

URGENT ACTION

PROTESTERS DETAINED, AT RISK OF TORTURE IN IRAQ

At least 10 protesters were detained in Baghdad on 7 March and their whereabouts are currently unknown. Amnesty International fears they might be at high risk of torture, following allegations from other protesters that they were tortured in detention.

Ala' Sayhoud, Ma'an Thamer, 'Ali Abdel Zahra' and Muhammad Kadhim Finjan were among at least 10 people reported to have been detained by Iraqi security forces at about 1pm on 7 March in the al-Batawin area of Baghdad. They had just left a peaceful demonstration in Baghdad's Tahrir Square protesting against unemployment, government corruption and poor social services.

The families of the four men have not been able to contact them via their mobile phones since their detention on 7 March. The families have made inquiries with the Iraqi authorities but their whereabouts remain unknown.

Amnesty International fears that the four men and other detained protestors are at high risk of torture. Other protesters who were detained in recent weeks say they were severely tortured. For example, Abdel-Jabbar Shaloub Hammadi has told Amnesty International that he was detained for 12 days after being arrested on 24 February and beaten and tortured for the first five days, including by being tied up and hung from the ceiling. Icy cold water was also thrown over him. Another protester, journalist and writer Hadi al-Mehdi, alleges that he was beaten, tortured with shocks to his feet and threatened with rape during the hours he was in detention from 25 to 26 February).

PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in English or Arabic:

- Calling on the government to reveal the whereabouts of Ala' Sayhoud, Ma'an Thamer, 'Ali Abdel Zahra', Muhammad Kadhim Finjan and all other protesters detained with them;
 - Calling for the immediate release of Ala' Sayhoud, Ma'an Thamer, 'Ali Abdel Zahra', Muhammad Kadhim Finjan and all other protesters detained with them, unless they are to be promptly charged with a recognizable criminal offence and brought to trial in full conformity with international fair trial standards and without resort to the death penalty;
 - Calling on the government to respect the rights to peaceful assembly and freedom of expression in Iraq;
- Urging the government to order an independent investigation into these and other allegations of torture and other ill-treatment of detained protesters, make the results public, prosecute those found responsible for torture and other abuses, and ensure that victims of torture and other abuses receive full reparation.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 20 APRIL 2011 TO the Iraqi Embassy in your country and addressed to:

Prime Minister and Acting Minister
of Defence and Interior

His Excellency Nuri Kamil al-
Maliki Prime Minister
Convention Centre (Qasr al-
Ma'aridh)

Baghdad, Iraq

Salutation: His Excellency

And copies to:

Minister of Justice

His Excellency, Hassan al-Shemri

Minister of Human Rights

His Excellency, Mohammad Shayaa
al-Sudan

PLEASE NOTE:

Please post appeals to the Iraqi
embassy in your country but address
them to the names and addresses
given here.

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

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Abdel-Jabbar Shaloub Hammadi played an active role in the organization of the 25 February 'Day of Rage' in Baghdad. He has told Amnesty International that on 24 February he was stopped in the street in Baghdad by 30 armed men belonging to the police force. He was subsequently beaten, blindfolded and transported in a vehicle to a police building in al-Baladiyat district. He told Amnesty International that he was severely tortured, including by being suspended from the ceiling by his wrists, being suspended from the ceiling while his legs and arms were tied up together and by having icy cold water thrown over him. He was then transferred after five days to the Intelligence Department in Sahat al-Nussur district in Baghdad and subsequently released on the morning of 8 March.

Hadi al-Mehdi is a journalist and writer. On 25 February, Hadi al-Mehdi joined the 'Day of Rage' protests in Tahrir Square in Baghdad. He told Amnesty International that after the demonstration finished on 25 February, he was having lunch with three friends when at least 15 soldiers stormed the restaurant, beat him and his three friends with their rifles and forced them into vehicles. He told Amnesty International that he was taken to a detention centre, which was later identified as the former building of the Defence Ministry, and interrogated. He said he was frequently beaten during the interrogation. He received electric shocks to his feet twice and was threatened with rape. He was subsequently released in the early hours of 26 February.

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