotations, he was placed on a piece of leather and covered with a towel. He does not remember subsequently what happened to him.

*“Once, a senior personality was present. I was taken into a room where a new kind of chair was placed in the middle. I was offered a scenario of an attack in France without specifying the place but by citing the names of friends living in France I had never mentioned to them before...Facing my stubbornness to refuse everything, they made me move to that chair. The spinning centrifuge gave me the impression that my internal organs were about to be torn apart. After this torture, I was placed on a kind of leather and I was covered with a towel. I do not remember much of what happened to me after”<sup>15</sup>*

### Extreme temperature

During his two months of incarceration, he was exposed to extreme temperatures.

*“They would also play a lot with temperature from a suffocating heat, while it was already 50° outside in the UAE summer months, to a cool or icy shivering.”<sup>16</sup>*

He was also locked in a big refrigerator.

*“Among the many threats of torture, there was one that surpassed my imagination: ending up locked in a kind of large refrigerator, in complete darkness and unbearable cold. As soon as the skin, clothes, or simply the tip of a finger touches the wall of the refrigerator, it finds itself caught and stuck. The effect of low temperatures on the body is terrible. The extremities and the skull are the most painful. The growing refrigeration removes any ability to think or to resist. In addition, to increase and vary the sources of pain, since the beginning of my ordeal, they forced me to put on slippers, size 32 or 34, while I am usually a size 45. In this fridge, these slippers would make me imbalanced and prevent me from standing properly. In other terms, it multiplied the pain of my swollen feet also engorged with blood after the falaqa sessions.”<sup>17</sup>*

<sup>13</sup> Ibid p.15

<sup>14</sup> ibid

<sup>15</sup> ibid p.16

<sup>16</sup> ibid p.15

<sup>17</sup> ibid p.16-17

### Water

He was regularly subjected to torture with water.

*“In a kind of shower, I was placed in a hollow receptacle and they opened a vertical jet of water like a waterfall. The water was cold and fell at least from four or five meters high. The strength of the jet, combined with that of the fall, was very painful by its impact on the skull or the rest of the body. It would unbalance a camel. The waterfall torture was almost daily with the difference that those who engaged in this pleasure were Hindu-Pakistani soldiers, dressed in grey uniforms. They would usually be in charge of moving me from one place to another.”<sup>18</sup>*

### Stress position

In addition to the special chair already described, he was also allegedly placed in a special type of cell.

*“The tiniest cell of physical torture that I saw was simply diabolical. A normal door is opened and at eye level arises a concrete wall. Down, a hole 60 to 80 cm high allows to introduce a man leaving him just enough space to sit on the floor with a small ceiling to block the head. The back is blocked by the back wall and the feet must be found lying with the inability to bend your knees to relieve them because from the head to toes the small oblique ceiling falls and keeps the legs straight...*

*This process over time causes excruciating pain to the buttocks and especially the spine. It's exhausting.”<sup>19</sup>*

### Contortion of his fingers

His fingers were also placed in a sort of can opener and forced towards the back of his hand.

*“In a kind of can opener, they put my fingers and then forced them towards the back of my hand, causing excruciating pain and making me scream until I had no more voice. They called me delicate.”<sup>20</sup>*

### Nail ripping

*“There was the "clipper" with which they tore small pieces of toenails in spurts.”<sup>21</sup>*

### Cold gas

His face and scalp were subjected to a gas causing the skin to dry and giving the feeling that it was about to be ripped.

*“They took pleasure in spraying me with a cold liquid, or just a gas, coming out of a vaporizer. They sought the facial skin but mainly the scalp. After a few seconds, the skin dries out, stretched continuously giving the feeling that it would eventually crack or tear. It feels unbearable.”<sup>22</sup>*

### Smoke

While Beghal was on the chair in a stress position, the room was once filled with smoke. He woke up in his cell.

*“Once, there were many people in this torture chamber. They left me sitting on this terrible chair for hours. Then, suddenly, they surrounded me and filled the room with smoke. They repeated over and over that those were rituals to which they absolutely had to subject me. I never remembered anything. I found myself lying in my cell with several soldiers wearing white masks and talking to me in broken English.*

*From this event, I went into a permanent trance. I could not fully emerge and return to real sensations.”<sup>23</sup>*

---

<sup>18</sup> Ibid p.17    <sup>21</sup> ibid

<sup>19</sup> ibid p.18    <sup>22</sup> ibid

<sup>20</sup> ibid p.17    <sup>23</sup> ibid p.17-18

## Humiliation

He experienced many forms of humiliation.

