

AI Index: PRE 01/028/2011  
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## **US accused of inhumane treatment over Wikileaks soldier case**

Amnesty International has urged the US authorities to alleviate the harsh pre-trial detention conditions of Bradley Manning, the soldier accused of leaking information to Wikileaks.

The US army private, 23, has been held for 23 hours a day in a sparsely furnished solitary cell and deprived of a pillow, sheets, and personal possessions since July 2010.

Amnesty International last week wrote to the US Defence secretary, Robert Gates, calling for the restrictions on Bradley Manning to be reviewed. In the same week, the soldier suffered several days of increased restrictions by being temporarily categorised as a 'suicide risk'.

"We are concerned that the conditions inflicted on Bradley Manning are unnecessarily severe and amount to inhumane treatment by the US authorities," said Susan Lee, Amnesty International's Programme Director for the Americas.

"Manning has not been convicted of any offence, but military authorities appear to be using all available means to punish him while in detention. This undermines the United States' commitment to the principle of the presumption of innocence."

Last Tuesday, Manning was placed on 'suicide risk', which resulted in him being stripped of his clothes apart from underwear, and the confiscation of his prescription glasses for most of the day, which Manning says left him in "essential blindness".

Following protests from Manning and his lawyers, the 'suicide risk' restrictions were lifted on Thursday.

Manning is classed as a "maximum custody" detainee, despite having no history of violence or disciplinary offences in custody. This means he is shackled at the hands and legs during all visits and denied opportunities to work, which would allow him to leave his cell.

Manning is also detained under a Prevention of Injury (POI) assignment, despite a recommendation from his official military psychiatrist that this is not necessary. Detainees with POI status are subjected to extra restrictions such as checks by guards every five minutes and bars on sleeping.

There have been no formal reasons given for Manning's maximum custody and POI status, yet his lawyers' attempts to challenge the restrictions have been ignored by the authorities.

"The repressive conditions imposed on Manning breach the US's obligations to treat detainees with humanity and dignity," said Susan Lee.

"We are also concerned that isolation and prolonged cellular confinement, which evidence shows can cause psychological impairment, may undermine Bradley Manning's ability to defend himself," said Susan Lee.

In April 2010, the Wikileaks organization released leaked footage of attacks by US Apache helicopters, which killed two Reuters news staff in Iraq in 2007.

Manning was arrested the following month and then charged with "transferring classified data" and "delivering national defence information to an unauthorised source".

Wikileaks has also since released large batches of information on the Iraq war, the Afghanistan war, and US diplomatic communications.

Manning could face a maximum sentence of 52 years in jail.

**Note to Editors**

For a copy of Amnesty International's letter to US Defence secretary, Robert Gates, please see:  
<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/AMR51/006/2011/en>

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