

PUBLIC

AI Index: MDE 18/001/2008

23 January 2008

UA 20/08 Fear of forcible return/ torture and other ill-treatment/ death penalty

LEBANON / Muthher 'Abd al-Karim al-Kharbit (m) Iraqi national
IRAQ Bashar Sab'awi Ibrahim (m) Iraqi national, the nephew of the former Iraqi
President Saddam Hussain

Muthher 'Abd al-Karim al-Kharbit and Bashar Sab'awi Ibrahim, two Iraqi nationals held in Lebanon, the former for more than a year, are facing a possible extradition to Iraq following a decision taken by the Lebanese government on 28 December 2007. Both the Iraqi government and the US military in Iraq accuse the two men of funding insurgent groups within Iraq.

The Iraqi government formally asked Lebanon to extradite the two men and if returned they would be at serious risk of torture, other ill-treatment and possibly execution. Many Lebanese human rights activists, including lawyers, have been lobbying the Lebanese government to not hand the men to the Iraqi authorities.

Muthher 'Abd al-Karim al-Kharbit was arrested at the end of 2006 by the Lebanese General Security as he attempted to cross into Lebanon from Syria. He was accompanied by his wife who was in need of hospital treatment and was prohibited from entering Lebanon.

Muthher 'Abd al-Karim al-Kharbit belongs to a well known clan in al-Anbar governorate in Western Iraq. On 11 April 2003 bombs dropped by US warplanes killed his brother, Malik al-Kharbit, a tribal leader, and 21 members of his family, including a dozen children. Bashar Sab'awi Ibrahim is a nephew of the former Iraqi President Saddam Hussain, who was executed at the end of December 2006.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Over the last three years Amnesty International has documented numerous cases of torture and ill-treatment by the Iraqi police and security forces. Hundreds, possibly thousands, of detainees held in prisons and detention centres controlled by the Iraqi security forces have been tortured since the June 2004 hand over of power. The victims are mostly Sunni Muslims suspected of involvement in or support for insurgent groups fighting against the Iraqi government and the US-led Multinational Force. However, other groups, including Shi'a Muslims, have also been tortured by the Iraqi police and Special Forces belonging to the Ministry of the Interior. Among other methods, victims have been subjected to electric shocks or have been beaten with plastic cables.

Since the reintroduction of the death penalty in Iraq in August 2004, scores of people have been sentenced to death and there has been a rapid rise in the number of executions. At least 65 people were put to death in 2006 alone, many of them after unfair trials. In 2007 at least 199 people were sentenced to death and 33 executions were carried out.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Muthher 'Abd al-Karim al-Kharbit and Bashar Sab'awi Ibrahim who are at risk of forcible return to Iraq following a decision made on 28 December 2007 to hand them over to the Iraqi government;
- calling on the Lebanese government not to return the two men to Iraq where they are most likely to face torture and possibly execution;

- reminding the Lebanese government of its obligations under international law that individuals cannot be forcibly returned to a country where they face the risk of being subjected to human rights violations, including execution and torture.

APPEALS TO:

His Excellency Prime Minister Fouad Siniora
Office of the Prime Minister
Council of Ministers
Grand Sérail
Rue des Arts et Métiers
Sanayeh, Beirut, Lebanon
Fax: + 961 1 785 014
Salutation: Your Excellency

His Excellency Minister of Justice Charles Rizk
Ministry of Justice
Rue Sami Solh
Beirut
Lebanon
Fax: + 961 1 427 975
Salutation: Your Excellency

His Excellency Nabih Berri
Speaker of the National Assembly
National Assembly
Beirut
Lebanon
Fax: + 961 1 982 059
Salutation: Your Excellency

COPIES TO: diplomatic representatives of Lebanon within your country.

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