

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

Public Statement

AI index: MDE 14/031/2009
29 September 2009

Iraq: Amnesty International urges the immediate release of 36 Iranian detainees

A group of 36 Camp Ashraf residents continue to be held at a police station in the town of al-Khalis, in Diyala province, north of Baghdad, since they were arrested by Iraqi security forces on 28-29 July 2009. The 36 men are in poor health and continue to maintain a hunger strike.

According to latest information and after referral to a criminal court in Diyala province, north of Baghdad, on 16 September the investigative judge in the town of al-Khalis confirmed his previous ruling of 24 August 2009 ordering the release of the 36 men on the grounds that they had no charges to answer. A second charge of illegal residency in Iraq was said to have been dismissed by the investigative judge. The public prosecutor, who had appealed the investigative judge's first ruling, is said to have had no objection to their release without charge. However, despite the judge's ruling and the men lawyers' pleas, the local police at al-Khalis continue to refuse to release the detainees yet have provided no reasons or legal justification for their continuing detention.

Amnesty International now urges the Iraqi authorities to immediately and unconditionally release the 36 Camp Ashraf residents. The organization calls on the Iraqi Prime Minister, Nuri al-Maliki, to personally intervene and order an investigation into the failure of the police at al-Khalis to release the 36 men. Amnesty International reiterates its opposition to any forcible return of Iranians, including the 36 detainees or other Camp Ashraf residents, to Iran in circumstances where they would be at risk of serious human rights violations, including torture and execution.

Public Document

For more information please call Amnesty International's press office in London, UK, on +44 20 7413 5566 or email: press@amnesty.org

International Secretariat, Amnesty International, 1 Easton St., London WC1X 0DW, UK
www.amnesty.org