

The Dark and Secret Dungeons of Iraq. Horror Stories of Female Prisoners

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When women in Iraq are arrested, they routinely go through three gruesome phases, starting with humiliation, followed by torture, and often ending with rape. I have received disturbing information from two different, well informed sources: one from qualified social workers in Al-Kadimiyah Women Prison, the other from three national guards officers who worked in the prison.

The common procedure is as follows:

During the Arrest

The torture journey starts when security forces raid and search the houses, through random raids or ordered raids. The Fourth Commander of the Second Brigade - Team 6, Major Jumaa Al-Musawi, has confirmed this information. This man has a criminal record, and he was assigned to this position by the American Forces during their first training courses in intelligence gathering. He used to live in Al-Thawra (now called Sadr City) / Sector 87. In his own words:

“When we receive the raid and search orders from the Brigade Intelligence, we usually start with a little party and drink alcohol, or take some drugs. We choose the most cruel soldiers to carry out such operations. The first thing we do is to lock the men and youngsters in a room, and the women and children in another room. We start to steal what can be taken fast, like jewelry, and we mess up the house, like throwing the women’s underwear here and there; some soldiers even steal some of this underwear. After that, we start to do a body search on the women, and having fun touching their private parts or breasts. We threaten them to arrest the men in the house when they refuse to be touched. If those women are pretty, we usually rape them immediately, and leave the house when we find no weapons or incriminating material. In case we find some weapons, every man and youngster in the house will be arrested, and if there are no men at home, we arrest all the women instead. This is totally according to the orders we receive.”

What follows is one of many stories about the crimes committed by these corrupt creatures, who shamelessly brag about their misdeeds to each other. Al-Musawi and his assistant Lt. Rafid Al-Darraj (another criminal who was imprisoned in Abu-Ghraib and sentenced to death, but was released by the Americans, using him as a guardian, along with their own

guard dogs, giving him the Lt. rank. He used to live in Al-Nuariyah District. Here is what they state:

“In July 2006, we received an order to raid and search the house of one of the fabric merchants in Karradah (his name is not mentioned). When we reached his house at 1:00 a.m., we didn’t find the man, we only found his wife and his 17 year old son. During the search we found a rifle, which – according to our law – is permitted for the personal protection of civilians. But we threatened the woman that we would arrest her son if she didn’t let us rape her. So, we handcuffed the son and locked him in a room, and one soldier after the other raped the lady in the other room. The other soldiers stole what they could find, then we headed to a well-known brothel in Al-Doura District in Um Alaa’s house to enjoy the rest of the night there.”

They continue: “The first thing we do when an arrested woman is being transported to the detention location, is that every part of her body is touched by all the soldiers in the vehicle, while using dirty language. When we reach the detention facility, we leave her in the investigation room, supervised by the intelligence officer and his assistants. They directly take all her clothes off, blindfold her, handcuff her, then the intelligence officer starts to rape her with his assistant. And later they ask her some questions: if she’s guilty or innocent and so on. Then they blackmail her, saying that she should be cooperative and give important information about the District where she lives, otherwise they would distribute photos of her while she was naked and being raped. They would accuse her of false charges if she would file a complaint about harrassment and torture. If she receives a “guilty” verdict, she usually stays in the same location for a period of one to three months, in order to finish the procedures of her “case”, to be sent to the headquarters. During these months, every single intelligence officer and soldier in the Brigade will rape her. After that, she will be sent to Al Tasfeerat Prison in Shaab Stadium, or to Al-Muthanna Airport Prison. Sometimes the prisoner is transferred to the facility of the Chief Commander’s Office in the Green Zone, which is a cellar under the building of the Baghdad Operations Headquarter, supervised by Major General Adnan Al-Musawi. This place is one of the most dangerous, dirtiest prisons of Al-Maliki.

