

occasions during her detention from May 2003 until November 2005.

In December 2005, several ‘high value’ detainees were released without having been charged or tried. They included two women scientists, namely (the above mentioned) Huda Salih Mehdi ‘Ammash and **Rihab Rashid Taha**. Both had been held in US detention for about 30 months.

Amnesty’s recommendations arising from this report, together with the references to it, are available online (www.amnesty.org).

SEEKING MISSING PERSONS IN IRAQ

Eman Ahmad Khamas, an Iraqi journalist who lives in Baghdad, was interviewed by Amy Goodman on 6 March on the Democracy Now! radio programme in the United States.

EMAN AHMAD KHAMAS: ... I work on the missing, a very big issue in Iraq, I work on the detainees. People disappear in Iraq. People – especially men – are arrested, and you don’t hear anything about them. For example, during the first days of the war, between 20 March and 9 April [2003], when the Iraqi state collapsed, people disappeared. There are eyewitnesses that these people were taken by the American troops. Some of them may be killed. Some of them may be in jail. But now, they don’t exist.

AMY GOODMAN: Well, how do you find out? I mean, if you want to find out if someone has been jailed, what do you do?

EMAN AHMAD KHAMAS: There are eyewitnesses in the place that he disappeared, and they say that ‘We saw him, he was injured and was taken in an American tank or vehicle,’ or ‘He was taken,’ ... There are injured prisoners who are released and they say that in our room and the place, we had this man, and they give his description – many things that no one else would know, only the person who was with him.

AMY GOODMAN: The American authorities in the US-run prisons will not tell you?

EMAN AHMAD KHAMAS: We go to the American military bases, to the prisons, and we ask about these people. They deny them.

AMY GOODMAN: They deny that they are there?

EMAN AHMAD KHAMAS: They deny they exist in that prison. For example, we have a story of a man. He was supposed to be in prison in Umm Qasr, you know, Camp Bucca in the south, deep in the south.

AMY GOODMAN: Camp Bucca is named for a fireman who was killed 9/11 in New York.

EMAN AHMAD KHAMAS: Yes, but for Iraqis it is a very big prison. It is a camp where tens of thousands of Iraqis are arrested for three years now. So people come from there, and they say, 'We know this man, we know this man,' etc. And we go there. Sometimes even the American themselves, they say – the American authorities, the American officials, they say, yes, they put list of names. And when we go back, we ask about them, they say, 'No, we didn't do that.' And we show them, I have a paper, I have a document, of one of these men. And now he's denied.

I don't know the number of these people. The number is between 5,000 and 15,000. But I had a meeting with a general called General Brandenburg in the Ministry of Justice. And he said that he has records of that period. And he asked me to give him the names that I'm looking for. And I did. But when we had the meeting, and we had a date to go and to talk about these people, to give him the names, he did not show up, unfortunately. I'm still waiting for an answer. They said, in the Ministry of Justice, they said that he's changed. Now, there is another one, called Garner. But I didn't meet him yet. And I'm looking forward to meeting him and giving him the list of names and the stories of these people who disappeared.

This is a very big tragedy in Iraq, because there are families, mothers, wives, children, who are waiting to hear about their loved ones, if they exist, if they are dead, if they are alive. They simply won't answer. That's all ...

'STRIVE FOR CONCERTED NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT'

Pope Benedict XVI exposed the fallacy of seeking security through nuclear weapons in his New Year Message, from which these excerpts are taken.

'... It must not be forgotten that, tragically, violent fratricidal conflicts and devastating wars still continue to sow tears and death in vast parts of the world. Situations exist where conflict, hidden like flame beneath ashes, can flare up anew and cause immense destruction. Those authorities who, rather than making every effort to promote peace, incite their citizens to hostility towards other nations, bear a heavy burden of responsibility: in regions particularly at risk, they jeopardize the delicate balance achieved at the cost of patient negotiations and thus help make the future of humanity more uncertain and ominous. What can be said, too, about those governments which count on nuclear arms as a means of ensuring the security of their countries? Along with countless persons of good will, one can state that this point of view is not only baneful but also completely fallacious. In a nuclear war there would be no victors, only victims. The truth of peace requires that all – whether those governments which openly or secretly possess nuclear arms, or those planning to acquire them – agree to change their course by clear

and firm decisions, and strive for a progressive and concerted nuclear disarmament. The resources which would be saved could then be employed in projects of development capable of benefiting all their people, especially the poor.

