

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

## Public Statement

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### **Iraq: Amnesty International calls for an investigation into death in custody of nine men**

Amnesty International has written to Iraq's Interior Minister, Bayan Jabr Solagh, to call for a full investigation into the alleged torture of a group of men detained by Iraqi police on 10 July and the circumstances in which nine of them were suffocated to death after being confined in a police van or container.

The nine who died were among a group of 12 men who were detained in Baghdad's al-'Amariya district on 10 July. The Iraqi authorities have suggested they were members of an armed group who had engaged in an exchange of fire with US or Iraqi forces, but other sources claim they were a group of bricklayers who were picked up as suspected insurgents and then brutally tortured by police commandoes before being confined in a police van or container in extremely high temperatures for up to 14 hours. Medical staff at Yarmouk hospital in Baghdad, to where the bodies of those who died were taken on 11 July, are reported to have confirmed that some of them bore signs of torture, including electric shocks.

In its letter to the Iraqi government, Amnesty International said that whatever the men's status, there could be no justification for the use of torture or for confining them in conditions which caused deaths by suffocation. The organisation urged the government to investigate the allegations of torture and the circumstances of the deaths, and to bring to justice any police officers or other officials suspected for violating human rights.

Amnesty International also urged the government to take effective steps to prevent torture and to ensure that all police and other security personnel are made aware that they will be held accountable if they torture prisoners or commit other grave abuses of human rights.