

## 'I DIDN'T WANT TO DIE OR KILL ANYONE'

'We are Alive Aylan', says Ady from the place that he calls hell - Australia's immigration detention camp on Manus Island. 'What is my difference with other Syrians?', the young man asks.

Ady is 20 years old. In Syria he worked as a mechanical electrician. He fled at the age of 17. 'The Syrian government wanted me to join the army to kill innocent Syrian people... I escaped because they killed all my friends who refused to join the army. I didn't want to die or kill anyone'.

Ady has been interned in Australia's detention camp on Manus Island for 27 months. He was a child of 17 when he was first exiled there. He should not have been moved there. No-one under 18 was supposed to go there.

When I comment on how young he is Ady replies that he is the youngest person in the camp. Despite his youth I hear stories of him staying by the side of another Syrian man who was very ill, taking great care of him. That man, under pressure from the Australian government, was deported back to Syria. Ady says he is the only Syrian remaining in the camp. This speaks volumes about the level of torture and maltreatment that the men in this camp endure. That one would return to the bombs and destruction of Syria is beyond imagination.

'Please help me and others. We are dying here', Ady calls with urgency.

There is much confusion in this young man's voice. How is it that there has been such a swell of compassion amongst Australians for his fellow Syrian's fleeing into Europe, with Australia pledging to settle 12,000 people, when he remains persecuted and punished in what has effectively become a political prison camp, a black site, created and continued in the name of a domestic policy of deterrence.

'I don't understand', he says. 'Are we not the same humans?'

Ady is from the city of Hamah and is the oldest of 4 boys. His 3 younger brothers remain at home with their parents who, Ady adds with an air of surprise, 'are still alive.' 'All my family are under fire in Syria. They are in bombs. They are in danger every second'. Ady asks if I know his city. I reply that I have seen beautiful pictures of Hamah prior to the bombing and that now I see newsreels of a city destroyed. 'It's war every second', he says.

'I fled from that danger but I faced prison and torture. I want to be free to help my family', he says. But in January during the peaceful hunger strike things got worse for Ady. He says that because he asked for his freedom 'Wilson's beaten [sic] me and handcuffed me and took me out of Delta compound to Chauka then to CIS prison because I asked for my freedom'.

'In the prison we were sleeping on concrete floor. We were allowed to leave the cell for 10 hours a day into a courtyard and we could eat 3 very small amounts of food. It was a filthy place. I was scared too much. We couldn't do anything. Those are bad memories I can't forget ever...', Ady drifts off. 'I have so much pain to talk', he says.

In February 2014, the night when Reza Barati was murdered, Ady wanted to end his life. 'G4S locked me up in a place called Delta 9. I was asking for freedom. I was there for 7 days'.

'I don't see my future. I am so depressed, hopeless', he says. I feel his anxiety and agitation rising. Surviving in the camp is stressful enough without recalling particular moments of unbearable torture. I ask him if he would do some breathing with me. An attempt to ground him a little. His reply is heartbreaking: 'Those soft things don't work on me anymore. I appreciate it Janet. I mean that I am over human things. Really I appreciate it Janet, but even tablets don't work'.

Ady's wish for his family is that they are one day able to 'sleep without fear of dying'. For himself he says: 'I barely sleep. I am getting 50 years in my 20'.

'Janet, I have suffered here for more than 2 years. It's 27 months for God's sake! Enough is enough!'

'Janet, no one sees our pain. No one helps us here. Australia has forgotten us. But we have been suffering for more than 2 years in worst living conditions.'

Ady's wish for his family is that they are someday able 'to sleep without fear of dying'. For himself sleep no longer comes.

Ady asks if we can continue the interview tomorrow as he is feeling upset and has more pain. I thank him for telling part of his story. He replies:

'I want my word to go out and people to hear or read it. I want people to find out about our situation ... Enough is enough'.

- Ady and Janet Galbraith

Ady = not real name. 20 year old Syrian man interned in our black site on Manus Island.  
Conversation conducted October 2015.