

# URGENT ACTION

## 39 DETAINEES AT RISK OF EXECUTION

**According to recent public statements by the Iraqi Minister of Interior, 39 untried detainees may face the death sentence in Iraq by the end of 2010, possibly without trial or fair trials.**

The 39 detainees are alleged members of armed groups in Iraq. They have not yet been charged and tried. The group were paraded on 2 December before journalists, while handcuffed and clad in orange jumpsuits, at a press conference convened by the Ministry of Interior. At the press conference, the Iraqi Interior Minister, Jawad al-Bolani, ignored the presumption of innocence of the 39 suspects and declared: "Today, we will send these criminals and the investigation results to the courts that will sentence them to death. Our demand is not to delay the carrying out of the executions against these criminals [in order] to deter terrorist and criminal elements." He added that the 39 had confessed to committing criminal offences but gave no details of how those confessions were obtained.

According to media reports Jawad al-Bolani said most of the 39 suspects had rejoined al-Qa'ida linked groups after being released from Iraqi prisons administered by the USA. Three of the suspects were named as: Hazim al-Zawi, reportedly the third-highest leader in the Islamic State of Iraq (ISI), Iraq's al-Qa'ida branch; Ahmed Hussein 'Ali, known as the "Mufti of Anbar"; and 'AbdulRazzaq, the organization's alleged media chief.

Amnesty International fears that the confessions the 39 suspects are said to have made under interrogation may have been obtained under torture and, despite this, may be used as evidence against them at trial. Amnesty International has urged the Iraqi government to ensure that these and other detainees receive fair trials that conform to recognized international standards, and that "confessions" obtained under torture are not used in their trials.

The security situation in Iraq remains precarious and Amnesty International recognizes that the government has a duty to protect the population, including members of religious and ethnic minorities and others who have been targeted for attack by al-Qa'ida and other armed groups; however, this must be done in full conformity with human rights and the rule of law. Amnesty International has on numerous occasions strongly condemned human rights abuses committed by armed groups in Iraq. Amnesty International opposes the death penalty unconditionally as a violation of the right to life and the ultimate cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment and continues to call on the Iraqi government to end executions as a step toward complete abolition of the death penalty.

### **PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in Arabic or English:**

- Calling on the Iraqi government to ensure that Hazim al-Zawi, Ahmed Hussein Ali, Abdul Razzaq and the other 36 detainees receive a fair trial without recourse to the death penalty;
- Calling on the Iraqi authorities to ensure that no statements obtained under torture or duress are submitted as evidence against the 39 or those who may be accused in other trials;
- Calling on the Iraqi authorities to introduce immediately a moratorium on executions, in accordance with the recent UN General Assembly resolution calling for a worldwide moratorium on executions.

### **PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 20 JANUARY 2010 TO THE IRAQI EMBASSY OR DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATIVE IN YOUR COUNTRY, ASKING THEM TO BE FORWARDED TO:**

#### Minister of Interior

Jawad al-Bolani  
Minister of Interior  
Convention Centre (Qasr al-Ma'aridh)  
Baghdad, Iraq

**Salutation: His Excellency**

#### Prime Minister

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

**Salutation: His Excellency**

#### **And copies to:**

**Ministers of justice**  
Judge Dara Nouredin  
**Minister of Human Rights**  
Wajdan Mikhail Salam

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

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