

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

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Iraq: The government must reveal the whereabouts of four ex. Guantánamo detainees

Amnesty International has written to the Iraqi Minister of Interior Jawad al-Bulani urging him to reveal the current whereabouts and legal status of four Iraqi nationals and former detainees who were transferred from Guantánamo Bay to Iraq by the US military authorities. According to an official from the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and international media, the four people, 'Abbas Habib Rumi al-Naely, 'Ali 'Abdul Motalib 'Uwayd Hassan al-Ta'i, Arkan Mohammad Ghafil al-Karim and Hassan 'Abdul Said, were handed over to the Iraqi authorities on 18 January 2009. The US Department of Defense announced on its website that the four Iraqis were transferred to Iraq on 17 January 2009. However, to date their fate and whereabouts have remained unknown. The ICRC has contacted the Iraqi authorities and requested information about them and to be given the opportunity to visit them. A senior Iraqi Interior Ministry official was quoted as stating that the authorities have no knowledge of such transfers. However, the Iraqi Minister of Justice is reported to have stated that four Iraqis, all former detainees in Guantánamo Bay, were returned to Iraq in early February 2009 and were being "investigated by the security services and under the supervision of an investigative judge". He added that the judge has extended their detention by 15 days after which they will be charged and brought to trial, or released.

In its letter to the Iraqi Minister of Interior Amnesty International called on the government to confirm that they had indeed received from the US authorities the four detainees mentioned above and to clarify the exact date of the transfer. The organization urged that the location of the four be disclosed without delay and their families be informed and given immediate access to them. Amnesty International also requested to be informed of the reasons and legal basis for the detention of the four. It also urged that they be released immediately unless they are to be charged with recognizable criminal offences and brought promptly to trial in accordance with international fair trial standards and without recourse to the death penalty. Finally, Amnesty International sought assurances that the four detainees are being treated humanely, given access to legal representation and any medical assistance that they may require.

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