

URGENT ACTION

CLERIC HELD INCOMMUNICADO, RISKS TORTURE

An imam (Muslim cleric) is being held incommunicado in Iraq's Kurdistan Region, and is believed to be at risk of torture or other ill-treatment.

Imam **Kamran 'Ali Khwaraham**, was summoned by the police and presented himself at Sara Police Station in the morning of 29 March. According to police, he was handed over to the Anti-Terror Department in the city of Sulaimaniya the following day and has been held incommunicado since then. Activists who have been in contact with local authorities about Kamran 'Ali Khwaraham's detention told Amnesty International they understood that he is being questioned about speeches he gave at demonstrations in Sulaimaniya's central Sara Square. He is 37 years old, married and has four children.

Kamran 'Ali Khwaraham had been targeted for a speech he gave at a demonstration on 27 February at the central Sara Square in Sulaimaniya where he criticized corruption and called on the Kurdish authorities to listen to people's demands. Later that day, four armed men in military uniform, believed to be members of the *Peshmerga* armed forces, under the control of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), went to his house and asked him to come with them. He asked if they had an arrest warrant and they said they did not, but took him away anyway. They blindfolded him and tied his hands behind his back. After a short drive, the car stopped and he was transferred to another car. After another short drive he was taken to a room where he was threatened and beaten.

Kamran 'Ali Khwaraham was able to meet with Amnesty International delegates on 8 March in Sulaimaniya, and told them what had happened: "I was left on my own for about half an hour and then two men came in the room and they were hooded. They started beating me. They punched me several times in the face and they also kicked me. They started insulting me. They threatened to kill me and said I was not leaving there alive..."

Kamran 'Ali Khwaraham was held in the room until 1 March, when he was released after being warned not to join future demonstrations. He ignored the warning and continued giving speeches at demonstrations in Sulaimaniya.

PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in English, Kurdish, Arabic or your own language:

- Calling on the authorities to allow Kamran 'Ali Khwaraham immediate access to his family and lawyer.
- Calling on them to release Kamran 'Ali Khwaraham immediately and unconditionally, unless he is to be charged with a recognizable criminal offence and tried in conformity with international standards for fair trial.
- Urging them to ensure that Kamran 'Ali Khwaraham is protected against torture or other ill-treatment.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 13 MAY 2011 TO (if possible via the representation of the Kurdistan Regional Government in your country):

President

Mas'ud Barzani
Diwan, P.O Box 60
Erbil
Kurdistan Region of Iraq

Salutation: Your Excellency

Prime Minister

Dr Barham Salih
Kurdistan Regional Government
Erbil
Republic of Iraq

Salutation: Your Excellency

Minister for the Interior

Karim Sinjari
Kurdistan Regional Government
Erbil
Republic of Iraq

Salutation: Your Excellency

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



URGENT ACTION

CLERIC HELD INCOMMUNICADO, RISKS TORTURE

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

During protests that have gripped the Kurdistan region since mid-February 2011, thousands of protesters have been calling for an end to corruption, unemployment and poor government services, and for the introduction of political reforms, social justice and respect for human rights and freedoms. They have complained about the political and economic control exercised by the two political parties that have been in power since the Kurdistan region of Iraq became semi-autonomous in 1991.

The Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), led by KRG President Mas'ud Barzani, controls the governorates of Erbil and Dohuk. The Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), led by Iraq's President Jalal Talabani, controls Sulaimaniya governorate. Kurdish security agencies (*Asayish*) and the armed forces (*Peshmerga*) are directly or indirectly controlled by the two parties. At least six civilians have died as a result of excessive use of force by security forces and dozens have been injured. Also, two members of the security forces were shot dead in unclear circumstances. Several people have been briefly detained and some tortured or otherwise ill-treated. A number of protesters, independent journalists and opposition activists have been threatened, and repressive action has been taken against students and academics.

UA: 100/11 Index: MDE 14/015/2011 Issue Date: 1 April 2011

AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL

