

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

Public Statement

AI Index: MDE 14/038/2006 (Public)

News Service No: 291

10 November 2006

Iraq: One year on, still no justice for torture victims

Amnesty International is calling on the Iraqi government to publish the findings of its investigation in the so-called al-Jadiriya case in November 2005, involving the detention and torture of suspects under the control of the Iraqi Interior Ministry. The Iraqi authorities quickly announced an investigation after these abuses were revealed, but one year on its findings have still not been disclosed and those responsible for the incarceration, torture and brutal treatment of the detainees have not been held to account.

On 13 November 2005, some 168 detainees, including children, were found being held unlawfully at a building in Baghdad's al-Jadiriya district under the control of Iraq's Interior Ministry, then headed by Bayan Jabr Solagh. They were in poor condition, malnourished and emaciated, and many complained that they had been tortured. According to the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), many of the detainees had injuries caused by electric shock torture, beatings and stabbing.

The detainees reported that several others who had been held with them had been killed by their captors or had died in detention. One detainee, a father of five, later told Amnesty International that he was beaten and suspended from the ceiling and that his interrogators *"threatened to bring my wife, mother and sister and rape them in front of me. I was deprived of food and water for eight days, suffered electric shocks and cigarette burns on my hand and neck."*

The detainees' plight came to attention reportedly as a result of a raid on the Interior Ministry building by US forces. Coming in the wake of the Abu Ghraib prison scandal, the case provoked wide international attention and concern and the Iraqi authorities promptly announced an investigation but without giving further details. One year on, the Iraqi authorities have disclosed no further information although the US ambassador to Iraq, Zalmay Khalilzad, told a press conference in February that his government was pressing for "serious investigations" by the Iraqi authorities. At the same press conference, he said the US had conducted its own investigation into the incident but its outcome also has never been disclosed.

Amnesty International welcomed the government's announcement of an inquiry into the al-Jadiriya case but it has become increasingly concerned about the delay in disclosing its findings. The organization is urging the government of Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki, who came to power in May 2006, to publish the investigation's outcome and ensure that those responsible for abuses in the al-Jadiriya case are promptly held to account, as required by international law and without recourse to the death penalty.

