

PUBLIC

AI Index: MDE 14/08/00

UA 219/00 Incommunicado detention/fear of torture/  
forcible expulsion/fear of forcible return

19 July 2000

**IRAQ/IRAQI KURDISTAN**

**Mu'ayad Ahmad, Amjad Ghafur, 'Abdullah Mahmud, 'Ammar Sharif, Yusuf Mohammad  
- Iraqi Workers Communist Party (IWCP) executive committee members**

**Azad Ahmad, Awara Majid, Najal, Taha Baha al-Din, Kawa 'Abdullah, Amanj 'Othman  
- IWCP members**

**Nasik Ahmad (f), head of the Independent Women's Organisation (IWO)**

**Arsh Baqri, Iranian national**

**And many others**

**Killed: Omid Nikbin, Sadiq Nikbin (Iranian nationals)**

Scores of people, many of them women, have been arrested in the part of Iraqi Kurdistan controlled by the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK). Their whereabouts are now unknown, and Amnesty International fears they may be tortured or ill-treated. Several are reportedly injured and being denied medical attention.

Many of those arrested are members or supporters of the opposition Iraqi Workers' Communist Party (IWCP) and the Independent Women's Organization (IWO), who were protesting against alleged persecution by the PUK. In June the PUK reportedly cut off the electricity and water supplies to both organisations' offices, and ordered them to stop all political activities and leave the PUK-controlled area of Iraqi Kurdistan.

On 13 July, demonstrators protesting against these measures were arrested when they attempted to march on the Ministry of Interior in the capital of the PUK-controlled area, Sulaimaniya. There were more arrests in the city of Rania, where up to 30 IWCP members and supporters are said to be held incommunicado.

The next day four IWCP members, 'Abdul Basit Muhsin, Mohammad Mustafa, Ibrahim Mohammad Rostam and Hawri Latif, were killed, reportedly when their car came under fire from PUK security forces. Two Iranian nationals, Omid Nikbin and Sadiq Nikbin, members of the Iranian Workers' Communist Party, were killed by the PUK that day. The circumstances of their deaths are not clear, but Amnesty International fears they may have been victims of extrajudicial execution. Another Iranian national, Arsh Baqri was reportedly injured and is now in PUK custody. Amnesty International fears that he risks being forcibly returned to Iran, where he would face serious human rights violations.

Three leading IWCP members have been held hostage at the PUK headquarters in Sulaimaniya since 16 July, apparently to put pressure on all the other IWCP members to leave the PUK-controlled area. Tahar Hassan, Saman Karim and Fu'ad Sadiq had reportedly gone to negotiate with the PUK.

On 19 July 17 members of the IWCP executive committee, their families and scores of other IWCP members were reportedly expelled from their homes in Sulaimaniya. They were reportedly on their way to the city of Arbil, in the part of Iraqi

Kurdistan controlled by the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP). These expulsions were reportedly intended to stop all political activity by the IWCP.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Since the end of the Gulf War in 1991 Iraqi Kurdistan has been under the control of the two main Kurdish political parties, the KDP and the PUK, who control two distinct areas and have established their own "governments".

Until now, political opposition has been tolerated. The IWCP was formed in 1993 from a merger of four small communist groups. Its activities remained limited, under pressure from both the KDP and the PUK.

Three IWCP members were arrested in February 2000 in Sulaimaniya, reportedly for publicly accusing the PUK of rigging local elections and criticising security measures taken during the elections. The PUK said that the three had been arrested for "creating disturbances and encouraging others to take part in disturbances, and illegally collecting money and forming committees and organizations to collect money without proper procedures and permission". All three were released without charge in April 2000.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express/airmail letters in or your own language:**

- asking to be told the names and places of detention of all those arrested in connection with anti-PUK demonstrations since 13 July;
- seeking assurances that they are being treated humanely and have regular access to lawyers of their own choosing, their families and any medical care they may require;
- urging that they be immediately released if they were arrested solely for their peaceful political activities;
- urging a full investigation into the killings of 'Abdul Basit Muhsin, Mohammad Mustafa, Ibrahim Mohammad Rostam, Hawri Latif, Omid Nikbin and Sadiq Nikbin, and that anyone found responsible be brought to justice;
- calling for all expulsions of IWCP members, supporters and their families to be stopped, and for all those expelled to be allowed to return to their homes;
- urging that no one who would be at risk of human rights violations be forcibly returned to Iran or to areas under Iraqi government control.

**APPEALS TO:**

Jalal Talabani  
 President  
 Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK)  
 Sulaimaniya  
 Kurdistan  
 Iraq

**Telegrams: President, Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, Kurdistan, Iraq**  
**Salutation: Dear Mr Talabani**

Jalal Talabani  
 c/o PUK United Kingdom  
 First Floor, 5 Glasshouse Walk,  
 Vauxhall  
 London SE11 5ES  
 UK

**Faxes: + 44 171 8400630**

**Salutation:Dear Mr Talabani**

Jalal Talabani  
c/o PUK USA  
444N. Capitol Street, NW, Suite 837  
Washington D. C.  
USA

**Faxes: + 1 202 6372723**

**Salutation:Dear Mr Talabani**

**COPIES TO:** Office of the PUK, if there is one in your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat,  
or your section office, if sending appeals after 30 August 2000.