*“Sessions of gratuitous humiliation to destroy my moral and mental strength are innumerable. For example, my torturers would drink tea and would throw the contents of their cups over my head and my face, calling me such or such animal.”<sup>24</sup>*

*“A lesser event, but very typical: I was called for another session of abuse, something that became almost a habit. By making me enter into the room, one of the agents I have called the "Syrian", passed me and took me aside to tell me I had a very bad breath. I replied that it was due to the excessive hospitality of Emirati Bedouins. Then, he ordered his Pakistani henchmen to give me enough to brush my teeth. Actually, I was undressed. I was spun the usual towel to preserve my modesty. I was allowed to enter into a kind of bathroom. One handed me a small toothbrush and put a little reddish toothpaste. Finding this banal gesture of brushing teeth gave me the impression that all the unhappiness was now behind me. Within seconds, my mouth caught fire so that I gasped. It was as hot as pure chilli! I leaked the floor to calm the pain and I would leave my cheek against the ground when they would forget me in my cell”.<sup>25</sup>*

## Forced feeding

He was suspicious about the food he was given. One day, his torturers decided to forced feed him. Few minutes later, Beghal’s body went through excruciating pain.

*“A few hours after my arrival, I was asked to eat a plate of rice with some kind of yogurt. I refused any food. It became their obsession. I absolutely had to eat. It was suspect and I had sensed that something was behind their hospitality. I was beaten up for my refusal and they ended up force feeding me. They let it macerate for a few moments.*

*Without warning, suddenly, I was struck by abdominal pain that bent me over. Soldiers led me somewhere. I felt like the tip of the blade of a large knife was slashing my belly from the inside. I screamed in pain.*

*I started to vomit. I even vomited my stomach lining mixed with blood.*

*Then all my sphincters relaxed. I was placed on a Turkish toilet. I had defecated everything I had inside, even blood. Then without any control, a compact paste similar to soft butter came out of my urethra as if it was removed by an internal pressure.*

*To my surprise I discovered they (the American agents) had collected everything. The vomit and the rest.”<sup>26</sup>*

## Unknown chemicals

Beghal was administrated several times unknown chemicals causing pain, hallucinations, anguish, uncontrolled movements and uncontrolled speech. He was then repeated scenarios by westerners interrogators.

*“After this episode, doctors/torturers gave me a multitude of products. To this day, I do not know what their aims were”.<sup>27</sup>*

*“The worst ways to suffer were through the uncontrollable effects of the chemicals ingested. The oxcitane was supposed to erase all sense of restraint or protective fear against others. Rather it provides a real trust and respect for the torturer. It also gives rise to rivers of unfettered discussion. I remember arriving to the point of presenting the soles of my feet without any constraint. It was enough that they asked me and here I was. Once beaten to blood, I found myself surrendering to them my feet, or other part of my body, without hesitation, like a robot programmed to obey.*

<sup>24</sup> Ibid p.18    <sup>27</sup> ibid p.20

<sup>25</sup> ibid p.18

<sup>26</sup> ibid p.19

*Without going too much into this painful subject, the chemicals injected caused me terrible pain, hallucinations, anguish, ICT and OCD like self-slapping, kicking in the air, head butting anything, acts of madness, uncontrolled verbiage, unusual attitudes...the list is sadly unbearable once detailed.*

*During those moments, when you become a vegetable, the "civilised Westerners" hammered me, intermittently, the brain, the conscious and the subconscious, with crazy stories. Then, came the well-crafted scenarios of fictitious attacks they would keep on repeating to me repeating me until it became like autosuggestion."<sup>28</sup>*

#### Mock execution

Beghal was taken several time by soldiers and put in a truck. He claims they would then simulate an execution.

*"The "soldiers" would often come in at the most unexpected moments, pick me up from the ground and take me somewhere and throw me in a 4 x4. After ten minutes of "lumpy terrain", they would simulate an execution but finally cancel and postpone it".<sup>29</sup>*

---

<sup>28</sup> Ibid p.20

<sup>29</sup> ibid

## British complicity in torture

---

Djamel Beghal claimed he was interrogated by a British agent who questioned him solely about the UK. He asked him about Leicester, London and his relation with Abu Qatada. Further, this agent physically mistreated Beghal. When a doctor would come to wake him up after he fainted, this agent would beat him on his chest and his head.<sup>30</sup>

### Description of the British agent

*“This agent could speak Arabic in an understandable manner, but with a British accent. He would also introduce some Arabic terms in his English locutions. He would often use the words “takfiri”, “mujrim” (criminal), kalb (dog)...”*

*“I managed to see him few times through the space between my nose and the blindfold. He was tall and massive, maybe 85 or 90 kg. He had a rangy face and blue eyes. His skin was very white with redness. I can’t remember the colour of his hair precisely, but from his eyebrows and the hair on his hands, he was blonde. His movements were quick.”<sup>31</sup>*

### Interrogations

*“It’s difficult to be very precise as for when he appeared but I believe that the British entered fully on the stage on the tenth day. I think he was there from the first days without intervening at the beginning. When his turn came, he would interrogate me a lot about Afghanistan and myself, but mainly about Muslim figures well known in London.*

