

URGENT ACTION

ACTIVIST ABDUCTED IN BAGHDAD

An Iraqi pro-reform activist was abducted in central Baghdad on 27 June by men wearing civilian clothes. His whereabouts are unknown to his family and friends, and there are fears that he could be at risk of torture.

Dargham Mahdi al-Zaidi, a pro-reform activist aged around 30, was abducted in the morning of 27 June while walking in the streets of the Bab al-Sharqi neighbourhood of Baghdad, the capital of the country. The men who abducted him were wearing civilian clothes and they reportedly forced him into a car then drove away.

Dargham Mahdi al-Zaidi has been active in the pro-reform movement in Iraq. On 24 June he participated in a demonstration in Baghdad's al-Tahrir Square, and after that he was said to have been threatened by a security officer wearing civilian clothes who was a member of a security force under the control of the Prime Minister's Office. He was apparently told that he must stop taking part in anti-government protests. Family and friends of Dargham Mahdi al-Zaidi have been unable to find out where he is.

Amnesty International has recently documented cases of other protesters who were tortured or otherwise ill-treated shortly after their arrest and while they were detained incommunicado by Iraq security forces

Please write immediately in Arabic or English or your own language:

- Calling on the authorities to confirm or deny the detention of Dargham Mahdi al-Zaidi;
- Calling on the authorities to reveal his whereabouts if he is held and to allow him immediate access to his family and a lawyer;
- Calling on them to release him immediately and unconditionally if he is being held solely for the peaceful exercise of his right to freedom of expression and assembly;
- Urging them to ensure that he is being protected against torture and other ill-treatment;
- Calling on them to respect fully the rights to peaceful assembly and freedom of expression in Iraq.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 12 AUGUST 2011 TO DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATIVES OF IRAQ 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: Your Excellency

Minister of Human Rights

His Excellency Mohammad Shayaa

al-Sudani

Convention Centre (Qasr al-Ma'aridh)

Baghdad, Iraq

Salutation: Your Excellency

Minister of Justice

Hassan al-Shammari

Convention Centre (Qasr al-Ma'aridh)

Baghdad, Iraq

Salutation: Your Excellency

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below:

Name Address 1 Address 2 Address 3 Fax Fax number Email Email address Salutation Salutation

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Since early February 2011, tens of thousands of Iraqis, inspired by the uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt, have protested against corruption, unemployment and lack of basic services, and demanded greater civil and political rights. In the Kurdistan region of Iraq, demonstrators have also protested against the two main parties that have dominated local politics for decades.

On 16 and 17 February the first deaths were reported, during protests in Kut, Wasit province, and in Sulaimaniya, Iraqi Kurdistan Region. During February and March, there were many demonstrations across Iraq; 25 February was marked as a "Day of Rage" across Iraq and was the day with the highest number of reported detentions and casualties to date.

The security forces have frequently responded with excessive force, using live ammunition, sound bombs (which make a very loud noise, though no explosion) and other weapons to disperse peaceful protesters, particularly during the "Day of Rage" on 25 February when demonstrations were held across Iraq. At least 20 people have been killed since protests started in February. Many of those arrested say they were tortured or otherwise ill-treated in detention. Journalists trying to cover the protests as well as political activists have been attacked or threatened.

Amnesty international recently published a report, *Iraq: Days of rage: protests and repression in Iraq* (Index: MDE 14/013/2011), that documents human rights violations during the recent protests.

Name: Dargham Mahdi al-Zaidi
Gender m/f: Male

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