

Note “Editor’s Notes” for clarification.

You have spent much of your life listed as a terrorist suspect by the West. Your older brother, Dr. Ayman Al Zawahiri, as the leader of al Qaeda is America’s most wanted. What are your beliefs?

Before you call me and my brother terrorists, let’s define its meaning. If it means those who are bloodthirsty merciless killers then this is not what we are about. This is the image incorrectly portrayed by the media. We only try to regain some of our rights that have been hijacked by Western powers throughout history, especially in third world countries. This oppression will not continue. If the West wants to live in peace then they must give the Muslims their rights back. Occupation of our lands is one thing, but interference in our religious beliefs is the worst kind of breach of human rights. We believe that democracy is against all religions because it gives supreme authority to humans while all powers are reserved to God almighty under all religions. We tell people in the west not to follow their leaders because they only want to continue in global wars to serve their own interests. Western governments spend billions of dollars out of taxpayers’ money in what they call the war on Islamists. It’s a delusion. At this phase, we only want to build our Islamic nations the way we like it and want no confrontation with the West as long as they stop occupying our land, killing innocent women and children and above all interfering in our religious beliefs.

United Arab Emirates’ security forces detained you in 1999 and you were then transferred to Egypt. How was your experience in prison?

The United Arab Emirates subjected me to horrible psychological and physical torture for four months, and I reserve my right to compensation in this life and in the after-life. They used a lot of drugs on me that weakened my nervous system. They defied all human rights laws by handing me over to Egypt, knowing that I had been unlawfully sentenced to death in absentia by the military court. The terrorism charges were all forged with no attached documents, evidence, or witnesses. When I asked, the UAE officer replied, “The CIA arrested you not us. We all work for them after the Davos agreement.” I was targeted simply because I am the brother of Ayman Al Zawahiri, which cost me two death sentences in 1981 and 1998. The US does not want his ideology to spread globally. I appealed both sentences and won but afterwards I was tortured, and my life destroyed.

[Editor’s note: the UAE denied Zawahiri had been tortured]

I spent four years in solitary confinement [in Egypt] in a cell that was exactly 180cm x 180cm. There were no windows. I was not allowed to talk to the inmates in the cell beside me, or even own a Koran for three years. Sometimes, they let me out in the sun blindfolded and handcuffed for ten minutes. My family had no clue I was alive. I was tortured by electrocution, sleep deprivation, beatings, and I was allowed to shower only once every four months. We have submitted over 1,000 reports to the general prosecutor against these officers but no investigation was ever initiated.

You have long been a leading figure in the Egyptian Islamic Jihad in, Afghanistan, Sudan, Yemen and Egypt. Do you still believe in reverting to violence in order to spread your message?

They say we use violence for no reason. I consider myself a normal Muslim like any other person. We call for fasting, prayers, spreading Allah’s word and jihad if we are attacked or restricted from practicing our religion. In this case, we invite the oppressor first into the Islamic community to learn our religion. If they refuse and we are stopped from spreading our religion, then Allah has ordered us to confront them, and this is jihad. If a foreigner occupies our lands, kills our women, then it is our duty to fight him. Most of us are very educated. Ayman Al Zawahiri is very efficient. Osama Bin Laden was a very successful businessman. We only use violence to defend ourselves.

Ayman Al Zawahiri's wife and children were killed in Afghanistan. What were the circumstances of their death and how was your last meeting with him?

The last time I saw Ayman was in 1996 in Azerbaijan before I flew to the UAE to work as an engineer. Pakistani agents working for the CIA stripped his wife and children among many refugees fleeing Afghanistan of their cars, money, and belongings. US planes bombarded their shelters inside Pakistani territory hours later with several rockets and killed them all purposely. Regardless of what happened on September 11, what gives the Americans the right to kill unarmed women and children anywhere? The United States in this case are the terrorists. *[Editor's note: the United States has not acknowledged targeting Zawahiri's wife and children, who are thought to have been killed in a U.S. air strike in Afghanistan in December 2001..]*

The United States assisted the Mujahedeen in defeating the Soviets in Afghanistan. How did the situation turn into a global war on terror?

America took advantage of the Muslims to defeat its major enemy at the time, the Russians. It turned a blind eye to assistance from Saudi and other countries to the Mujahedeen to achieve its goal and terminate its two enemies - the Russians and Muslims. Allah empowered the Muslims who came out stronger. For decades, liberal scientists in authority in America attempted to defame the real face of Islam. The best result of the war in Afghanistan is that the Muslims realized true Islam. We respect all Islamic scientists but those who disagree with us should provide us with legitimate evidence that we are wrong. We are then willing to take responsibility for our actions. We are prepared to abandon any our beliefs if proven they are against Islam. But if it's proven that our religion is the true one, then we ask everyone to join us. If they refuse, then they must admit they are at war with Islam itself, not against us.

The United States has killed many Al Qaeda leaders including Osama bin Laden, **Abu Musab Al Zarqawi (in Iraq)** and Anwar al Awlaki (in Yemen.) Do you think the end of al Qaeda is near?

If you read American literature, now they have understood that the strength of Al Qaeda is not in its leaders but in its ideology. Any person obtains power when his work matches his principles. Those who reached martyrdom have won life on earth and Allah's heaven. Those who were killed by the US have shown us the light and proven that they have committed to their cause and spread the ideology. We advise the Americans to return to their senses and avoid resisting Allah. Al Qaeda is about moderation, and we are prepared for civilized open dialogue with those who disagree to prove it with evidence.

If you believe America is at war with Islam, do you think American homeland is a legitimate target?

I swear, he who attacks me, I attack him. He who kills our women and children should not be sad when I kill his. I tell them not to lead us into a cycle of violence. Your interest, so that we all live in peace is to avoid following world leaders who use Islamists as an excuse to ignite this war for their own gains. You started the attack. Leave us alone, so that we can implement our religion.

You would still be behind bars if Mubarak had not been toppled. Do you believe in the revolution's democratic transition and that new constitution will one day give birth to your long-time goal of an Egypt governed by Sharia law, an Islamic State?

Firstly, the revolution was the reason I was released along with many other Islamists. We endured a system of dictatorship not only during Mubarak's time but also with Sadat and Abdel Nasser, for centuries even. We are in merciful times now. These Arab revolutions rejected oppression, especially restrictions placed on certain religious practices. **77% of Egyptians chose to implement Sharia law rather than governance by democracy** led by humans because it is completely against Allah's words. I don't believe in constitutions, or this secular system created by America to distort the true Islam like we see in the Turkey model. Democracy is not against

dictatorship as some try to portray it. It is against Allah's supreme authority, against Islam. In the Soviet Union and communist regimes, the rule is by the people, yet we witness these regimes are run by extreme dictatorship. Our Islamic states must review their books to seek governance by Sharia only or else we will see bloody conflicts with America until someone wins, and Islam will win because its God's religion. We don't want this scenario.

[Editor's Note: Zawahiri is referring to the 77% of Egyptian voters who approved constitutional amendments that included limiting the president to two four-year terms, capping emergency laws to six months unless they were extended by public referendum, and placing elections under judicial oversight. The amendments did not introduce Sharia law, but are widely believed to have helped political organizations such as the Muslim Brotherhood.]