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MOI Abuse  
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Foreign Secretary

Dominic Asquith

## IRAQ: HUMAN RIGHTS - ABUSE IN MOI DETENTION

Thank.

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1. The recent discovery of illegal detention and abuse in a Ministry of Interior (MOI) detention facility in Baghdad provides graphic confirmation that the Iraqis, in particular the MOI and elements of the police, are committing human rights abuses and that militia influence is one of the reasons for this.
2. We need to step up our efforts on this specific issue, other abuses and human rights violations and the underlying problems. This will require us and the Americans at Ministerial level to raise human rights concerns whenever we meet representatives of the Iraqi government. The Foreign Secretary might wish to make this point to Secretary Rice. In addition, we should continue to press our EU colleagues and the UN to do the same. We have also successfully encouraged the Australians to lobby in Baghdad.
3. But we should go further. I recommend the Foreign Secretary follows up his conversation with Ja'afri in Baghdad last week on detainee abuse, and with Vice President Mehdi earlier this week, through a telephone call to Ja'afri (who has called for an independent investigation) to press home our messages in four key areas:
  - in the case of Basra, we need to see evidence they are addressing the problems of militia influence in the police and other cases of abuse which we have brought to Minister of Interior Jabr's attention;
  - they must stop militia influence elsewhere in the police and government, particularly in the MOI where the perception of Badr influence is undermining engagement by the Sunni Arab community in the political process;
  - this specific case reinforces our view that, in the next government, the Minister of Interior should not be or be capable of being perceived to be associated with any of the militias;
  - the Iraqi government's performance will directly affect international credibility. A key task of democracy is to protect minority rights. No Iraqi government will be able to sustain the political and social reforms needed for stability if the population is not convinced that human rights will be respected.
4. The Prime Minister's Special Envoy on Human Rights in Iraq, Ann Clwyd, is seriously concerned about the state of human rights in Iraq and that we have not been able to influence improvements. We share her concerns. To complement Ministerial level action, we are taking the following steps at official level:

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- the Embassy is reorganising the Human Rights team in Baghdad to ensure there is a full-time Human Rights officer;
  - we have agreed with Ann Clwyd that her staff will integrate more completely with our own and we will pay for one additional member of staff for her office;
  - we will agree with William Patey a strategy that will raise the political profile of human rights.
5. We are also considering:
- recruiting an additional B3 for IPU (which might allow us to deploy IPU staff to reinforce the effort in Baghdad as necessary);
  - recruiting an additional LE member of staff in Baghdad with human rights experience and deploying an appropriately qualified consultant to help develop Iraqi awareness. This could be further bolstered by deploying IPU Human Rights staff to Baghdad as necessary once the additional B3 is in place. This is likely to be particularly relevant in our engagement with the new Iraqi government after elections.
6. If the Foreign Secretary takes up the recommendation in para 3 above, we shall provide him with an updated speaking note.
7. Ann Clwyd has raised this week with the Prime Minister her concerns that IPU has insufficient resources to take forward the human rights agenda in Iraq. I recommend that the Foreign Secretary takes her through the contents of this minute.

  
**Dominic Asquith**

18 November 2005

**Cc William Patey**  
**John Sawers**  
**John Williams**

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