

# URGENT ACTION

## PROTESTERS DETAINED, AT RISK OF TORTURE

**A group of pro-reform activists have been allowed no contact with the outside world since they were detained on 27 and 28 May in Baghdad. They are at risk of torture or other ill-treatment.**

**Ahmed Alaa al Baghdadi, Jihad Jalil Ibrahim, Muayyad Faisal al-Tayeb and Ali Abdul Khaliq al Jaf** were taken from Tahrir Square in central Baghdad at 9.30am on 27 May, just before a planned demonstration started. They were apparently driven away in an ambulance by men in plain clothes, believed to be security officials. The four activists had previously called for and participated in peaceful demonstrations in protest against deteriorating economic and other living conditions in Iraq.

The four men, aged between 19 and 29, are being held in the al-Muthanna airbase prison in Baghdad. They are said to be facing possible trial on 5 June accused of possessing false ID cards. However, Amnesty International is concerned that their arrests and detention may be directly linked to their involvement in peaceful protests involving the legitimate exercise of their rights to freedom of expression and assembly. The authorities have refused requests by their families and lawyers to be allowed to visit them, heightening concern that they could be subject to torture or other ill-treatment.

On 28 May, Iraqi security forces detained at least 11 other activists while they were meeting in Baghdad at the headquarters of Ayna Haqqi (Where is my right), a local NGO. Those detained include the NGO's secretary general, **Ahmed Mohammad Ahmed**; four of those arrested were later released but he and others continued to be detained and have also been denied access to their families and lawyers. They too are believed to be held at al-Muthanna airbase prison in Baghdad and to have been detained on account of their involvement in organizing peaceful demonstrations in Baghdad's Tahrir Square.

Amnesty International has recently documented cases of other protesters who were tortured or otherwise ill-treated shortly after their arrest and while they were detained incommunicado by Iraq security forces.

### PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in Arabic or English:

- Calling on the authorities to allow Ahmed Alaa al Baghdadi, Jihad Jalil Ibrahim, Muayyad Faisal al-Tayeb and Ali Abdul Khaliq al Jaf and the arrested members of the Ayna Haqqi NGO immediate access to their families and lawyers;
- Calling on them to release the activists immediately and unconditionally if they are being held solely for the peaceful exercise of their rights to freedom of expression and assembly.
- Urging them to ensure that these activists and all other detainees are protected against possible torture or other ill-treatment, and that any officials responsible for torture are brought to justice;
- Calling on them to respect fully the rights to peaceful assembly and freedom of expression in Iraq.

### PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 14 JULY 2011 TO DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATIVES OF IRAQ IN YOUR COUNTRY AND ADDRESSED TO:

Prime Minister and Acting Minister of Defence and Interior  
His Excellency Nuri Kamil al-Maliki,  
Prime Minister  
Convention Centre (Qasr al-Ma'aridh)  
Baghdad, Iraq  
**Salutation: Your Excellency**

Minister of Human Rights  
His Excellency Mohammad Shayaa al-Sudani  
Convention Centre (Qasr al-Ma'aridh)  
Baghdad, Iraq  
**Email: info@humanrights.gov.iq**  
**Salutation: Your Excellency**

Minister of Justice  
Hassan al-Shammari  
Convention Centre (Qasr al-Ma'aridh)  
Baghdad, Iraq  
**Salutation: Your Excellency**

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

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## FOUR PROTESTERS DETAINED, RISK TORTURE

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Since early February 2011, tens of thousands of Iraqis, inspired by the uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt, have protested against corruption, unemployment and lack of basic services, and demanded greater civil and political rights. In the Kurdistan region of Iraq, demonstrators have also protested against the two main parties that have dominated local politics for decades.

On 16 and 17 February the first deaths were reported, during protests in Kut, Wasit province, and in Sulaimaniya, Iraqi Kurdistan Region. During February and March, there were many demonstrations across Iraq; 25 February was marked as a "Day of Rage" across Iraq and was the day with the highest number of reported detentions and casualties to date.

The security forces have frequently responded with excessive force, using live ammunition, sound bombs (which make a very loud noise, though no explosion) and other weapons to disperse peaceful protesters, particularly during the "Day of Rage" on 25 February when demonstrations were held across Iraq. At least 20 people have been killed since protests started in February. Many of those arrested say they were tortured or otherwise ill-treated. Journalists trying to cover the protests as well as political activists have been attacked or threatened.

Amnesty international has recently published a report, *Iraq; Days of rage: protests and repression in Iraq* (MDE 14/013/2011) that documents human rights violations during the recent protests in Iraq.

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