Al-Tasfeerat Prisons

This is the second stage of the unfair arrest journey. The female detainee will be sent either to Shaab Stadium Prison or the notorious Al-Muthanna Airport Prison. A group of the worst psychopaths in the government is supervising these prisons, a corrupt committee of criminals of the Military Intelligence, the Intelligence services of the Ministry of Interior, and an Intelligence and Security Representative from the Chief Commander’s Office. This management is appointed by the Iraqi Correction Office through the Ministry of Justice. 45% of its employees are Al-Mahdi Militia members, 30% from the Badr Organisation. The other 25% is divided among the other criminal parties of the government.

This phase is considered as the most barbaric. The security forces, prison guards and members of the prison management practice the most terrible ways of torture, humiliation, profanation, deprivation, blackmailing the prisoners, ethnic and sectarian and political discrimination, and raping men and women without exception. Female prisoners are detained for very long periods, without legitimate accusations or investigating their case. In criminal Maliki’s jails, there are many women who were imprisoned for periods between one year and six years, without any legal representation or procedures regarding their case.

There are many examples of the immoral and brutal practices being committed against female and male prisoners in Al-Tasfeerat Prisons. Some officers from the Ministries of Interior and Defense, the Office of the Chief of Command, and some partisan and criminal militia leaders visit these prisons, and choose some detainees to be tortured for hours and raping them for sectarian reasons. Some of the prisoners die as a result of this brutal torture. Between 2008-2012 Al-Rasafah Tasfeerat Prison recorded the death of more than 250 prisoners, among them 17 women. During the same period Al-Muthanna Airport Prison recorded the death of 125 prisoners, among them three women.

And these torture practices do not only take place in Al-Tasfeerat Prisons, but in all the prisons supervised by the Ministry of Justice, especially the Juveniles Prison, Al-Kadimiyah Women Prison, the notorious Abu-Ghraib Prison, in addition to the secret prisons of Al-Maliki where no accurate records are available about the male and female detainees who died because of the brutal torture they faced there.

It's worth mentioning that under Al Maliki's rule, some notorious high risk level prisoners – men and women alike- were released or secretly smuggled out Al-Tasfeerat Prisons, after destroying all the documents and papers related to their cases, on the orders of Ministers and VIPs in the Ministries of Interior and Defense, and the Commanding Chief's Office. Here are some of prisoners who were “released”:

1. **Radiyah Kadum Muhsin** : she was one of the prominent leaders of the Dawa Party, and was released after an order from Al-Maliki himself, and under the supervision of his Intelligence and Security Consultant. She was accused of leading one of the biggest human trafficking criminal gangs that kidnap children and sell them, in addition to prostitution, seducing some officers and government officials, and blackmailing them with their own pornographic photos, or even eliminating them. She was also accused of drug dealing, and forging official documents.
2. **Adnan Abdulzahra Al-Aaraji**: he is one of the prominent leaders of the Mahdi Militia, and the head of one of the most notorious gangs known in Iraqi history in terms of sadism, criminality and discrimination. He was arrested by the Americans while he was trying to smuggle 5000 corpses of his victims to Iran during the sectarian wars in 2006. Those corpses were sent to Iran in three cooled vehicles for the sake of human organs trade. He was accused of smuggling antiques, explosives, weapons, and drugs. We mentioned here only two of the prisoners who were “released” from Al-Maliki prisons.

After The Trial

Here begins the real tragedy. After the arrest, the prisoner – if she's still alive – has physical wounds all over her body, having many psychological problems because of the unfair trials and the terrible treatment she faced during the time in prison, including torture and rape.

And here is another serious hardship the female prisoners are facing inside the detention centres.

There are women in these prisons with criminal records, convicted for various crimes. The prison supervisors use those inmates to bully the arbitrarily detained, innocent female detainees, imprisoned for sectarian reasons, because of false accusations or reports by secret informants. Those inmates are scaring the arbitrarily detained, watching them,

blackmailing them through continuous attempts to find out things about their personal lives. Then that information is used against these innocent women to break them psychologically, through disinformation and lies about the families of those innocent prisoners.



