

## **Oz Aid Worker Abandoned and Betrayed by Government**

by Michael Bachelard via dan - SMH Thursday, Oct 4 2012, 9:28pm

international / prose / post

To Australia's enduring shame, successive Oz governments have a habitual track record of selling citizens to the dogs. It seems that government can't do enough to assist foreign abusers maltreating our citizens.



***Aid worker, Pippi Bean***

The most notorious cases are the 'Bali nine' -- who were informed on by a concerned parent worried about the welfare of his son. So what did Oz authorities do with that information, hand it over to a foreign power that enforces the death penalty for drug offences! Needless to say the AFP will not be receiving too much information from concerned parents/citizens in the future.

The infamous David Hicks case, in which an Aussie national was used as a political porn by an overseas power and the Federal government at the time. Everyone exploited and capitalised on the situation much to Hicks' horrific, tortuous expense. Hicks was consciously sold down the river to the US for political gain.

In the same way Oz citizen, Mamdouh Habib, was handed over to foreign powers to be tortured and allowed to rot in jail for years. Both Hicks and Habib have since won cases against the Federal government and settled out of court. Cold comfort after years of torture and abuse.

But perhaps the most damning case is Australia's lack of pursuit of the known murderers of the Balibo Five, shot in cold blood by Indonesian special forces in Timor. To this day no Federal government has had the spine to pursue the [known murderers](#) and see justice done.

Then of course we have Julian Assange, not charged with any crime yet labelled a criminal by our current lawyer PM, Juliar Gillard. Abandoned by the federal government, which is well aware of the charges the US is seeking to lay against him, Assange has had to take the extreme measure of seeking asylum in the Ecuadorian Embassy in London. The Oz government could care less or more accurately is too busy selling him out to their American bosses.

So the following story of a female aid worker betrayed and abandoned in Libya by the current government comes as no surprise:

### **Doubly betrayed: aid worker's hell**

THE aid worker Pippi Bean endured a seven-day nightmare last week at the hands of Libya's shadowy security forces - but it was Australia's Foreign Affairs Minister, Bob Carr, who delivered the "lowest point" of her ordeal.

Ms Bean was questioned by Libyan investigators under threat of arrest, pressed to admit to a fictional rape or sexual affair with a senior government member, and repeatedly asked to sign a statement in Arabic that she was unable to read.

When she refused, then tried to leave the country on a scheduled business trip for her employer, the International Organisation for Migration, she was detained by seven men in a downstairs room at Tripoli airport and her passport taken away.

Not long after this, when she was still under threat of arrest, Mr Carr commented on the ABC program 7.30 that Ms Bean did not "require further [consular] assistance".

The comment came when, in fact, her requirement for assistance could not have been greater. In an exclusive interview with the Herald, she said the comment had made her feel abandoned by her country.

"It came at a time when [my employer] ... was casting me out. Now Australia was casting me out," Ms Bean said.

"It came at a time when [my employer] was casting me out. Now Australia was casting me out." Ms Bean is now out of Libya and recuperating in Indonesia but the events have left her angry with her employer and the Australian government - and despairing that Libya, a country in which she and the world have invested so much hope, can recover from a deepening malaise.

Ms Bean was employed in Libya by the International Organisation for Migration, a Geneva-based inter-governmental body dedicated to orderly and humane migration. She was working with the country's deputy health minister, Almahdi Alamen, on a scheme to bring 50 doctors and 50 nurses to Libya from Tunisia and Egypt.

From March onwards she had several totally ordinary meetings with the deputy minister.

"I have a standard rule when dealing with government: as a woman, I never go by myself; I never meet outside office hours; I keep everything above board and witnessed." But one time she slipped up. Mr Alamen called her to an emergency meeting on July 8 to discuss an aspect of the migration plan, and she went alone.

The meeting was short, "15 minutes, 20 tops," said Ms Bean, and "utterly unremarkable" - so much so that when she was grilled about it later, she could remember few of the details.

A few weeks later, rumours started to swirl about the deputy minister - that he'd had an affair with his secretary, or a Bulgarian nurse.

Such rumours can be dangerous in a country ruled by a restrictive Islamic moral and legal code. Some suspected the rumours were part of a move to oust the deputy minister.

But on September 11, his problem also became Ms Bean's. Mr Alamen sent her a text message saying he had been accused of raping her, and that he needed her help.

Horrified, she called his boss, the minister, Fatima Hamroush, but she refused to take Ms Bean's call. Almost two weeks later, on Sunday, September 23, a letter from the country's special investigation unit was hand delivered to the IOM office. It requested that Ms Bean go to its office immediately to answer questions.

She refused but the investigators were insistent, saying she should come or they would arrest her. Under mounting pressure, Ms Bean made her first contact with the nearest Australian embassy, in Cairo.

