

GuardianUnlimited Special reports

Home UK Business Audio World dispatch The Wrap Newsblog Talk Search
The Guardian World News guide Arts Special reports Columnists Technology Help Quiz

Special
report
Iraq

Midday

'14,000 detained without trial in Iraq'

Mike McDonough
Monday March 6, 2006

Search this site

Full coverage

[Special report: Iraq](#)[Iraq archived articles](#)[Interactive guides on Iraq](#)

More special reports

[Britain's armed forces](#)[The anti-war movement](#)[Al-Qaida](#)[United States](#)[Iran](#)[Israel & the Middle East](#)[Nato](#)[Turkey](#)[Full index of our special reports](#)

In this section

[Pressure grows to oust Iraq's prime minister](#)[Mary Riddell: Don't wait for God. We will judge you](#)[Norman Johnson: Those crying mothers just don't get this war](#)

US and UK forces in Iraq have detained thousands of people without charge or trial for long periods and there is growing evidence of Iraqi security forces torturing detainees, Amnesty International said today.

In a new [report](#) published today, the human rights group criticised the US-led multinational force for interning some 14,000 people.

Around 3,800 people have been held for over a year, while another 200 have been detained for more than two years, the report - Beyond Abu Ghraib: detention and torture in Iraq - said.

"It is a dangerous precedent for the world that the US and UK think it completely defensible to hold thousands of people without charge or trial," Amnesty spokesman Neil Durkin said.

The detainee situation in Iraq was comparable to Guantánamo Bay, he added, but on a much larger scale, and the detentions appeared to be "arbitrary and indefinite".

"It sends a very worrying message to the people of Iraq that the multinational force does not think normal human rights standards apply," he said.

Amnesty said there was no fresh evidence of US-led troops abusing detainees in ways similar to Abu Ghraib prison, but it warned that the US practice of denying detainees access to lawyers or visits by relatives for their first 60 days in custody left the door open to mistreatment.

"The worry is that people will suffer abuse during that period and it is less likely to be checked if there is no form of external oversight," Mr Durkin said.

The Amnesty report also claimed Iraqi security forces were systematically violating the rights of detainees.

Many cases of torture, including electric shocks or beatings with plastic cables, have been reported since US-led forces handed power to Iraqi officials in June 2004, the document said.



British troops patrol their base at Shaibah in southern Iraq.
Photograph: AFP/Getty Images

[Action to cut friendly fire deaths delayed by lack of US help](#)

[Jonathan Steele: Civil strife is not the only conflict for Iraq's Shias](#)

[Vehicles banned in Baghdad after night of violence](#)

[Pauline Hickey: Mr Blair, you sent my son to die](#)

[Baghdad official who exposed executions flees](#)

[Mother of dead soldier accuses Blair over Iraq](#)

[Phones stolen in Iraq used for sex chatlines](#)

[Saddam admits link to killings of Shia villagers](#)

[Two British soldiers killed in Iraq bombing](#)

[Iraq pushes Bush support to all time low](#)

[Column five: 'No sectarian war? Then what is this?'](#)

[Iraq blasts kill at least 25](#)



Several detainees reportedly died in Iraqi custody last year, and some of their bodies bore injuries consistent with torture, Amnesty said.

The report expressed particular concern about the activities of the Wolf brigade, a unit that reports to the Iraqi interior ministry.

Mr Durkin insisted it was feasible for the Iraqi authorities to implement international human rights standards despite the country's extremely volatile security situation.

"We do not see what is unreasonable about abiding by human rights standards in attempts to police Iraq," he said. "And you are not going to fuel resentment to the same degree as if you imprison people without charge, that is a recipe for disaster."

Amnesty acknowledged that armed groups opposed to the US-led force were responsible for many of the abuses being committed in Iraq, including attacks targeting civilians.

But the group said it had addressed that issue in earlier reports, and that it was not the focus of its latest publication.

The vast majority of the 14,000 people held in Iraq are in US custody.

British troops are holding 43 detainees at a facility in Shaiba, southern Iraq, a spokesman for the Foreign Office said. Their detention is subject to regular review by an internment panel, but lawyers can only make written submissions.

Amnesty said it was concerned the lawyers do not have access to any substantive evidence against their clients.

One man, Hillaal "Abdul Razzaq" Ali al-Jedda, has been in British custody since his arrest in October 2004. The 48-year-old dual Iraqi and UK national has not been charged with any offence, and a court of appeal judgment on his detention is awaited following a hearing in January.

The Foreign Office said the UK followed UN guidelines for detaining suspects.

"We believe that the detention is legal and fair and subject to review," a spokesman said.

Full coverage

[Special report: Iraq](#)

[The trial of Saddam Hussein](#)

Britain and Iraq

[In memoriam: 100 British troops killed in Iraq](#)

[Special report: UK politics and Iraq](#)

Chronology

[January 1 2005 - present](#)

[Feb 1 2004 - 31 Dec 2004](#)

[July 16 1979 - Jan 31 2004](#)

Interactive guides

[Saddam's trial](#)

[More click-through graphics on Iraq](#)

Key documents

[Full text of speeches and documents](#)

Audio reports

[Audio reports on Iraq](#)

Links

[Provisional authority: rebuilding Iraq](#)

[Iraqi-American chamber of commerce](#)

[Wikipedia: Iraq](#)

Advertiser links

[Buy Concert Tickets - Double8tickets.com](#)

For all major concert tickets visit double8tickets.com.

We...

[double8tickets.com](#)

[Printable version](#) | [Send it to a friend](#) | [Save story](#)



[Privacy policy](#) | [Terms & conditions](#) | [Advertising guide](#) | [A-Z index](#) | [About this site](#)

Guardian Unlimited © Guardian Newspapers Limited 2006