

Abu Ghraib: “Man In the Hood” provides testimony at War Crimes Conference

By [Global Research](#)

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Editorial Note

It was a moving experience for me to to meet Professor Ali Shalah, a man of tremendous courage and determination. Professor Ali Shalah has given us the strength to challenge the war criminals in high office and ultimately bring them to justice.

Global Research will shortly be publishing the full transcript of Professor Ali Shalah’s presentation to the War Crimes Venue in Kuala Lumpur. Being a scholar and a theologian, professor Shalah was able to describe and analyse his detention and torture in the hands of the US military. There are 150,000 prisoners in Iraq who are illegally detained by Occupaiton forces in violation of the Geneva Convention. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) which has a mandate under Geneva convention has no access to to thousands of detainees.

The Kuala Lumpur Initiative to Criminalise war will go down in history as a landmark document and process.

Michel Chossudovsky, Global Research, Kuala Lumpur, 7 February 2007

‘Man In The Hood’ Tells Of His Tale In Abu Ghraib

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 6 (Bernama) — Ali Shalah, popularly known as ‘the man in the hood’ in a famous photograph depicting the torture suffered by Iraqis at the American-run Abu Ghraib prison in Baghdad, today spilled the beans on the inhumane treatment he received at the detention centre.

Ali, who now heads an organisation representing tortured victims in Iraq, captivated some 2,000 people with his story at the three-day War Crimes Conference at the Putra World Trade Centre, organised by the Perdana Global Peace Organisation headed by former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

“My nightmare began on 13th October, 2003, when I was arrested and put in a small room, which I later found out to be a toilet, which was flooded with water and human waste. I was interrogated in that room.

“They asked me if I was Sunni or Shiaa. I replied that we didn’t have that kind of difference in Iraq. They also claimed that I had helped instigate people to oppose the occupation and to reveal the location of Osama bin Laden.

"They also said I was an important person in the Iraqi resistance. I was then marked to be transferred to Abu Ghraib. They wrote "big fish" on my forehead denoting that I was an important detainee," he said, relating his experience at a special session chaired by Tun Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali, the wife of Dr Mahathir.

He said he was then beaten up and put in the truck and then transferred to the prison, which had five sectors with each sector having a tent surrounded by a wall and barbed wire.

The living conditions in these tents were bad with each tent accommodating 45 to 50 detainees, he said, adding that each tent was given only 60 litres of water daily for washing, cooking and cleaning.

"Our breakfast was at 5am, lunch at 8am while dinner was at 1pm. During Ramadhan, food was given at midnight but food was again given during the day, encouraging us to break our fast."

Ali said he was interrogated twice during his stay at the infamous prison but "I heard that detainees were tortured using lighted cigarettes and by injecting hallucinogens".

"After one month, I was called up and my hands were tied, a hood put over my head and transferred to a cell. At the cell they asked me to strip but when I refused they tore my clothes and tied me up again. They then dragged me up a flight of stairs and when I could not move, they beat me repeatedly.

"When I reached the top of the stairs, they tied me up to some steel bars. They then hurled me human waste and urinated on me. Then they put a gun to my head and said that they would execute me there. Another soldier used a megaphone to shout abuses at me and this went on the whole night," Ali further recalled.

He said the next morning he was asked the names of resistance fighters in Iraq and when he replied that he did not know any, they inserted a jagged wooden stick into his rectum, followed by the barrel of a rifle, which caused him to bleed profusely.

"The next morning the interrogator came to my cell and tied me to the grille of the cell and then played the pop song 'By the Rivers of Babylon' continuously until the next morning. The effect on me was that I lost my hearing and lost my mind," he added.

On the 15th day of detention, Ali was given a blanket, in which he made a hole and used it to cover himself.

Soon after this, the former lecturer said he was forcefully placed on top of a carton box containing canned food, had wires connected to his fingers and ordered to stretch his hand out horizontally, and the electricity was switched on.

"As the electric current entered my whole body, I felt as if my eyes were being forced out and sparks were flying out. My teeth were clattering violently and my legs shaking violently as well. My whole body was shaking. I was electrocuted on three separate sessions," he said to pin-drop silence in the hall.

Throughout the torture, he said the interrogators would take photographs of him.

He said he was then left alone in the cell for 49 days, and during this period the torture

stopped.

“At the end of the 49th day, I was transferred back to the tents and after 45 days at the tents, I was informed by a prisoner that he overheard some guards saying that I was wrongly arrested and that I would be released.

“I was released in the beginning of March, 2004. I was put into a truck and taken to a highway and then thrown out. A passing car stopped and took me home,” he ended his tale.

To a question from the floor after his talk, he said only God kept him alive during his ordeal but the suffering he went through was only “a drop in the ocean”.

— BERNAMA

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