

Democracy in the New Iraq Equals Death and Repression

Maliki's election platform: 900 Iraqi prisoners face summary execution

By [BRussells Tribunal](#)

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Maliki's election platform: 900 Iraqi prisoners face summary execution

In the run-up to elections, Maliki proposes executions to bolster his chances

Democracy in the new Iraq equals death and repression

Maliki serves the US occupation: it is the occupation that kills Iraqis

The machine of repression and death in Iraq continues unabated. The Presidential Council of Iraq has reportedly ratified the death sentences of some 900 detainees who languish on death row. Some 17 of them are confirmed to be women.

None of the condemned had a fair trial. The Iraqi judicial system has been deemed corrupt, fundamentally dysfunctional and plagued with sectarianism by responsible international agencies and all major human rights organisations. Hundreds of lawyers have been assassinated since 2003. The Association of Iraqi Lawyers has publicly declared that it cannot reach the detainees.

In a bid to eliminate its political opponents, further terrorise the Iraqi people, ostensibly into submission, and to be casted the "tough leader" the US pretends it is currently seeking for Iraq, Nouri Al-Maliki has pledged to carry out these executions ahead of parliamentary elections scheduled in March of 2010.

Iraq already has one of the highest rates of executions in the world. On a single day in June, 19 people were hanged in Baghdad. Without global action, 900 people will be hanged imminently.

A culture of terror and detention

Terror through mass detention, torture and abuse is one of the trademarks of the US occupation and Maliki. In addition to mass killing, mass forced displacement, the contamination of Iraqi soil, the destruction of all public infrastructure and means of survival, tens of thousands of Iraqis are arbitrarily detained in both official and ghost facilities all over Iraq.

Exact figures of the number, age and gender of detainees are withheld by authorities. Those

who want investigations on abuse are either threatened or killed. In June 2009, Harith Al-Obaidi, an MP and critic of human rights abuses, announced in parliament his plan to investigate allegations of corruption, torture and abuse in Iraqi prisons. He was assassinated the following day.

Depending on the source, the number of detainees varies from 44,014 to some 400,000. Tens of thousands of families don't know the fate of a loved one arbitrarily arrested. Even the number of detention facilities is unknown. The ICRC, responsible for monitoring prisoners in time of conflict, has repeatedly complained of being denied access to all "field operation detention facilities" and secret prisons. Amnesty International, the International Federation of Human Rights and even the UN Assistance Mission in Iraq, mandated by the Security Council to provide human rights reporting, are denied access to official detention centres by US Command.

The Red Cross has reported that intelligence officers of the US occupation themselves estimate that 70-90 per cent of Iraqi detainees are arrested "by mistake". The majority is taken in sweeping and arbitrary mass arrest campaigns. They are held incommunicado, without charges, without visits from families or access to lawyers, for indefinite periods. The few who are formally accused are charged on the basis of confessions made under torture or the testimonies of dubious informants of the occupation. No tangible evidence is ever provided.

Since 2003, an estimated 2,400 children have been detained by the US, some as young as 10 years old. After denying it for years, the occupation has now acknowledged that a large but unspecified number of women are being held. Many were kidnapped to blackmail their husbands, accused of "terrorism," into surrendering. They often have their infants and children in prison with them. Several women inmates interviewed by UN researchers reported being raped and sexually abused while held in custody. The US bears primary and final responsibility for these conditions.

Maliki's new Iraq: repression

Everyday news outlets report more arrests and new killings by persons wearing official uniforms. The Maliki government praises itself for the recent waves of detention. Since its appointment, all it has succeeded in achieving is more repression of his opponents while the crimes against innocent people had never been investigated and punished.

Under occupation, Iraq has become the second most corrupted country in the world, the trade of prisoners one of the government militias' most lucrative businesses. The police kidnap, hold prisoners in ghost prisons, sell them and blackmail their families for ransom with impunity.

Year after year, alarming reports have been published by leading human rights organisations, inside and outside Iraq, pointing to random arrests, unlawful detentions, summary executions, abuses, rape and torture of prisoners in Iraq, both at the hands of occupation forces and their local armed gangs.

Under false accusations and deceitful propaganda, the absence of law or a functioning judicial system, and with the support of the US for its puppet government, humanity and the rights of the human being are insulted every day in Iraq. Millions of Iraqis are suffering.

An occupation that tries to impose its plans and interests by force and destruction on a people whose rights, interests and identity is to resist it can only result in the perpetuation of genocide — the intended destruction of Iraq and the Iraqi people as a state and nation.

Call for global action

We call on all to work to stop these executions, demand the release of all political prisoners, and impose a moratorium on the death penalty in Iraq.

Every Iraqi deserves protection and justice.

We call on the UN Human Rights Council to appoint a Special Rapporteur for the human rights situation in Iraq.

We call on all organisations that defend the first human right — the right to life — to take up with urgency the cause of the 900 prisoners on death row in Iraq.

We call on all lawyers associations to protest the absence of law and due process in Iraq, and to declare the imminent execution of these 900 prisoners unlawful.

900 prisoners killed in Iraq would be 900 insults to the common conscience of humanity.

We call on all to do everything within their means to bring the cases of these 900 prisoners facing death to the public eye, and to demand action by relevant authorities.

The US occupation of Iraq must end. It is that occupation that is the ultimate rope around the neck of Iraq, and the ultimate prison for the Iraqi people.

Hana Al Bayaty, Executive Committee of the BRussells Tribunal

Abdul Ilah Albayaty, Executive Committee of the BRussells Tribunal

Ian Douglas, Executive Committee of the BRussells Tribunal

Dirk Adriaensens, Executive Committee of the BRussells Tribunal

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For more information contact:

info@brusselstribunal.org

www.brusselstribunal.org

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