

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PRESS RELEASE

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## **UK: Internment one year on -- no hope in sight**

On the eve of the first anniversary in detention of those arrested under the Anti-terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001 (ATCSA) on 19 December last year, Amnesty International is renewing its call on the UK authorities to immediately release all persons detained under the ATCSA unless they are charged with a recognizably criminal offence and tried by an independent and impartial court in proceedings which meet international standards of fairness.

In a statement to Amnesty International today, some of the detainees said: "Our wives have been widowed and our children have been without a father for a year now. Our lives and our families' lives have been destroyed and we see no hope in sight."

In September 2002, Amnesty International issued two detailed reports cataloguing the plight of those held under the ATCSA. Since then, the organization has been urging the UK authorities to repeal the internment provisions of the ATCSA.

Thirteen people have been arrested under the ATCSA since its enactment on 14 December 2001. Of those originally arrested on 19 December 2001, two have since "voluntarily" left the UK. There are currently 11 people, all non-UK nationals, interned without charge or trial in the UK. Ten are detained in two high security prisons, HMP Belmarsh in London, and HMP Woodhill in Buckinghamshire, England, while Mahmoud Abu Rideh was transferred from Belmarsh to Broadmoor Psychiatric Hospital, a high security mental hospital in Berkshire, England.

Gareth Peirce, solicitor for many of those interned, told Amnesty International: "As horrified as we were a year ago when people were first arrested, if we had thought for a moment that a year later we would be no further forward we would have told the detainees bluntly 'they have locked you up and thrown away the keys'. As it is, we feel that we have all been subjected to a false pretence that there would ever be an early hearing that could lead to their release."

**For more information, please see:**

**UK: Basic rights denied after 11 September, <http://web.amnesty.org/ai.nsf/EUR450192002>  
UNITED KINGDOM - Rights Denied: the UK's Response to 11 September 2001,  
<http://web.amnesty.org/ai.nsf/EUR450162002>**

**UNITED KINGDOM -- Amnesty International's Memorandum to the UK Government on Part 4 of the Anti-terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001, <http://web.amnesty.org/ai.nsf/EUR450162002>**

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