But she said even her employer was not responding properly. It failed to find her a lawyer so, on September 25, she went without one to the investigative unit which, she said, comprised "ex-Gaddafi intelligence".

On entering the building, she knew she was in trouble when she was not offered a cup of tea or coffee, as Arabic hospitality required. When she asked for tea, she was given water.

At first the questions were about the IOM's work in Libya, but after lunch the tempo stepped up. The first question was: "Did you go and visit the minister on July 8?"

For the next 21/2 hours Ms Bean was grilled about that meeting.

"What was the minister wearing? Did you have tea or coffee? What were you doing there?" Ms Bean said.

"Around and around on the small details. I had no recall but they kept asking. Then they'd read out details of his statement. I'd say I didn't remember. They'd say, 'Are you now saying that didn't happen?'

" 'Did he rape you? Harass you? ... You can tell us, if it was a romantic relationship, just tell us and you can go.'

"They'd make jokes: 'He's a good-looking man; he's not married'. It was clear that this individual [the investigator] wanted to snare me.

"He'd say, 'Now you're creating problems with this simple case. You're making more work. Just tell us it was a romantic relationship and you can go home and that's the end of it' ... It was coercive."

During the interrogation, the investigator wrote notes in Arabic, a language Ms Bean does not speak. Then, at the end, he signed them and asked her to do the same. She refused. This, the investigator said, would cause even bigger problems, though he mentioned nothing about travel restrictions.

The next day, Ms Bean was leaving for a business meeting in Rome after agreeing with her employer that it would try to get her statement translated into English while she was away. But at the departure gate at Tripoli airport, she was snatched from a queue and detained for 90 minutes or more in a small room with up to seven Libyan men yelling

and gesticulating.

Back in Australia, on the other end of the phone, her brother James Bean could hear his sister's desperation.

He called the IOM and threatened to go to the media if it did not sort out the problem. Then he rang the Australian consul in Cairo and "asked what it would take" to get her to Tripoli.

"He said: 'I think it's a bit early for that'," Mr Bean said. Both organisations warned him that to contact the media would damage his sister in the eyes of the Libyan government. He did so anyway.

"She had no one in her corner. I felt like we needed that megaphone," Mr Bean said.

Meanwhile, Ms Bean had been transferred again to the investigative headquarters, where interrogators again demanded she sign the statement. They shocked her with the news that two of her colleagues from the IOM had refused to vouch that she would return from Rome, even though she had a return ticket.

Perhaps spurred by the rush of publicity, Australian and British consular officials began offering support and advice. On Friday, they were at her side. The two governments supplied lawyers, contacts and reassurance and, on Saturday, accompanied by officials from both countries, she again went to the investigator's office.

There, she said, the "whole atmosphere was different," full of "big forced smiles and attempts at civil engagement. Everybody was using the word 'misunderstanding'," she said.

The statement was finally translated and, in return for her passport, she signed it. On the afternoon of the same day, Ms Bean boarded a flight out.

"I tell you, when that plane took off, it was a good moment."

Speaking from the safety of Bali, Ms Bean still does not know why she became embroiled in what appears to have been a larger political plot among Libya's elite. But she said organisations such as the IOM need to do much better with staff in vulnerable positions.

"You ask us to go into dangerous places, leave our families - and we love it - but it does come at a cost. And when ... your employer doesn't step in, they just throw you out, it's gut wrenching."

Female workers in difficult environments needed particular care but also brought particular skills, she said, and organisations must improve the way they dealt with these issues.

Her other insight is about Libya. Leaving in those circumstances, she said, was "soul destroying," because the country, in which the world has invested so much hope, is "literally falling apart".

"Everyone is talking about the new Libya. There's nothing new about it. They can't even

secure Tripoli but we all need to pretend it's doing well," she said.

"The county is on a rapid decline and it will be facilitated by the international community's collective blindness to what's really happening."

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*[Universally reviled Gillard is a known but we expected better from Bob Carr, current Foreign Minister.*

*There is no doubt that the current Labor Federal Government is an utter failure and DISGRACE -- hang your heads in SHAME Labor ministers, your are accurately perceived by the Oz public as a pack of cowardly, servile dogs; but of course you are too busy serving the Corporate/Banker sectors and too far removed from average Aussies to notice any negative impact and real public opinion.*

*For your unrepresentative position and brazen abandonment of 'AUSTRALIAN CITIZENS' (does that mean anything to you traitorous lackey dogs?) you will most assuredly suffer a well earned defeat/complete annihilation at the next election.*

<http://tinyurl.com/9cdq8wy>

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Jungle Drum Prose/Poetry. <http://jungledrum.lingama.net/news/story-160.html>