



## **AL-SWEADY INQUIRY: LESSONS MUST BE LEARNED SO NEVER AGAIN WILL A PRISONER IN BRITISH CUSTODY SUFFER ILL-TREATMENT**

**17 December 2014** – A Public Inquiry which investigated claims of unlawful killings and mistreatment of Iraqi prisoners by British troops after a battle in Iraq in 2004 has concluded that prisoners were subjected to ill-treatment and that Ministry of Defense rules and Geneva Convention provisions were breached, including the use of proscribed interrogation techniques banned from Northern Ireland, such as blind-folding and food and sleep deprivation. However, the report dismissed some other serious allegations, including that soldiers were responsible for the murder of prisoners, concluding that these allegations were “wholly without foundation and entirely the product of deliberate lies, reckless speculation and ingrained hostility”.

Some of the findings of the Al-Sweady Public Inquiry - established by the Secretary of State for Defence in 2009 – mirror, nonetheless, the findings of a previous inquiry, the Baha Mousa Inquiry, which looked into the death of an Iraqi civilian in British custody in 2003, after an “appalling episode of serious, gratuitous violence” at the hands of British soldiers.

**“The Al-Sweady Inquiry confirms that during the Iraq war, UK military forces used banned interrogation techniques abroad and that certain ways in which prisoners were treated in their custody amounted to ill-treatment,”** said Carla Ferstman, Director of REDRESS. **“We hope that the recommendations of this inquiry as well as those of previous inquiries are fully implemented by the Ministry of Defence, and that all future handling of prisoners is done in a proper manner so never again will a prisoner in British custody suffer ill-treatment.”**

The report found, for example, that many of the ways in which detainee handling was carried out at Camp Abu Naji during the reviewed period had been adopted or developed on a somewhat *ad hoc* basis and that “some unacceptable practices had developed over time”. It also found that the lack of guidance in some key areas together with a general perception that certain practices should be maintained, also resulted in significant sub-standard treatment of the detainees.

A copy of the Al-Sweady Inquiry report is available here: <http://www.alsweadyinquiry.org/>

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**About REDRESS:** REDRESS is an award winning human rights organisation based in London which works internationally to combat torture by seeking justice and reparation for torture survivors. Since 1992, it has consistently fought for the rights of torture survivors and their families in the UK and abroad. REDRESS has intervened in a range of leading torture cases.