*They wanted me to accuse Abu Qatada at any cost. They wanted me to accuse him of a military plot (bombing plan) or at least to make him responsible for the ideological and financial management of terrorist networks linking London to Kabul but also many other capitals in Europe, Africa and Asia.”*

*“It was clear that he knew perfectly well Abu Qatada’s life, intellectual and political activity as well as his entourage. Sometimes he would try to make me confess a set-up describing the hierarchy among the people who were around the Sheikh, according to him of course. Sometimes he would make me play the role of the accountant and would urge me to confess the financial movements and their sources within the “planet Abu Qatada”. Or he would vehemently urge me to give up the military projects, weapons, explosives, arms caches, vehicles... that would be at the disposition of Abu Qatada in Britain and elsewhere. He was obsessed by this character.*

*Sometimes, he would come back on the classes, formations and “secret” preaching that Abu Qatada would have given “us” somewhere very discreetly in order to make “us” the scholars for the “cause.”*

*He would insist with brutality to reveal the link between Abu Qatada and Osama bin Laden, whom they all called Abu Abdallah.*

*He would also question me about Abu Hamza, the Egyptian Imam of Finsbury Park mosque in London. Again, he had the same objectives. He was also interested in Sheikh Abdul Wahid. He presented him as the spiritual trainer for suicide bombers and the indoctrinator under the commandment of Osama bin Laden.*

*There were some names that were mentioned but which I did not know at all. There are others that I forgot because of the damage to my memory caused by the total and prolonged solitary confinement in French prisons.”*

*Geographically, he interrogated me on what I knew about the projects of Muslims living mainly in London, Luton, Manchester and Leicester. At one point, he talked about Ireland but then he gave it up.”<sup>32</sup>*

---

<sup>30</sup> Letter to Cageprisoners 12/09/2011

<sup>31</sup> Letter to Cageprisoners 25/09/2011

<sup>32</sup> ibid

### Mistreatment

*“He would not hesitate to beat me, to jostle me and to mistreat me.”*

*“One day, between torture sessions and interrogation, my blood pressure went down and I fainted. I woke up in a medical room. The blindfold on my eyes had fallen down which surprised this British agent. He jumped to beat me and to cover my eyes (with his hands first and then with the blindfold). What was unusual is that he took my blood pressure himself (if I understood correctly, it went up to 18) as well as my pulse. My state did not seem to move him and he started again the cycle of mistreatment and interrogation. I can’t remember if it was that time or during another session, I managed to see him entirely. He was wearing a “kamees” (Muslim robe) and a pale yellow “shalwaar” (trousers) like the Pakistanis or Afghan Muslims. He had black sandals.”*

### Medical mistreatment

Furthermore, among the three doctors in charge of the supervision of his torture, Beghal said one of them was British and claims he very keen to mistreat him.

*“Three doctors, who have no connection with medicine, took turns during this miserable time, day and night, in order to:*

*1. Wake me up after the multiple fainting and unconsciousness.*

*2. Provide an accurate diagnosis of my state of resistance to the Emirati and American torturers so that they could know what amount of torture they could inflict on me.*

*3. Give me, themselves, terrible various products causing unbearable pain, hallucinations and anxiety.*

*4. Patch up the wounds, bruises and others without pain relief, repeating incessantly that they were doing it only to leave no trace on my body, even after I would be dead and buried under a concrete slab in one of several sites in the Emirates.*

*5. Force me to eat five different tablets periodically in the manner of a duck that is force fed. I've never been able to deduce the reason for these drugs.*

*The most inhuman of all three doctors were the Hindu (Indian) and the British (recognised by his accent) who took pleasure in abusing me physically while the old doctor from UAE showed himself to be somewhat sympathetic.”<sup>33</sup>*

---

<sup>33</sup> Ibid



## French complicity in torture

---

Based on the testimony of Djamel Beghal, there is a plethora of evidence to show that French authorities played a role in his kidnapping, illegal detention and torture.

Narrating the arrest of Beghal in Abu Dhabi airport on 29 July 2001, The Observer reported that the Emirati intelligence called CIA agents and agents of the French foreign intelligence services (the DGSE).<sup>34</sup> It emphasised the reaction of the French services.

*“Excited French intelligence officials told them they had been tracking Beghal for almost a decade. He was, they explained, a known activist with Takfir-wal Hijra, which they defined as ‘a radical hard-line Islamist movement founded in Egypt as a splinter group from the Muslim Brotherhood.’”<sup>35</sup>*

It was reported that the Direction of the Territory Surveillance (DST) became aware of the whereabouts of Djamel Beghal in August, only few days after his arrest and directly were in touch with the Emirati police.<sup>36</sup>

His acquaintances in France were placed under surveillance on 23 August 2001.<sup>37</sup>

Furthermore, on 7 September, a DST (security services) report mentioned statements made by Beghal in the UAE. Based on it, an investigation was opened in France on 10 September 2001 adding that the modus operandi was typical of Al Qaeda.<sup>38</sup>

After media reporting of his detention, Beghal’s friends placed under surveillance, were arrested, and that a *juge d’instruction* (investigating judge) decided to go to UAE.<sup>39</sup>

The *juge d’instruction*, Jean-Louis Bruguière, went to the UAE from 21 to 23 September 2001 to interrogate him<sup>40</sup> and negotiate with the local authorities. However, Djamel Beghal said he did not see him there.

