



The Aafia Foundation, Inc.
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PRESS RELEASE

SUPPORT RALLY FOR POLITICAL PRISONER DR. AAFIA SIDDIQUI, WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 20th

The passing of Colin Powell is a stark reminder of many things: the second African American to rise to the rank of four-star general; the first black national security adviser (Reagan administration); the youngest and first black chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (George H. W. Bush administration); the first black US Secretary of State (George W. Bush administration).

Powell is also known for the role he played in the 1989 invasion of Panama; the 1991 Gulf War; and the US invasion of Somalia. As America's "top diplomat" at the US Department of State, he was tasked with building international support for the so-called "War on Terror" in Afghanistan and Iraq following the 9/11 attacks.

In Feb 2003, Powell delivered a UN speech that he would later come to regret. The speech was based on alleged *evidence* from America's "intelligence" community that accused Iraq, and its [then] leader, Saddam Hussein (America's former "*man in Baghdad*"), of being in possession of "weapons of mass destruction." Weapons that were never found.

The thing that connects this part of Colin Powell's legacy to what brings us (and a coalition of partners) to his home city of New York on Wednesday, however, is the *bodyguard of lies* that surrounded the "bad intelligence" that led to the imprisonment, torture, and/or preventable deaths of a countless number of innocent victims of America's *war of terror*. One of these victims is Dr. Aafia Siddiqui and her family.

Aafia Siddiqui was a brilliant young student full of promise when she arrived in America as an 18-year-old in 1990. She did her freshman year at the University of Houston and received a full scholarship to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. After graduating from MIT with honors she continued her studies at Brandeis University, where she would receive her PhD in cognitive neuroscience. At all three universities she was active in the Muslim Students Association and the community-at-large. Despite the laudable nature of her extracurricular activities, she became a target of Islam/Muslim-oriented bigotry, and the oppressive dragnet that emerged from Post 9/11 America.

Kidnapped (along with her three young children) in March 2003 from her home city of Karachi, Pakistan, she was secretly imprisoned and tortured for five years before being brought back to the United States in 2008 – and later put on trial just blocks away from "ground zero" in 2010. Despite the overwhelming evidence pointing to her innocence, and government malfeasance at the highest levels, Dr. Siddiqui was convicted of "attempted murder" of US personnel in Afghanistan (in 2008) and given a sentence of 86 years by a US district court judge (Richard Berman) who was openly biased against her from start to finish!



The late [former US Attorney General] Ramsey Clark once described the case of this political prisoner, *and prisoner of war*, as follows: “The case of Aafia Siddiqui is the worst case of individual injustice I have ever witnessed.” The Director of Operations for The Aafia Foundation, El-Hajj Mauri’ Saalakhani, agrees with that assessment.

Two of the **Five City Mobilizations** have already been held in Houston and Fort Worth, Texas. On Wednesday, October 20th, starting at 3pm, the third mobilization will be held near the Pakistan Consulate on 65th Street in Manhattan. The fourth mobilization will unfold at the Boston Common (Boston, MA), near the statehouse, on October 23rd beginning at 2pm. The fifth and final mobilization is scheduled for Washington, DC, on Saturday, November 13th.

The Aafia Foundation’s coalition partners for the New York City mobilization are (in alphabetical order):

1. American Muslims for Palestine (AMP)
2. AMP – New Jersey Chapter
3. Boston School Bus Drivers (Union)
4. CAIR – New Jersey
5. CAIR - New York
6. Coalition for Civil Freedoms
7. Human Rights Sanrakshan Sansthaa
8. ICNA Council for Social Justice
9. US Council of Muslim Organizations
10. Imam Jamil [Al-Amin] Action Network
11. Our REVOLUTION Florida
12. International Action Center
13. Islamic Leadership Council of New York (Majlis Ashura)
14. Jericho Movement
15. MAS-PACE
16. Muslim Alliance in North America
17. Muslim Matters
18. Muslims 4 Liberty
19. 1Muslim Voice

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