

WEB UPDATES – TACTICAL CAMPAIGN AGAINST TORTURE**Title**

Abu Ghraib torture victims still seeking redress

Summary for torture homepage

Two years ago the release of photographs showing detainees being tortured and ill-treated by US military personnel at Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq shocked and horrified the world.

Despite repeated calls, US authorities have failed to conduct proper investigations to ensure that all those responsible, including at the highest levels, are held to account. The survivors are still seeking redress.

Feature

Two years ago the release of photographs showing detainees being tortured and ill-treated by US military personnel at Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq shocked and horrified the world. Despite repeated calls, US authorities have failed to conduct proper investigations to ensure that all those responsible, including at the highest levels, are held to account.

The second anniversary of the outbreak of the scandal also serves as a haunting reminder two years on that the torture and abuse of Iraqis by their own authorities and the US-led coalition forces is still an issue. This timely reminder comes when the US Secretary of Defense has argued that US service members who see torture and inhumane treatment do not have an obligation to “physically stop it”, but only “to report it”.

Testimony gathered by AI from former detainees reportedly tortured in Abu Ghraib and elsewhere indicates that victims have not received any compensation and are apparently unaware of the ways of making claims and, in many cases, lack the means and resources to do so.

The case of Abdel-Jabbar Al-Azzawi

Abdel-Jabbar Al-Azzawi, a 50-year-old Iraqi, was detained and tortured by US forces and civilian interrogators hired by the US government in Iraq. He told AI that about 30 US soldiers burst into his house on 20 November 2003, pushed him to the ground and handcuffed him. US troops allegedly took money, jewellery and other personal belongings from his house at the time of his arrest, which were never returned. He also alleges that a US soldier beat his wife over the head with the butt of a gun during the raid, causing the loss of sight in one of her eyes.

At Baghdad airport, where he was initially interned, US personnel reportedly tortured Abdel-Jabbar Al-Azzawi during interrogation. He described how he was insulted, blindfolded, beaten, stripped, doused with water, tied in a crucifix position and suspended in the air. He was then transferred to Abu Ghraib prison, where he was held as a “ghost detainee” – i.e. without being registered - and in solitary confinement for almost a month.

He says that pictures were taken of him as he was naked and while he was forced to adopt humiliating positions similar to those to which other detainees were subjected, as shown in the published Abu Ghraib scandal images. He was released on 6 June 2004 after spending almost seven months in detention without charge or trial.

Abdel-Jabbar Al-Azzawi, who reportedly suffers physical and physiological disorders that allegedly developed during his detention, has not received any compensation from the US authorities.

Survivors still seeking redress

US investigations into the abuses have resulted in prosecutions only of junior military personnel and the sentences in those cases generally have failed to reflect the gravity of the offences.

Since the invasion of Iraq in March 2003 US-led coalition forces have detained tens of thousands of people. In defiance of international humanitarian law, most have been held without charge, trial, or access to lawyers or courts. Some of the detainees have been interned for over two years; others have been released without explanation or apology after months in detention.

Two years on, the US government must condemn all forms of torture and other ill-treatment, establish an independent investigation into the abuses, bring the perpetrators to justice, and create a adequate mechanism for redress; this should include compensation, restitution, satisfaction, guarantees of non-repetition and rehabilitation.

Spread the word

Take action against torture in the “war on terror”

LINKS

Link to Iraq report of 6 March “Beyond Abu Ghraib” MDE 14/001/2006, but perhaps also to older reports

For Iraq/USA team to decide if we link these:

“Iraq: killing of civilians...” MDE 14/007/2004 and open letter from Irene to President Bush which goes into detail of the Taguba report and Rumsfeld’s response AMR 51/078/2004 **Instead of the Armed Groups report (MDE14/009/2005), we should list MDE 14/006/2004 “One year on the human rights situation remains dire”**

<http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGMDE140062004?open&of=ENG-IRQ>

<http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGMDE140012006?open&of=ENG-IRQ>

<http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGMDE140072004?open&of=ENG-IRQ>

<http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGAMR510782004?open&of=ENG-IRQ>

Quote (in the web clip)

“They threatened to bring my wife and my eldest son and rape them in front of me. I had lost command of my speech and thought, so I said: ‘Bring them’.”