He signed his confessions on the 22 September, a day after the arrival of Judge Bruguière. A medical examination (made after his repatriation to France) noticed some traces of the kind of treatment Beghal reported—for example a bruise on his left arm, as well as marks on his left ankle and sole of the foot and a slight swelling of a toe on his left foot, as well as the “post-traumatic effect of the alleged events”.<sup>41</sup> The doctor said that one of the beatings would have occurred between 15 and 23 September 2001.<sup>42</sup>

Finally, just before being subjected to the “centrifugal chair” torture (described above), Beghal said he was asked by CIA and Emirati agents about some of his friends in France he had never mentioned to them.

*“Once, a very important person was there. I was led into a room in which a new kind of chair was placed in the middle. I was offered a scenario of an attack in France without specifying the place but by citing the names of friends living in France I had never mentioned to them before: Kamel Daoudi, Nabil Bounour, Abdelkarim Lefkas, Rachid Benmessahe. The latter was cited as an explosives expert who spent years in camps in Afghanistan, but he never left Europe...It was disturbing to hear those names from the mouth of Emirati and CIA agents. France was behind the scenes.”<sup>44</sup>*

On his refusal, he was tortured.

---

<sup>33</sup> Ibid p.12    <sup>41</sup> Human Rights Watch, Preemptive justice, p.42

<sup>34</sup> The Observer “Focus special: The secret war part 1.” 30/09/2001 <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2001/sep/30/terrorism.afghanistan6>

<sup>35</sup> Ibid    <sup>42</sup> Décugis, supra n.31

<sup>36</sup> Le Point “Djamel Beghal, les failles du dossier français” Jean- Michel Décugis and Christophe Deloire 09/11/01

<sup>37</sup> Ibid    <sup>43</sup> Those persons are among those who were placed under surveillance on 23 August 2001 in France

<sup>38</sup> Ibid    <sup>44</sup> Beghal. Supra n.1 at p.16

<sup>39</sup> Ibid

<sup>40</sup> Le Nouvel Observateur “Djamel Beghal, premiers liens avec Ben Laden” 02/10/01

### Arrests in Europe

The statements made by Djamel Beghal under torture in the UAE immediately led to the arrest of over a dozen arrests in France, Belgium and Netherlands.

### Deportation

Shortly before his repatriation to France, Beghal saw some changes.

*“A few days before leaving this hell, they began to get agitated. Several auscultations were made by the old Emirati doctor, still using a very "fraternal and religious" language. They fixed all visible sores although some remained. Magically, meals had become suddenly richer. They gave me a white box containing delicious food in cellophane, along with a paper plate and some Miranda (a drink). Suspecting poisoning at any time because of the trauma after what happened during my detention, these feasts had become a source of temptation and suffering. It was hard to resist.*

*Some three days before flying to France, I was receiving one cup of water with two fingers of bread topped with a tiny drop of jam per day. I realised later, as my extradition to France would be by military aircraft, that they were preparing my stomach and my bladder to be empty to avoid on one hand, vomiting and urination, and on the other hand, to keep me in a state of weakness, and therefore more easily manageable and controllable during the long journey I was about to take.*

*On the last day, they came and gave me the trousers, the shirt and the sandals I was wearing on the day of the kidnapping at the airport. My clothes hung on me. I had to double tie up my trousers to keep it up. I weighed 92 kg and 1.84m on 29 July, and I weighed only 63 kg when I arrived in France.”*

Eventually, Beghal was taken out of his cell to be transferred even though his destination was still unknown to him.

*“Handcuffed, still blindfolded, I was put in a 4x4, cramped, alone in a car at the back of the vehicle. Everything was sealed around me and lined with red velvet and warm. It was like a coffin but in a sitting position. Hearing nothing, I managed to raise my blindfold and in front of me was a tiny camera and a kind of microphone. It was so tight I could not even move my shoulders.*

*After a few minutes, the car stopped and when they opened the door, terrible heat pushed me inside. Like a blind man, I was taken to the back of a military aircraft. It was a transaal US - 630 Hercules. I discovered later that the pilots were U.S. soldiers and that the staff was made of five individuals with one being the commander. At first, they were all dressed in battle-grey combat uniforms. Then during the flight, they put on jeans and black T-shirts with a five petals flower, below was written “Interpol International.”<sup>45</sup>*

Djamel Beghal gave some description with regards to the conditions of his transfer to France.

