



BAHA MOUSA: WIDER INQUIRY INTO UK ARMY TORTURE IN IRAQ ESSENTIAL

PRESS STATEMENT

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REDRESS, the international human rights organisation with a mandate to help torture survivors obtain justice, welcomes the Government's announcement today that there will be an independent Inquiry into the death of Baha Mousa, the torture and ill treatment of his nine hotel colleagues and how the five techniques banned in 1972 were reintroduced in Iraq. However, this long-overdue Inquiry does not go far enough.

"Although Baha Mousa's death was one of the worst incidents there are many other legitimate unanswered questions about the whole civilian detention programme," said Carla Ferstman, REDRESS' Director. *"Although the scope of the Inquiry is still under consideration, we believe that the Inquiry should cover every credible allegation of civilian abuse."*

REDRESS made a third-party intervention supporting the claim brought by Baha Mousa's family and the other victims in 2004, and only last month gave evidence to the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights on the wider issues pertaining to torture by the UK Army in Iraq. *"What happened in September 2003 was not the result of a few 'rotten apples' but symptomatic of a more widespread failure to prevent torture,"* said Ferstman.

In October 2007, REDRESS released a detailed Report entitled *UK ARMY IN IRAQ: Time To Come Clean On Civilian Torture*¹, exposing serious failures in the way civilian detention was planned prior to the invasion, contributing to an atmosphere in which torture and ill-treatment occurred. This Report drew attention to amongst other issues, not only the use of the banned interrogation techniques, but the confusion which continued for around year thereafter at Permanent Joint Headquarters as to what was and was not lawful.

"All these and other issues need to be properly and independently assessed. Until this happens, and appropriate action is taken, then the legacy of UK abuses of Iraqi civilians will remain a dark one for the British Army and the UK as a whole, and for the civilians who suffered and in some cases did not survive," said Ferstman.

Further Information

The Report, including REDRESS' recommendations on what any Inquiry should cover, can be accessed at: http://redress.org/publications/UK_ARMY_IN_IRAQ_-_TIME_TO_COME_CLEAN_ON_CIVILIAN_TORTURE_Oct%2007.pdf

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REDRESS was founded by a British torture survivor in 1992. Since then, it has consistently fought for the rights of torture survivors and their families in the UK and abroad. It takes legal challenges on behalf of survivors, works to ensure that torturers are punished and that survivors and their families obtain remedies for their suffering. REDRESS cooperates with civil society groups around the world to eradicate the practice of torture once and for all and to ensure that survivors can move forward with their lives in dignity. It has intervened in a range of leading torture cases. www.redress.org
