

PUBLIC

AI Index: MDE 14/004/2008

21 February 2008

UA 44/08 Fear of torture or other ill-treatment/Possible Prisoner of Conscience

IRAQ Jooni Khoshaba (m), aged 34, journalist

Kurdish journalist Jooni Khoshaba was arrested on 17 February by the *Asayish* (the security forces working for the authorities in the semi-autonomous region of Iraqi Kurdistan). He is at grave risk of torture.

Jooni Khoshaba has written a number of articles for newspapers in Iraqi Kurdistan criticising the policies of both the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) and the central government in Baghdad. The *Asayish* arrested him at his home in the northern town of Talkeef, without showing a warrant. He was taken to a detention centre near the town of Sarsanak, where he was apparently questioned about what he had written.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Opponents of the authorities in Iraqi Kurdistan are routinely arrested and sometimes tortured by the *Asayish*. Journalists are at particular risk.

The *Asayish* arrested journalist Mohammad Siyassi Ashkani in January 2007 and held him without charge or trial for almost six months. He spent the first 55 days in solitary confinement before his family were allowed to visit him. He was then allowed weekly family visits, but never had access to a lawyer.

Former prisoners of the *Asayish* have reported being tortured, by methods including beatings, use of electric shocks on various parts of the body and *falaqa* (beating on the soles of the feet).

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in Arabic, Kurdish, English or your own language:

- expressing concern that Jooni Khoshaba was arrested by the *Asayish* on 17 February, in connection with his work as a journalist, and urging the authorities to release him immediately unless he is to be charged with a recognizably criminal offence and brought to trial promptly and fairly;
- asking them to ensure that he is treated humanely in custody, and not tortured or ill-treated;
- asking them to ensure that he has access to a lawyer of his choosing, and his family.

APPEALS TO:

Please send appeals via the KRG offices abroad, asking for them to be forwarded to President Barzani of Iraqi Kurdistan, and to the Iraqi President:

KRG International Relations Bureau, London, United Kingdom

Fax: +44 20 7498 2531

Email: KdpEurope@aol.com

Salutation: Your Excellency

KRG Europe, Berlin, Germany

Fax: +49 30 797 437 46

Email: kdpeurope@t-online-.de

Salutation: Your Excellency

KRG Office, Washington, USA

Email: pdk7usa@aol.com

Salutation: Your Excellency

KRG Office, Ankara, Turkey

Fax: + 90 312 447 3532

Email: info@kdp-ankara.org.tr

Salutation: Your Excellency

KRG Office, Sydney, Australia

Fax: +612 9822 22 72

Email: haval@optushome.com.au

Salutation: Your Excellency

KRG Office, Madrid, Spain

Fax: +34 913 001 638

Email: kurdi@infonegocio.com

Salutation: Your Excellency

President of Iraq

Jalal Talabani

Salutation: Your Excellency

E-mail: questions@iraqipresidency.net

COPIES TO: diplomatic representatives of Iraq accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 3 April 2008.