*“I was placed like a bat, hanging by the arms, stretched for them to see me. A civilian medical officer asked if I had been tortured, and I said yes. I asked in return the name of our destination, and if I would be tortured again? He refused to reveal to me where we were going to but he told me that there would be no more physical torture because the methods that I would be subjected to on my arrival would be more subtle and very effective.*

*He asked the chief escort the permission to remove the blindfold. At first he flatly refused, then with the argument of the sedative I was meant to be given, he finally gave it up.”*

---

<sup>45</sup> Ibid p.23-24

The doctor gave me a strong sedative required, he said for the success of the journey of 21 hours ahead of us and for security reasons, forcing me to drink, otherwise he threatened to go for an injection. The very bitter product contained in a cup had its effects very quickly. I saw everything blurry while being in a permanent state of drowsiness. The slightest movement became so much of an effort that it was like moving a mountain.

The interior of the aircraft was made to transport parachute commando troops. There were rail casters on the floor for airdrops of equipment. The idea of eventually being dropped did not leave me. I had sore arms as they were stretched and hung. Once the plane left, the noise of the engines was deafening. It was a terrible pain for which they had earplugs. Also, it was freezing cold. I did not expect to finish the trip alive, let alone safe.

At one point, I asked them the opportunity to relieve myself. The head of the escort categorically refused to untie me and asked me to urinate in my clothes, in the position where I was. He claimed that I was able, by only making use of my hands and teeth, to screw up the navigation system. For him, all Islamist fighters are super-trained for that. I do not try and dwell on their refusal to let me do my five daily and obligatory prayers.

I was hoping for death instead of the pursuit of this ordeal.

The plane landed somewhere for a few hours and new pilots came in. I thought I understood, without seeing anything that we were in Turkey. French pilots took over. Few hours later, the plane landed at the Villacoublay military airfield (France).<sup>46</sup>

### Arrival in France

He was put in a car by DST (French security services) agents and driven to the Parisian courthouse in order to meet the juge d'instruction Bruguière.

### Interrogation

Beghal was immediately interrogated by judge Bruguière. He was then interrogated for 19 hours (from 1 October-7am until 2 October 1am) despite having spent over 20 hours flying in the conditions described above. Moreover, he was not informed about his situation nor his rights. Judge Bruguière allegedly also used illegitimate pressure in order to force him to confirm the confessions obtained in the UAE.

*“From the very beginning, without even telling me that I was in custody, or that I had the right to a lawyer, he put me under pressure. He warned me that my wife and children remained in Afghanistan and that they were in danger. The problem is that I was not aware of the 9/11 attacks, let alone that the U.S. was preparing to attack Afghanistan. I thought that this manipulating judge only wanted me to give up and extract from me what he expected. So his words and shenanigans had no impact on me because I did not believe him.*

*First, he explained that I had a lot to lose. He said that several secret services wanted me including Algerian torturers. He explained that that the CIA was very threatening and decided to extradite me to the United States. He said that as I was, for the moment, of French nationality, something that could change according to him, France does not extradite its nationals. He evoked a multitude of reasons to raise in me fear, terror and submission.”<sup>47</sup>*

<sup>46</sup> Ibid p.24-25

<sup>47</sup> Ibid p.26

Judge Bruguière then offered a bargain to Beghal.

*“Finally, he revealed the purpose of his ill-conceived comedy. With a voice of an affectionate father, sad and sorry, he proposed a deal that was made up, according to him, only for me and my salvation.*

*He grabbed some documents, showing them to me from far, then, full of confidence, he proposed to recognize their contents, to sign them and hence to be saved immediately, as well as my wife and three children. He assured me that instead of being sentenced from 10 to 20 years, I would be sentenced to 5 years at most, and that later I would be released after two and a half years of detention.*

*Of course, I asked him the content of those documents. I was shocked when he said that it acknowledged the preparation of an attack against the United States Embassy in Paris, adding that Osama bin Laden was the sponsor. It was also proclaiming my repentance and my acknowledgement that I had been misled by Al Qaeda, which would have, by the way, “sold” me to foreign secret services!”<sup>48</sup>*

#### Medical examination

In the late afternoon, a doctor came to visit Beghal. He had lost 30 kilos (66 pounds). As already mentioned, the doctor found traces of the torture he described. Nevertheless, this medical was rushed according to him.

*“He arrived at sunset time. The doctor seemed to have an ancestral familiarity with the judge. Despite a rushed auscultation, in an office with two big policemen, he still noticed signs of beatings, bruises, as well as obvious psychological trauma...He never mentioned the wisdom tooth that had been drilled without anaesthesia which had not been extracted. Nor the falaqa on the soles of my feet was still painful.”<sup>49</sup>*

#### Charges

Beghal was then charged with the incrimination of “criminal conspiracy in relation with a terrorist undertaking”.

