

# US Targetted Assassinations in Iraq confirmed by Wikileaks Archive

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## **A massive archive of unredacted US diplomatic cables is circulating freely on the web**

ANTI-secrecy group WikiLeaks says its massive archive of unredacted US State Department cables has been exposed in a security breach which it blames on its one-time partner, Britain's Guardian newspaper.

In a 1600-word-long editorial posted to the internet, WikiLeaks accused the Guardian's investigative reporter David Leigh of divulging the password needed to decrypt the files in a book published earlier this year.

The Guardian and Leigh both denied wrongdoing.

Copies of the files appeared to be circulating freely around the web, although their authenticity could not immediately be determined.

WikiLeaks said in its statement that Leigh had "recklessly, and without gaining our approval, knowingly disclosed the decryption passwords" in his book on the organisation, published by the Guardian back in February.

WikiLeaks said that knowledge of the leaked passwords had been spreading privately for months, but that the organisation was forced to come out with a statement today after news of the breach began spilling into the press.

In Washington, the State Department did not immediately respond to a call seeking comment.

US officials have previously said that the disclosure of the entire unredacted archive could have potentially serious consequences for informants, activists and others quoted in the cables.

Repeated attempts to reach WikiLeaks staffers for further clarification were unsuccessful.

Meanwhile, a cable in the latest tranche of documents released suggests US troops executed 10 Iraqi civilians, including an elderly woman and an infant, before bombing to destroy the evidence.

The controversial 2006 incident in the central Iraqi town of Ishaqi involved the execution-

style murder of 10 civilians including a woman in her 70s and a 5-month-old infant.

The unclassified cable, which was posted on WikiLeaks' website last week, contained questions from a United Nations investigator about the incident, which had angered local Iraqi officials, who demanded some kind of action from their government.

US officials denied at the time that anything inappropriate had occurred.

But Philip Alston, the UN's special rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, said in a communication to US officials dated 12 days after the March 15, 2006, incident that autopsies performed in the Iraqi city of Tikrit showed that all the dead had been handcuffed and shot in the head.

Among the dead were four women and five children.

The children were all 5 years old or younger.

Reached by email on Wednesday, Alston said that as of 2010 – the most recent data he had – US officials hadn't responded to his request for information and that Iraq's government also hadn't been forthcoming.

He said the lack of response from the United States "was the case with most of the letters to the US in the 2006-2007 period," when fighting in Iraq peaked.

Alston said he could provide no further information on the incident.

"The tragedy," he said, "is that this elaborate system of communications is in place but the (UN) Human Rights Council does nothing to follow up when states ignore issues raised with them."

The Pentagon didn't respond to a request for comment.

At the time, American military officials in Iraq said the accounts of townspeople who witnessed the events were highly unlikely to be true, and they later said the incident didn't warrant further investigation.

Military officials also refused to reveal which units might have been involved in the incident.

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