Various Ways of Torture of Iraqi Female Prisoners

1- Physical and Psychological Torture: the prison supervisors use many different forms of physical and psychological torture, which they learned from their Americans and the Iranians supervisors. These methods include:

- Taking off the clothes of the prisoners for more than two hours, while insulting them.
- Beating them hard with sticks, or kicking them hard in the loins.
- Electrical shocks in their breasts, loins and head.
- Using all kinds of sexual harassment (we will not reveal more details because of the extreme shameful nature).
- Recurrent rape after midnight by the guards and other persons who work in the prison, in the presence of the prison manager, because the rape often happens in his room.

Those criminals: the prison manager and the other supervisors, continuously repeat their disgusting acts. They invite other security officers from the Ministries of Interior and Defense to participate in their savage orgies, that always end in rape of the prisoners.

I will mention only one incident I witnessed in Al-Kadimiyah Prison in 2008 and can be confirmed by a social assistant who works there:

In one of the secret prisons of Al-Maliki in the Green Zone, there was a prisoner named A.A.Al-Zaidi. He was a Police Colonel before, and also held a position in the Intelligence Dept of the Badr Org., known as one of the terrorist extremist militias. His task was to assist the Commander of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards in getting information, names and addresses of security and intelligence officers from Saddam's regime, so that the Iranian Revolutionary Guards could find them and eliminate them. His wife was helping him too, along with her cousin who is a lieutenant in the Ministry of Interior Special Commandos, called Sayid Jalal Al-Magsoosi.

A.A.Al-Zaidi was also responsible for recruiting women to carry out suicide attacks in Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Sunni areas in Iraq, especially Diyala and Baghdad. He was arrested by the American Forces while he was trying to illegally enter Jordan with his wife and other three women, carrying spying equipments. His wife and the three women were put in Al-Kadimiyah Prison, but he was taken to Al-Maliki's secret prison in the Green Zone.

On New Year's Eve, while the intelligence officers and some interrogators were partying and drinking in the prison, they told one of the guards to bring A.A.Al-Zaidi. The prisoner entered and the drunken officers asked whether he wanted to talk to his wife on the phone. They phoned the manager of Al-Kadimiyah Prison, asking him to bring the prisoner's wife. The two talked on the phone, and the prisoner was taken to his cell again.

After that, the chief interrogator talked to the wife and said: “we want to party with you and five other pretty friends of yours. We will be coming within an hour to the women prison, so you should all be ready. You will be five and we are six. The prison manager prepared a room for them, and all the prisoners were raped many times by the officers and two of the prison guards. While they were partying and raping the women, they cheered: “hail to Al-Maliki, the pimp, the liar, the thief of Baghdad!”

2- Deprivation:

This word does not accurately describe the dire situation of the women in prisons who are devoid from the simplest rights and needs, like;

- Deprivation of family visits, phone calls, and all kinds of contact.
- Deprivation of health services, health care, and other sanitary needs.
- Deprivation of legal rights, no authorization to see or consult a lawyer.
- Deprivation of regular exposure to sunlight, and having no detergents or necessary disinfectants.
- Deprivation of complaining to the concerned committees, prisoners are threatened that they should not complain to those committees or else... And even if the prisoners file a complaint, no one will ever listen, because those committees will hear the complaints and then neglect them.

3- Blackmail and Terrorization:

Female prisoners often receive threats that their family members will be arrested and false accusations are made against the families of the prisoners. The prisoner has to pay a huge amount of money and has to beg to make a phone call to her family. Those who have not enough money can sell their bodies to make a phone call.

This is just a brief account of what is happening in the women prisons. Baghdad alone has more than 3000 women imprisoned. The prisoners are distributed among the following jails:

- Al-Kadimiyah Prison
- Al-Tasfeerat Prison in Shaab Stadium.
- Al-Muthanna Airport Prison.
- Al-Baladiyyat Prison.
- Al-Rustumiyah Prison.

There's another secret prison supervised by the Chief Commander's Office, containing 65 imprisoned women. The site of this prison is changed regularly. In addition to these prisons other small detention centres are located in different security and intelligence operations headquarters.

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