#### Transfer to prison

At 3am on 2 October 2011, he was transferred to prison. His hands were tied up behind his back. He said the handcuffs were excessively tight and severed his wrists. He was also verbally abused and inappropriately driven.

*“I was handcuffed in the back. The handcuffs had been voluntarily tightened to cut my wrists. All my complaints were subject to ridicule and contempt on the part of my escort. On the way they drove at breakneck speed while repeatedly kicking and braking hard. We climbed dozens of times on sidewalks to cause tremors and bullied me in my tin can. They were doing U-turn to get me banging around in my narrow cell. It was clear that this was ordered to get me tired until submission. Despite my head constantly knocking against the metal walls of the wagon, dark and very narrow, and the handcuffs that cut me more left because, again, deliberately unlocked, I swore never to yield to this petty and underhanded blackmail.*

*I was enraged to tears and I had pain to hatred, but the call of faith was there to recommend me that this was the time for the role of patience, endurance and resistance.”<sup>50</sup>*

---

<sup>48</sup> Ibid p.27    <sup>50</sup> Ibid p.30

<sup>49</sup> Ibid p.29

## A French miscarriage of justice

---

### Arrival in prison

Upon his arrival at Osny prison (France), Djamel Beghal was strip searched and put in a tiny waiting room for several hours. He was then placed in a cell in which he was served some food. Soon after his meal, he felt intense pain in his stomach, similar to the pain he experienced in Abu Dhabi when he was forced fed. He started to vomit without interruption. Meanwhile, his face and legs started to swell. He did not receive any assistance from the guards.

*“After having waited hours for no reason, I was placed in a quiet and cold atmosphere, in a cell with a tray of rice, two slices of breaded fish, yogurt, sugar, powdered milk and a sachet/dose chicory for food.*

*I was hungry and I ate with all my heart.*

*Few moments later, I had excruciating pain in the abdomen. There was like a bone or a knife, which tore my belly. I felt the same pain as when I was forced to eat rice and yogurt while I was in the hands of the secret services in the UAE. I screamed in pain.*

*Then, suddenly, I began to vomit continuously with stomach contractions that would not stop. I thought I was dying that night. I lay as I could on the bed and suddenly my body started to swell like a balloon. Without any exaggeration, my legs, my calves, my cheeks, my face, had quintupled in volume to the point where the skin had become like paper-thin. I kept on calling the guards. The only answer I had was no, and I saw them several times, eyes that were looking at me through the eyehole but they would not talk to me. I asked them to speak with me and to call a doctor while showing them the state of my face. They told me to write to the infirmary!”<sup>51</sup>*

### Strip searches

During his four years in pre-trial detention, Djamel Beghal experienced dozens of strip searches. He described the security checks he had to go through each time he had to be interrogated by the investigative judge or for his trial. He was usually strip naked and searched, a first time by the guards in an empty cell. He would then be strip searched a second time just before leaving the prison. Elite forces in charge of the transfer would then proceed to conduct the same operation. On his arrival to the courthouse, he would be strip searched for the fourth time consecutively. He would often refuse this process. He said handcuffs would be excessively tightened and he would be beaten in retaliation for his refusal.<sup>52</sup>

### Extradition to Netherlands

Four persons were arrested in Holland, accused of having links with Beghal. Dutch authorities came to France in order to interrogate him. However, his declarations had to be made in Holland to be taken into consideration. He accepted to be a witness there. He was then flown to Netherlands in conditions that do not comply with International standards. He described the torture to which he was subjected in the UAE and the pressures that were used against him during the interrogations in France. He came back after 24 hours.

*“Without any notice, for security reasons, in July 2002, they came looking for me. The DGSE supervised the extraction. At least four trucks of hooded mastiffs. Destination: Le Bourget airport. Blind-folded, anti-noise headphones on the ears, hands cuffed and tied to the stomach, feet shackled with plastic strings, I was put in the small twin-engine plane.*

---

<sup>51</sup> Ibid p.33-34

<sup>52</sup> Ibid p.30-33

*We landed at Rotterdam and we went to The Hague. Everyone was waiting. I answered their questions. They were surprised to see how France had not taken into account the torture in the UAE. They often asked about the manipulations of Bruguière. The lawyers for the detainees over there had a smile from ear to ear. I asked through the interpreter the reason for this joy. I was told that their clients would be released on that day because I did not recognize any attack or any network or any deceit introduced by Judge Bruguière. I spent the night alone in one of their prisons, well treated, and came back to France. The news had enraged our famous judge. He decided never to allow such extradition again the name of Article 11 or 13.”<sup>53</sup>*

#### Trial of Nizar Trabelsi in Belgium

On 23 May 2003, Nizar Trabelsi was tried in Belgium in a separate case. His lawyers complained about Judge Bruguière. Nizar Trabelsi said:

*“When the French judge came to me, my wife was not charged. She would frequently come to see me with my son. I said what I’ve always said. I had nothing to do with Beghal and our target was not the U.S. Embassy in Paris. He was very upset. He offered a deal: I had to accuse Beghal and confirm the story of the embassy. I refused. He told me that I shall never see my wife and son.”<sup>54</sup>*

Few weeks later, his wife was charged and prevented from travelling to Belgium.

