

URGENT ACTION

MAN FACES TRIAL UNDER FABRICATED CHARGES

Walid Yunis Ahmad faces an unfair trial on 17 March in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq which could lead to his being sentenced to 15 more years in prison. Amnesty International believes that the charges against him have been fabricated.

Walid Yunis Ahmad, also known as Abu Khubeib, was arrested in Erbil, capital of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, on 6 February 2000. He has been held without charge or trial in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq for nearly 11 years. He is now due to stand trial on 17 March on the basis of charges brought against him in August 2010, AI believes that he only learnt of the charges for the first time in January 2011.

He is charged under the 2006 anti-terrorism law for allegedly "sending orders and instructions from prison to his followers in Kirkuk and Mosul to carry out terrorist attacks in Dohuk". The charges are said to be based on information that an investigative judge received from "secret informants" in connection with the discovery of explosives, on two occasions in 2009 in Dohuk; no one else has been arrested or charged in connection with these discoveries. The authorities have not disclosed the identities of the "secret informants" to the defence lawyer of Walid Yunis Ahmad and he will not be able to examine them in court. Those who reported the discovery of the explosives told investigators that they had never heard of Walid Yunis Ahmad.

Although he has been detained continuously since 2000, the reasons for his detention are not given in Walid Yunis Ahmad's casefile and previous explanations given to Amnesty International by the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) were not credible. He appears now to be facing fabricated charges intended to justify retroactively his long detention without trial. The charges do not indicate how he is alleged to have sent orders to others from prison. Only his wife, according to information received by Amnesty International, is allowed to visit him and only under strict security. No evidence has been produced about letters Walid Yunis Ahmad is alleged to have sent from prison.

The KRG authorities previously said they could not prosecute Walid Yunis Ahmad under the anti-terrorism law because it was introduced six years after his detention began and that the Iraqi Penal Code did not cover terrorist offences. However, the Penal Code does prohibit acts that undermine internal or external state security.

Amnesty International believes that the charges against Walid Yunis Ahmad have been fabricated in order to prosecute him and that there is no evidence to incriminate him in crimes committed before or after 2000. Amnesty International believes he should be immediately released and that he should receive reparation for his 11 years in detention.

PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in English and Arabic:

- Calling for Walid Yunis Ahmad to be immediately released, and for the charges against him to be dropped.
- Calling on the Kurdish government to afford reparation to Walid Yunis Ahmad and his family for his long detention without charge or trial.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 25 APRIL 2011 TO the KRG representation in your country and addressed to:

President

Mas'ud Barzani
President
Kurdistan Regional Government
Erbil
Republic of Iraq
Salutation: Your Excellency

Minister of Interior

Karim Sinjari
Minister for the Interior
Kurdistan Regional Government
Erbil
Republic of Iraq
Salutation: Your Excellency

Minister of Justice

Raouf Rashid Abdulrahman
Minister of Justice
Kurdistan Regional Government
Erbil
Republic of Iraq
Salutation: Your Excellency

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

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Walid Yunis Ahmad has been detained without charge or trial for more than 10 years. He was arrested on 6 February 2000 in Erbil, capital of the semi-autonomous Kurdistan region of Iraq, by members of the Asayish, the Kurdish security police. For the next three years his family did not know where he was or whether he was dead or alive.

During his enforced disappearance, Walid Yunis Ahmad was tortured. After he went on hunger strike to protest against his detention and torture, he was kept in solitary confinement. He was then moved from one prison to another without explanation. He is currently held at the Asayish headquarters in Erbil.

Walid Yunis Ahmad belongs to the minority Turkmen ethnic group in Iraq. Before his arrest he was working as a translator and programme organizer for a local radio and TV station apparently affiliated to the Islamic Movement in Kurdistan, an Islamist opposition party. Shortly before his arrest, he had attended a meeting of the Islamic Movement in Kurdistan. Afterwards, he was given a lift in a car which was then stopped and searched by the police. The police allegedly found some explosive material and arrested Walid Yunis Ahmad, who denied any knowledge of the explosives. The driver, who was also arrested, was released three months later.

An Amnesty international delegation visited Walid Yunis Ahmad in prison in June 2010.

Amnesty International has been campaigning on behalf of Walid Yunis Ahmad for more than two years. Walid Yunis Ahmad was included in the 2010 Letter Writing marathon.

Walid Yunis Ahmad is one of thousands of people who have been detained for years without charge or trial in prisons across Iraq.

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