



## **Iraq – Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on 16 October 2014**

### **Information on police corruption and brutality in Iraq circa 2006.**

The US Department of State country report on Iraq for the events of 2006, in a section titled “Respect For Human Rights (paragraph headed “Disappearance”), states:

“During the year, many individuals disappeared, with frequent accusations directed at the police. Many Baghdad residents complained that family members were often taken without an arrest warrant by neighborhood police officers who would later call for a ransom. Numerous reports indicated that rogue police were involved in sectarian-motivated kidnappings. However, since criminals, insurgents, and militia members easily purchased and often wore police uniforms, there was no reliable data on actual police abuses. In Basrah reports of kidnappings and killings, often by gunmen wearing police uniforms and riding in police vehicles, were a regular occurrence. The motives were reported to be ransom and political intimidation.” (US Department of State (6 March 2007) *2006 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices – Iraq*)

This section of the report also states:

“Serious reports of torture and killings were leveled at Mol's Serious Crime Unit detention facility in Basrah and the Khadamiya National Police detention facility in Baghdad. Former detainees in both facilities reported that they suffered severe beatings, electrocution, sexual assault, and, in some cases, gunshot wounds. There were also similar accusations against MoD facilities, particularly against the 5th Division, 2nd Brigade's detention facility in Baqubah. Reports of abuse at the point of arrest, particularly by Mol's National Police forces and by MoD's battalion level forces, were common at year's end. Accusations included extreme beatings, sexual assault, and threats of death. There was little indication that Mol or other government officials took disciplinary action in cases alleging abuses, apart from some transfers within the ministry.” (ibid)

In a section titled “Role of the Police and Security Apparatus” this report states:

“Police effectiveness, particularly the national police, was seriously compromised by militias, sectarianism, and in the case of the KRG, political party influences. Corruption and a culture of impunity were rampant. During the year, after some investigatory efforts, the Mol announced the firing of hundreds of employees accused of corruption. Many employees accused of serious human rights abuses were transferred rather than fired or arrested.” (ibid)

A section titled “Arrest and Detention” states:

“In practice police and the army personnel frequently arrested and detained suspects without judicial approval. Security sweeps sometimes were conducted throughout entire neighborhoods, and numerous people were reportedly arrested without a warrant or probable cause. Police often failed to notify family members of the arrest or location of detention, resulting in incommunicado detention. The army performed these law enforcement functions at the direction of the prime minister relying on authorization in the declared state of emergency.” (ibid)

A 2006 Amnesty International report states:

“Many cases of torture and ill-treatment of detainees held in facilities controlled by the Iraqi authorities have been reported since the handover of power in June 2004. Among other methods, victims have been subjected to electric shocks or have been beaten with plastic cables. The picture that is emerging is one in which the Iraqi authorities are systematically violating the rights of detainees in breach of guarantees contained both in Iraqi legislation and in international law and standards – including the right not to be tortured and to be promptly brought before a judge.” (Amnesty International (6 March 2006) *Beyond Abu Ghraib: detention and torture in Iraq*, p.2)

In a section titled “Torture and ill-treatment in Iraqi detention facilities” this report states:

“In the weeks leading up to Iraq’s parliamentary elections, held on 15 December 2005, new evidence emerged to indicate that the Iraqi Interior Ministry was holding many detainees in different facilities under its control and subjecting them to torture and ill-treatment. On 13 November 2005, US military forces raided one detention facility controlled by the Interior Ministry in the al-Jadiriya district of Baghdad, where they reportedly found more than 170 detainees being held in appalling conditions, many of whom alleged that they had been tortured. On 8 December 2005, Iraqi authorities and US forces inspected another detention facility in Baghdad, also controlled by the Interior Ministry. At least 13 of the 625 detainees found there required medical treatment, including several reportedly as a result of torture or ill-treatment. The Iraqi Ministry of Interior denied that any detainees had been tortured or abused.<sup>4</sup> However, the US ambassador to Iraq, Zalmay Khalilzad, stated that “over 100” detainees found at the detention facility in al-Jadiriya and 26 detainees at the other detention location had been abused.” (ibid, p.4)

This section of the report also states:

“According to media reports, in both cases detainees alleged that they had been subjected to electric shocks and had their nails pulled out. <sup>6</sup> An Iraqi Human Rights Ministry official subsequently told Amnesty International that the Iraqi authorities had conducted medical examinations but that these had not confirmed the allegations. However, the official stated that several detainees had injuries caused by beating with plastic cables. Further, the official confirmed that abuses committed at other detention facilities under the control of Iraqi authorities over the past year included incidents of detainees having been subjected to electric shocks.” (ibid, p.4)

A Los Angeles Times article states:

“Brutality and corruption are rampant in Iraq's police force, with abuses including the rape of female prisoners, the release of terrorism suspects in exchange for bribes, assassinations of police officers and participation in insurgent bombings, according to confidential Iraqi government documents detailing more than 400 police corruption investigations. A recent assessment by State Department police training contractors echoes the investigative documents, concluding that strong paramilitary and insurgent influences within the force and endemic corruption have undermined public confidence in the government. Officers also have beaten prisoners to death, been involved in kidnapping rings, sold thousands of stolen and forged Iraqi passports and passed along vital information to insurgents, the Iraqi documents allege. The documents, which cover part of 2005 and 2006, were obtained by The Times and authenticated by current and former police officials. The alleged offenses span dozens of police units and hundreds of officers, including beat cops, generals and police chiefs. Officers were punished in some instances, but the vast majority of cases are either under investigation or were dropped because of lack of evidence or witness testimony.” (Los Angeles Times (9 July 2006) *Police Abuses in Iraq Detailed*)

An Associated Press report states:

“Dozens of police officers and Interior Ministry officials have been fired on charges of corruption, bribery and human rights violations, a ministry official said Monday. The Interior Ministry official said most were sacked during the yearlong tenure of former Interior Minister Bayan Jabr, who was widely accused by Sunnis of bringing Shiite militiamen into the ranks of the ministry, which oversees Iraq's police forces. The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak publicly about the sensitive issue, could not say precisely how many were fired during Jabr's term, but said some 15 officers have been dismissed since new Interior Minister Jawad al-Bolani took office June 8. "Some of the officers sacked held high ranks such as major generals and lieutenant generals," the official said. Some of the former officers were accused of corruption while others were alleged to have taken bribes from families of detainees and insurgents in order to release them, he said.” (Associated Press (10 July 2006) *Dozens of police officers have been fired over corruption and human rights violations in Iraq*)

An article from UK newspaper The Guardian states:

“The police in Baghdad and multinational forces are cracking down on militias posing as police amid continuing accusations that members of the Iraqi police service are involved in kidnappings, torture and extra-judicial killings. A register of police officers, their cars and weapons is being compiled in a pilot scheme in eastern Baghdad. Every officer has been photographed, fingerprinted, and tattoos or scars photographically recorded. The database has also checked the serial numbers of weapons assigned to individual officers against their official ID cards, along with the vehicles they are allowed to drive. The scheme comes after claims that Shia militia members within the police, or associated with individual officers and stations, are responsible for death squad activity.” (The Guardian (11 September 2006) *US patrols to weed out militias posing as Iraqi police*)

A New York Times article states:

“Shiite militiamen and criminals entrenched throughout Iraq’s police and internal security forces are blocking recent efforts by some Iraqi leaders and the American military to root them out, a step critical to winning the trust of skeptical Sunni Arabs and quelling the sectarian conflict, Iraqi and Western officials say. The new interior minister, Jawad al-Bolani, who oversees the police, lacks the political support to purge many of the worst offenders, including senior managers who tolerated or encouraged the infiltration of Shiite militias into the police under the previous government, according to interviews with more than a dozen officials who work with the ministry and the police. No one expected a housecleaning to be easy, and some headway has been made in firing people. But despite that progress, recent difficulties reveal the magnitude of the task facing Mr. Bolani and Prime Minister Nuri Kamal al-Maliki. When he took office in late May, Mr. Maliki said one of his top goals was to reform the Shiite-led Interior Ministry, which had, to the minority Sunni Arabs, become synonymous with government complicity in abduction, torture and killing. The ministry recently discovered that more than 1,200 policemen and other employees had been convicted years ago of murder, rape and other violent crimes, said a Western diplomat who has close contact with the ministry. Some were even on death row. Few have been fired.” (New York Times (17 September 2006) *Iraq Stumbling in Bid to Purge Its Rogue Police*)

A 2006 Human Rights Watch report states:

“Every month, hundreds of people are abducted, tortured and killed by what many believe are death squads that include security forces. To terrorize the population, the killers often dump the mutilated corpses in public areas. Human Rights Watch welcomed the recent suspension from duties of the 8th Iraqi Police Unit pending an investigation into their complicity in abductions and killings. The US military has claimed that the unit was responsible for the October 1 kidnapping of 26 Sunni food factory workers in southwest Baghdad, 10 of whom were later found dead. The news agency Inter Press Service reported that the unit used Ministry of Interior vehicles and, according to witnesses, some wore black “death squad” uniforms.” (Human Rights Watch (October 28 2006) *Iraq: End Interior Ministry Death Squads*)

An Associated Press report states:

“Iraq’s Interior Ministry said Tuesday that it has charged 57 employees, including a police general, in the alleged torture of hundreds of detainees at a prison in eastern Baghdad. Police Brig. Abdel-Karim Khalaf said the charges marked the first time officers in Iraq’s post-occupation police force had been charged with torture. Those charged included 19 officers, 20 noncommissioned officers and 17 patrolmen or civilian employees, he said. All have been removed from their jobs, Khalaf said.” (Associated Press (7 November 2006) *Iraqi Interior Ministry charges 57 staff members over alleged torture of detainees*)

This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research and Information Unit within time constraints. This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to

the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.

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