In this regard, one can only note with dismay the evidence of a continuing growth in military expenditure and the flourishing arms trade, while the political and juridical process established by the international community for promoting disarmament is bogged down in general indifference. How can there ever be a future of peace when investments are still made in the production of arms and in research aimed at developing new ones? It can only be hoped that the international community will find the wisdom and courage to take up once more, jointly and with renewed conviction, the process of disarmament, and thus concretely ensure the right to peace enjoyed by every individual and every people. By their commitment to safeguarding the good of peace, the various agencies of the international community will regain the authority needed to make their initiatives credible and effective.

The first to benefit from a decisive choice for disarmament will be the poor countries, which rightly demand, after having heard so many promises, the concrete implementation of their right to development ...'

VANUNU REPORTS

Mordechai Vanunu, who blew the whistle on the Israeli nuclear weapons programme, has been harassed by the Israeli authorities ever since his release from prison in 2004. He sent this account of a day in court in March 2006.

'Today, the trial continued at 13:00, in the same court in Jerusalem. Mr Feldman could not come to the hearing so Michael Sfarf was my lawyer. Few supporters were with me in the court. Jerry Levin was there plus three people from Norway and one from Belgium. No press or any media people. The judge was Mr Yoel Zur, who already this week gave a decision that the court will not accept all the evidence from the Internet and from 'Internet Chats' taken without any authority from my computer by the police.

Sfarf cross-examined the policeman Peterburg, who interrogated me months ago in the police station. He especially asked about his methods of going through my computers to see my e-mails and chats, and going to court to ask for my arrest, and permission to search my room. Sfarf proved to the court, according to the police documents, that they asked Microsoft to give them details of my Hotmail account, my passwords, and the internet protocol address. All this was after the police went to the court, asking the judge for the right to go to my e-mails.

Microsoft obeyed these orders and gave them all the details, but not the passwords. This took place on 12 August 2004, three months before arresting me and taking my computers. Sfarf pointed out that it is strange to ask Microsoft to give this information before they have the court's order to listen to my private

conversations. It means they wanted to go to my e-mails in secret or maybe even help the secret services, Shaback and Mossad, but not as the police stated, by Peterburg, that he went to my e-mail account and all his material came only from my computer.

The most important revelation was that the police each time went to the court claiming that I was suspected of spying activity, not with just breaking my restrictions. So Mr Sfarid asked the police to tell the court what kind of espionage I was involved in. The policeman did not have any answers and said that he brought all the evidence to the court. When Sfarid asked again about any material related to the 'espionage' accusation, Peterburg had no answers.

It was also revealed that the state came to the court with two special secret Government orders, which allowed the prosecution to keep documents related to the court hearing secret. One was from the Minister of Internal Security and one from the Minister of Defence. What is this about? We don't know. One thing is clear – the secret cooperation between the police and Shaback/Mossad.

So Sfarid proved that the police had misled the judges with false accusations; who then gave orders to arrest me, to search my room, to go to my e-mail, confiscate my computers (for almost a year), and also mislead Microsoft to believe they are helping in a case of espionage, otherwise Microsoft would not have cooperated with such orders? All this case, interrogations, arrests, confiscations of private properties and more, all done from the start under the false and misleading statements to the courts of "suspicion of espionage", and yet they are not charging me with spy crimes.

The judge also asked questions. He wanted to know what the police said to the judges when they asked for all these orders, and how the proceedings had been conducted. Peterburg, most of the time, said he did not remember. It looked like he did not want to answer a lot of questions. The prosecutor wants the court to have the tapes, where they video me in secret when I was interrogated by the police in their offices. The court decided to give time until May 1st, for each side to write their arguments for and against "No case to answer". Meanwhile, there will be other hearings between now and then.

That was it for today. Please, anyone who could suggest prominent names who could testify on the subject of freedom of expression and hopefully could come to testify or write on the matter etc? Any ideas or help in this matter, my right to freedom of speech, and that I have not committed any crimes, including donations for legal expenses, would be very welcome. Thank You.'