

To:

Amnesty International

Human Rights Watch

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Whom It may be concerned

Subject: Condemnation and Calling for Action

We strongly condemn insulting, torturing, kidnapping and imprisonment of independent journalist by the Kurdish security forces in Iraqi Kurdistan.

On February 01, 2008 a group of the Kurdish independent journalist had attempted to pass the media blockade on the Qandil area by the Kurdish security forces for the past of three months. In an attempt to report the conditions and sufferings of the civilians living under the embargo, the brave journalists tried to inform the Kurdish public and the world on the reality behind such inhumane treatment and illegitimate blockade for the second time since January 18, 2008. When they reached the last checkpoints in the Sangasar area, the security forces surrounded them and have started beating, torturing, and threaten the journalists. Rahman Gharib and Soran Omar among the 50 independent journalists were severely beating by the security forces in which later Mr. Omar had to be hospitalized under an intensive care in Qaladeze hospital where he had remained there since the incidence. This is not the only time, where the Kurdish security forces under the direct command and control of the KDP and PUK authority are silencing, torturing, kidnapping and imprisoning the independent voices of Kurdish journalists. But this attempt along with the other previous actions are the explicit and systematic process and policy of the Kurdish authority to control the media agenda by preventing the public from getting any authentic news from such independent and incredible sources. We believe that this kind of policy is in direct conflict with the international norms and values and is also a clear violation of human rights and free speech; therefore, it's the responsibility of the international community and organizations to investigate, report, and condemn such kind of actions and treatment. We are also calling the United States and Britain to put pressure on the KRG government to stop such inhumane and undemocratic practice and treatment of its security forces against the innocent independent journalists. These journalists are only trying to report and inform the public on what they observe in this part of the world where authentic news is very important and it's a backbone for democracy and free society.

The Center of Halabja against Anfalization and Genocide of the Kurds-CHAK

February 03, 2008