

# URGENT ACTION

## RISK OF IMMINENT EXECUTION IN IRAQ

**A man sentenced to death in Iraq in 2006 is at risk of imminent execution after the Court of Cassation upheld his death sentence at the end of April 2011.**

**Mu'ayyad Yassin 'Aziz 'Abdel-Razzaq**, 50, a former colonel of the Iraqi army under Saddam Hussein, was arrested from his house in Baghdad in September 2004 by US forces. He and members of his family were allegedly beaten during the arrest. After one week in US custody he was transferred to Iraqi custody.

Mu'ayyad Yassin 'Aziz 'Abdel-Razzaq was allegedly tortured several times in detention between 2004 and 2006. In June 2006, he was brought before the Central Criminal Court of Iraq (CCCI) in Baghdad for the first time. He was charged with having a leading role in an armed group called the "Mohammad Army" and with armed attacks on US and Iraqi troops in different parts of Iraq. He was sentenced to death at the end of June 2006. During the trial, Mu'ayyad Yassin 'Aziz 'Abdel-Razzaq denied all the charges and told the court that he had been tortured in prison and was forced to sign a "confession" incriminating himself. He was represented by a lawyer appointed by the court. The lawyer appealed against the sentence. On 27 April 2011, the Court of Cassation in Baghdad upheld the death sentence. If the sentence is ratified by the Iraqi President, Mu'ayyad Yassin 'Aziz 'Abdel-Razzaq could be executed within days or weeks. He is currently held in al-Kadhimiya prison in Baghdad.

Mu'ayyad Yassin 'Aziz 'Abdel-Razzaq's family told Amnesty International that, even though they had been requesting information about his fate and whereabouts from the Ministry of Human Rights since he was first detained, they only found out about his place of detention, trial and death sentence through the news on TV in November 2006. His family was allowed to visit him for the first time in April 2009, over four years after he was arrested.

### PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in English or Arabic:

- Recognizing that governments have an obligation to bring to justice those responsible for serious crimes but insisting that the death penalty is a violation of the right to life and the ultimate form of cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment, and should not be applied even for crimes of the greatest magnitude;
- Expressing concern about the unfairness of the trial, including allegations that Mu'ayyad Yassin 'Aziz 'Abdel-Razzaq's "confession" was extracted through torture;
- Calling on the authorities to commute the death sentence against Mu'ayyad Yassin 'Aziz 'Abdel-Razzaq;
- Calling on the authorities to commute all other death sentences and declare an immediate moratorium on executions.

### PLEASE SEND APPEALS TO THE IRAQI EMBASSY OR CONSULAR REPRESENTATION IN YOUR COUNTRY BEFORE 23 MAY 2011:

#### Prime Minister

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

**Salutation: Your Excellency**

#### President

Jalal Talabani  
Convention Centre (Qasr al-Ma'aridh)  
Baghdad, Iraq

e-mail:  
questions@iraqipresidency.net  
**Salutation: Your Excellency**

And copies to:

Minister of justice  
Hassan al Shammari

Minister of Human Rights  
Mohammad Shayaa al-Sudani

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

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The CCCI was established by the Coalition Provisional Authority in June 2003 with jurisdiction over crimes relating to terrorism, sectarian violence, organized crime and government corruption. Trials before the CCCI consistently fall short of international standards for fair trials. Defendants commonly complain that “confessions” were extracted from them under torture during pre-trial interrogation, often when they were held incommunicado in police stations or in detention facilities controlled by the Ministry of Interior. These “confessions” are then often used as evidence against them at their trials, and are accepted by the courts without taking any or adequate steps to investigate defendants’ allegations of torture. Defendants also complain that they are not able to choose their own defence lawyers; those tried before the CCCI on capital charges have defence lawyers appointed by the court if they are unable to pay for defence counsel, but the quality of such representation is low. Some lawyers refuse to represent defendants accused of “terrorism”, who are mostly Sunni Muslims, fearing reprisals by armed militia groups linked to Sh’ia political parties represented in the Iraqi Council of Representatives (parliament).

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