

Arrest of Internationally Renowned Iraqi Human Rights Advocate Uday Al-Zaidi. Appeal of Extreme Urgency

This is an appeal for the immediate and urgent mobilization of your Agencies in securing the release of the prominent human rights defender, Mr Uday Al-Zaidi.

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Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)

Theme: [Police State & Civil Rights](#)

Mr Al-Zaidi was arrested by Iraqi security forces at 18.00 hrs., on Friday January 9th in Al-Shatrah city in southern Iraq.

Uday Al-Zaidi is internationally renowned for his courageous and outspoken advocacy against the sectarian cleansing in Iraq which began with the onset of the “divide and rule” policy of the US-UK invasion, continued under the occupation, their Prime Minister Nouri Al-Maliki and now under his replacement of August 2014, Haider Al-Abadi.

The urgency and gravity of the situation cannot be over-stressed, especially as it has been learned that the Iraqi authorities refuse to disclose Mr Al-Zaidi’s whereabouts thus, in contravention of all international legal norms, he is denied access to legal representation.

In an interview with Al Jazeera (15th December 2014) he described graphically, at length, the reality of the humanitarian catastrophe resulting from the government’s brutal systematic sectarian edicts.

Afterwards he said that he was “expecting” anything as a result. Warned to take extreme care in his movements, he determined to attend the funeral of a friend and was arrested.

His witness to Iraq’s ongoing tragedy has been tireless and international. On 19 March 2013 he received the BRussells Resistance Award.

In May 2011, invited by the Madrid-based Spanish Campaign Against the Occupation and for the Sovereignty of Iraq, talking at venues in a number of cities he showed visuals, the reality of: “... killing of children, raping of women and men, secret prisons, daily humiliations”, of families assassinated by U.S bombs over eight grinding years. “An image is worth a thousand words. These images show what the occupation has done for us”, he said.

“Since 2003, there have been a million deaths and four million orphans ... Iraq is a wealthy country. But its people, us, have to dig in the garbage to try and survive.”

He also called for an end to the corruption under Prime Minister al-Maliki – and returned to Iraq.

In January that year in Iraq he addressed the dishonour of the Iraqi people manifested by a government: “ ... representing their groups, militias and parties, and their masters abroad.” He talked of the “defilements” of Iraq in ever deepening crisis” and “tyranny.”

Nouri Al-Maliki is now Vice President of Iraq.

Sabah Al-Mukhtar, President of the Arab Lawyers Association and Vice President of the Geneva International Centre for Justice states starkly of Mr Al-Zaidi’s detention:

“This is a very serious matter. They will slaughter him.”

Representation to the Iraqi government at the highest level is incumbent on all those to whom humanity and human rights is utmost priority. No time can be wasted. Rivers of blood have bled, literally, from Iraqi feet and bodies, from Abu Ghraib to the innumerable secret prisons. Delay will near certainly be death.

It is also incumbent upon the UN and all other relevant international organizations that pressure be brought on the Iraqi Authorities for Mr Al-Zaidi’s immediate release. Prime Minister Al-Abadi’s personal responsibility for Mr Al-Zaidi’s safety is paramount. His release could be a turning point for Iraq. Any other outcome a further slide into the abyss, with human rights and international law counting for even less than their woeful international post-invasion standing.

1. <http://warresisters.wordpress.com/iraq-reports-analysis-and-interviews-on-movement-building-now/“we-will-protest-until-the-occupiers-leave-”-an-interview-with-uday-al-zaidi/>

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