

September 27, 2006 - Slaughter and Ranking Democrats Call on Rumsfeld to Take Action on Detention...

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday, September 27, 2006

Slaughter and Ranking Democrats Call on Rumsfeld to Take Action on Detention of AP Photographer
Pulitzer Prize Winner has been Held in Iraq for More than Five Months Without Charge

Washington, DC - Rep. Louise M. Slaughter (D-NY-28), Ranking Member of the House Rules Committee, today authored a letter to Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld calling on him to immediately resolve the case of Bilal Hussein. Mr. Hussein is a Pulitzer Prize-winning photographer for the Associated Press who has been held in Iraq by the US military for more than five months without charge or trial.

Rep. Slaughter's letter was cosigned by six Democratic Ranking Members: John Murtha, Ike Skelton, John Conyers, Henry Waxman, Barney Frank, and Jerrold Nadler.

"First, we would like your assurance that [Mr. Hussein] is being held in safe conditions and is being treated humanely," the letter reads. "Secondly, we ask that you allow his attorney to review the evidence the Army has compiled against Mr. Hussein and provide him with the opportunity to respond to the claims. Finally, we ask for an immediate resolution of this matter. If there is evidence that Mr. Hussein is a security threat, then that evidence should be heard in a court of law and a verdict rendered."

The complete text of Rep. Slaughter's letter can be found below:

September 27, 2006

The Honorable Donald Rumsfeld

Secretary of Defense

The Pentagon

Washington, DC 20301-1000

Dear Mr. Secretary,

We are writing to request that you immediately resolve the case of Bilal Hussein, a Pulitzer Prize-winning photographer for the Associated Press, who is being held without charges in a US military prison in Iraq.

As you may be aware, Mr. Hussein was arrested by US military troops on April 12, 2006. It has been reported that he is being held for alleged improper ties to insurgents. However, after being imprisoned for more than five months, Mr. Hussein has yet to be charged.

First, we would like your assurance that he is being held in safe conditions and is being treated humanely. Secondly, we ask that you allow his attorney to review the evidence the Army has compiled against Mr. Hussein and provide him with the opportunity to respond to the claims. Finally, we ask for an immediate resolution of this matter. If there is evidence that Mr. Hussein is a security threat, then that evidence should be heard in a court of law and a verdict rendered.

The fact that Mr. Hussein has not been charged with any crime only fuels speculation around the world that he is being held not because of security reasons, but because his work portrayed the situation in Iraq in an unfavorable light. Recent high-profile cases of others being held for months and even years without being charged, and without legal recourse, have damaged our country's reputation and jeopardized our efforts in Iraq. We urge you not to allow the case of Mr. Hussein to further undermine our international credibility or worsen conditions faced by our troops in Iraq.

We appreciate your attention to this request, and await your response.

Sincerely,

John Murtha

Ike Skelton

Ranking Member

Ranking Member

Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense

Committee on Armed Services

John Conyers

Henry Waxman

Ranking Member

Ranking Member

Committee on Judiciary

Committee on Government Reform

Barney Frank

Louise M. Slaughter

Ranking Member

Ranking Member

Committee on Financial Services

House Committee on Rules

Jerrold Nadler

Ranking Member

Judiciary Subcommittee on the Constitution

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