#### Trial

In January 2005, Beghal was put on trial alongside eight people.

During the trial he revealed that the investigating judge had put pressure on him to maintain his false confessions of involvement in the US embassy plot, despite the torture.

Djamel Beghal stated emphatically that these bomb-attacks had never existed, neither in his imagination nor in reality: he only affirmed that he, “*Simply repeated the answers that were imposed onto (him)*” by his interrogators in Dubai. Nevertheless, the Court used his false confessions made in the UAE.

Djamel Beghal requested the testimony of several persons, including Nizar Trabelsi detained in Belgium who was presented as the suicide-bomber meant to carry out the attack and an inmate incarcerated with Beghal who said he was in charge of spying on him in prison and to give a report to security forces every Wednesday. He said he was also asked to fabricate evidence in order to charge Beghal with an attempted escape. Nevertheless, these witnesses were not allowed to testify during the trial. Djamel Beghal was sentenced to ten years of prison.

#### Appeal and miscarriage of justice

It was only after an appeal in December 2005 that the court excluded his false confessions because they were obtained under duress. Beghal was prevented from attending the trial after he refused the several strip searches he had to go through before reaching the Court. His sentence was aggravated to ten years of prison of which 2/3 years without parole while Kamel Daoudi, presented as Beghal’s right hand man saw his sentence reduced from 9 years to 6 years.

---

<sup>53</sup> Ibid p.48

<sup>54</sup> Le Parisien, Le juge Bruguière sur la sellette, 24/05/2003  
<http://www.leparisien.fr/faits-divers/le-juge-bruguiere-sur-la-sellette-24-05-2003-2004112855.php>

### Solitary

Djamel Beghal served most of his sentence in solitary confinement. He was initially placed in “simple isolation” a regime that allows detainees to interact during recreational time. In 2003, he was requested to go to the prison office for administrative purposes. However, the real reason behind this request was to transfer him. He was forcefully taken into complete isolation. He spent 13 days without any of his clothes or personal belongings. When they were returned to him, many were missing.<sup>55</sup>

Altogether, he spent seven years in solitary confinement.

### Inhumane conditions of detention

Djamel Beghal described his condition of detention in complete isolation. He spends 22 or 23 hours in his cell. He is allowed a recreational time alone and indoors. He is never permitted to talk or even see another inmate. When he is displaced for any reason, the floor or the whole prison is blocked. Only the senior guard is permitted to talk to him or even to open the door of his cell. The shower and the recreational space are situated just in front of his cell and going there allows no more than a few steps across the corridor. He is taken there by three to five guards.

His cell is never larger than 9 meter square. In La Santé prison, he was incarcerated in a 5 meter square cell. The table is as high as his chest. He said that even eating or writing is a painful exercise. The sink is leaking and only cold water comes out of the tap. The toilets are open and right next to the door. Guards often enter into the room without notice while the detainee is relieving himself. Protests can engender disciplinary sanctions.

Djamel Beghal described a squat toilet in a cell of la Santé prison as well as the permanent odour in the small room. Once flushed, the floor would be flooded with water, urine and feces. Before sleeping, he said he would have to block the hole with a full bottle of water to prevent rats from visiting him at night. Some cells do not have any window. He spent a year and a half in one of them. When a cell is equipped with a “window”, natural light is obstructed by several layers of grills and bars hurting the eyes and causing a slow loss of sight.<sup>56</sup>

In 2008, Djamel Beghal was examined by a doctor as he had heart, digestive, muscular and respiratory issues. The doctor concluded:

*“All the symptoms presented by this patient, objective and subjective, are to be linked with the inhumane conditions of detention under which this detainee have been living for several years.”<sup>57</sup>*

### Wikileaks

On 30 November 2010 Wikileaks released a cable sent on 9 May 2005 which revealed some statements of the terrorism judge, Jean-François Ricard. Ricard said that,

*“His office depended significantly upon its reputation within the French justice system which tends to give the terrorism investigating judges the benefit of the doubt. As an example Ricard said that the proof against recently convicted Djamel Beghal and his accomplices, accused of plotting to bomb the US embassy, would not normally be sufficient to convict them but he believed his office was successful because of their reputation.”<sup>58</sup>*

<sup>55</sup> Ibid p.47    <sup>58</sup> 05PARIS3118 Diplomatic cable created by the American embassy in Paris on 09/05/2005

<sup>56</sup> <http://freedjamelbeghal.wordpress.com/category/ses-ecrits/>

<sup>57</sup> Medical examination realised on 28/04/2008

### Deportation

In 2006, Beghal's French nationality was taken away and in 2007 it was decided by government officials to deport him, his sentence ending in 2009.

