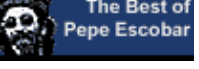
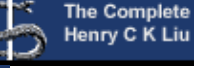


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# Middle East

Jul 13, 2006

## Merchants of death in Iraq

By Dahr Jamail and Ali Fadhil

FALLUJAH - It could be called perhaps just another raid. Early in the morning on Sunday, June 18, US military helicopters landed near the home of Sinan Abdul-Ilah al-Mashadani in the al-Jughaiifi district of Fallujah.

Within two minutes the doors of his home were blasted open and "a strange looking group of people" stormed inside, according to Said Walid Ahmed, a 40-year-old teacher who lives in the neighborhood.

"This force is not totally unknown to us here in Fallujah," Ahmed, who witnessed the incident from a nearby house told Inter Press Service (IPS). "They are a special force of Americans that assassinates more people than it arrests."

Ahmed described the force from the helicopters as "big men with



long hair and beards, some wearing earrings, and others with little black caps on the top of their heads at the back".

Sinan Abdul-Ilah al-Mashadani, who was a student at al-Mustansiriya University and the sole supporter of his mother and younger brother and sister, was killed in the raid, apparently by a special operations team supported by the US military, according to witnesses.

"Their [special forces troops] dogs were biting everybody, including children and women in the neighborhood," Um Amar, a 63-year-old woman who lives three houses away from Sinan told IPS. "They killed the poor boy in cold blood and arrested his little brother." She burst into tears and began to pray.

Another neighbor, Jassim al-Jumaily, said Sinan's father Najim Abdul-Ilah al-Mashadani was killed during Operation Phantom Fury in November 2004 when his house was bombed by US warplanes.

The US military assault on Fallujah then destroyed most of the city and killed between 4,000 and 6,000 people, according to Monitoring Net of Human Rights in Iraq (MHRI), an Iraqi non-governmental organization based in Fallujah.

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Sinan took responsibility for his family after the death of his father, Jumaily said. "He had to work and study at the same time. We did not notice any abnormality in his behavior at all. When the helicopters came, we never thought Sinan would be the target, because we realize they only come after big personalities from al-Qaeda or leaders in the Iraqi resistance."

Jumaily said the long-haired bearded men from the special force "blasted the doors of Sinan's house open as if they were attacking an army headquarters".

People in the neighborhood said they heard some of what was going on. "The screaming of Sinan's mother and sisters was frightening," Jumaily said. "All we could do was pray for their safety, trying to comfort each other that the worst possibility was that they would arrest Sinan."

After the men had been inside the house for three hours, Jumaily and other witnesses said they heard Sinan's mother wailing, and saw the men leave with Amin, her 13-year-old son who was being beaten by the men and bitten by their dogs as he was taken away.

Many of the neighbors then went to Sinan's home, and found his body, covered with sheets and mattresses. There was a pool of blood on the floor, some was splattered on the walls.

"Three days after his detention, Amin was released," said Muhamad al-Deraji, director of MHRI. "The left hand of this orphaned child was bitten three times, and is now scarred and deformed."

The US forces also raided other homes in the area, Deraji said. "One of the dogs attacked a woman who tried to protect her baby. The dog bit the mother's hand."

Deraji said the forces looted money and jewelry from several of the houses they raided.

IPS sent an email to Major Douglas Powell at the Combined Press Information Center for the Multi-National Force in Iraq to request comment on the incident. There was no reply.

Later, IPS phoned the US military spokesperson in Baghdad to request information on the incident. The spokesman, who declined to give his name, said, "We have no information confirming this event ever took place."

(Inter Press Service)

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