

# Number of Iraqi Executions Alarming After Former Saddam Hussein Aide Hanged

By [Amnesty International](#)

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(New York) – Following the execution of Saddam Hussein’s former secretary and bodyguard, Amnesty International said today it was alarmed by the escalating number of death sentences being carried out in Iraq and fears for the lives of two other members of Hussain’s former cabinet, facing imminent execution.

Abed Hamid Mahmoud, also known as Abed Hamoud, was executed by hanging on Thursday, bringing the total number of executions in Iraq in the first half of 2012 to at least 70. According to Amnesty International’s information, in 2011 at least 68 people were executed in Iraq.

Two other members of Hussain’s former cabinet are among those facing imminent execution.

“The killing of Abed Hamoud is part of an alarming escalation in executions in Iraq and we fear others may soon face the same fate,” said Hassiba Hadj Sahraoui, Middle East and North Africa deputy director at Amnesty International. “The Iraqi authorities should refrain from using the death penalty, commute the sentences of all those on death row, believed to number several hundred, and declare a moratorium on executions.”

Hamoud was number four on the list of most-wanted Iraqi officials following the U.S.-led 2003 invasion of Iraq.

He was arrested in June 2003 by American forces and sentenced to death in October 2010 by the Supreme Iraqi Criminal Tribunal (SICT), together with former government ministers Tariq Aziz and Sadoun Shakir.

All three were convicted of participating in the crackdown of opposition activists under Saddam Hussein, which they denied. Tariq Aziz and Sadoun Shakir are at risk of imminent execution.

“Saddam Hussein’s rule was synonymous with unlawful killings, torture and other gross human rights violations, and those who committed such crimes should be brought to justice,” Hadj Sahraoui said. “But the death penalty, which is the ultimate denial of human rights, should never be used, whatever the gravity of the crime. Instead, the present Iraqi government should demonstrate a clear break with the past by following the global trend away from the death penalty.”

Amnesty International has repeatedly expressed concern about trials conducted before the Supreme Iraqi Criminal Tribunal, which has a mandate to prosecute those accused of crimes committed under Saddam Hussein.

Its independence as a court of law has been undermined by repeated political interference.

The death penalty was suspended in Iraq after the U.S.-led invasion in 2003 but restored in August 2004. Since then, hundreds of people have been sentenced to death and many have been executed.

*Amnesty International is a Nobel Peace Prize-winning grassroots activist organization with more than 3 million supporters, activists and volunteers in more than 150 countries campaigning for human rights worldwide. The organization investigates and exposes abuses, educates and mobilizes the public, and works to protect people wherever justice, freedom, truth and dignity are denied.*

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