

Justice for Aafia US Tour Diary: Day 3 - leaving New York

Contributed by Yvonne Ridley
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INTEREST in Aafia Siddiqui's forthcoming trial is certainly gaining momentum in the media - and much has been generated from those journalists who serve the Pakistani community in America.

Yesterday I spent several hours talking to Pakistani journalists and giving background interviews about the case as well as doing a television interview from a TV studio in Queens, New York.

It is imperative we stop the speculation, the false accusations and the nonsense which has been pedalled or deliberately planted in the media by those briefing on behalf of the US intelligence agencies.

I've been trying to track some of these stories and internet-driven rumours - one URL has actually been traced to the US Embassy in Dhaka, Bangladesh!

There's a Bob and Linda who are obviously one in the same who regularly contribute to pro-Aafia websites in a bid to discredit her - these viral attacks fuel misinformation and gossip designed to confuse those taking an interest in her trial which has been scheduled for January.

But perhaps one of the most significant nuggets of information which came my way yesterday is that a key prosecution witness - one of the young US soldiers involved in the shooting of Aafia in the prison cell in Ghazni, Afghanistan last July - has himself been severely wounded in Afghanistan.

Friendly fire or Taliban attack? It's really difficult to say how or why this star witness was put in the firing line in Afghanistan when he was supposed to give evidence in such an important trial this month.

The prosecution, who are trying desperately to fudge the whole issue, have asked for the trial to be delayed until January. Hmm. Does anyone smell fish?

* Yvonne Ridley will address a crowd in Birmingham, Alabama tonight - for more information visit www.mlfausa.org