On 30 May 2009, on the day of his release, French authorities attempted to deport him to Algeria. He was forced to physically resist them on the airport tarmac to prevent the policemen from expelling him from the country<sup>59</sup> and thus despite the suspension of this order of deportation by an Administrative Tribunal and a decision by the European Court of Human Rights as he was at a "risk of torture, degrading and inhumane treatment" if deported to Algeria.

The French authorities then sought to deport him to Guiana. However, time was lacking to administer him an anti-yellow fever vaccination.<sup>60</sup>

On 30 June 2009, the French Conseil d'état confirmed the suspension of his deportation.<sup>61</sup>

### Restrictions

Djamel Beghal was then placed under house arrest in a hotel situated in a small village called Murat, Cantal, without the right to leave a 1.7 km<sup>2</sup> area. Isolated from family and friends he was made to sign a register at the local police station three times a day at 08:00, 13:00 and 18:00. He was deprived of his identity documents, the right to work and even welfare benefits. His family life was heavily affected by this regime since visiting him became extremely difficult for his wife and children, living in the UK.<sup>62</sup>

Despite the harsh situation under which he was living his neighbours had nothing but good to say about him. Bernard Villaret, the mayor of the village said that Beghal was leading "a very peaceful life". In 2010, he also said:

*"It's been a year since he has been placed under house arrest in Murat without causing any problem"*<sup>63</sup>

### Rearrested

On 18 May 2010, he was rearrested and other 13 Muslim men were arrested in various cities were also arrested. All were charged with him.

### Allegations

A well-informed source said to newspapers that while still under house arrest, he was accused of preparing the escape of Smain Ait Ali Belkacem, a detainee imprisoned in relation to the 1995 bomb-attacks against France. Belkacem had been jailed hundreds of kilometres away from Beghal. The group was said to have also planned Beghal's escape from the hotel, and his departure from France.<sup>64</sup>

### Charges

Djamel and the 13 remain in prison. His lawyer will now bring a case before the Court of Cassation to nullify the indictment of "Direction of a terrorist group".

### Condition

On 25 May 2010, he was incarcerated again and placed in complete isolation at the Bois d'Arcy prison in the suburb of Paris.

---

<sup>59</sup> [http://www.djamel-beghal.com/core/Fr/Fr\\_Biographie.html](http://www.djamel-beghal.com/core/Fr/Fr_Biographie.html)

<sup>60</sup> Le Monde, Ni Algérie ni Guyanne, l'islamiste Beghal restera dans le cantal, 02/07/2009 <sup>61</sup> Ibid

<sup>62</sup> Cageprisoners, Interview with Sylvie Beghal <http://www.cageprisoners.com/our-work/interviews/item/1513-exclusive-interview-with-umm-hamza-the-wife-of-djamel-beghal>

<sup>63</sup> La Depeche, Beghal et 13 islamistes présumés interpellés, un projet d'évasion déjoué, 18/05/2010

<sup>64</sup> Le Monde, Projet d'évasion, l'islamiste Djamel Beghal arrêté, 18/05/2010



### Falsification of Evidence

The allegations of escape plot planning against Beghal were based solely on wire tap evidence of phone conversations.

In March 2011, Djamel Beghal's lawyer pointed out to the judge in charge of the case the unreliability of the translations made of phone conversations: "wedding" was translated as a "bomb attack" and "bird" was translated to mean "helicopter".

The impartiality of the translator was in question since he was recruited by Jean-Louis Bruguère, the judge accused of putting illegitimate pressure on Beghal to maintain his false confessions extracted under torture in the UAE in the first court case.

Furthermore, in 2009, this translator had introduced himself to Beghal as a journalist wanting to make a documentary denouncing the conspiracy that led to his imprisonment. Beghal's lawyer was understandably surprised to face this 'journalist', now acting as a translator.<sup>66</sup>

### Police custody nullification

The Instructive Chamber of the Court of Appeal nullified Beghal's police custody and interrogations. In contradiction with case law of the European Court of Human Rights, he could not benefit from the assistance notified a lawyer, nor was he notified his right to silence during his police custody and hearings.

It was the first time that a French Court invalidates interrogations made in a terrorism-related case. Maître Tourné, Beghal's lawyer, commented:

*"It is reassuring to observe that terrorism is not excluded from common law."<sup>67</sup>*

Nevertheless, Djamel remains charged. His lawyer is now going to put a case before the Court of Cassation to nullify his indictment.

<sup>66</sup> Le Point, Un étrange interprète, 03/03/2011 [http://www.lepoint.fr/societe/un-etrange-interprete-03-03-2011-1302046\\_23.php](http://www.lepoint.fr/societe/un-etrange-interprete-03-03-2011-1302046_23.php)

<sup>67</sup> Le Point, Annulation de la garde à vue de Djamel Beghal, 10/06/2011





**CAGEPRISONERS**