



Catherine Ashton

High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs
Vice-President of the European Commission

Brussels, 12 April 2011
Our Ref.: B1067

Dear Baroness Ashton,

Days of Rage: protests and repression in Iraq

Amnesty International would like to draw your attention to the attached report, *Days of Rage: protests and repression in Iraq*, which we have launched today. The report focuses on the violent crackdown against demonstrators in Iraq in February this year.

Tens of thousands of Iraqis have taken to the streets since early February 2011 to protest against the lack of water, electricity and other basic services, rising prices, unemployment and endemic corruption, and to demand greater respect for civil and political rights. In Iraq's Kurdistan region, demonstrators have also protested against the two main parties which have dominated local politics for decades and monopolised state resources. The report released today is based on a fact-finding visit to Iraq during the unrest and documents patterns of protest and repression across the country.

We deplore the fact that the Iraqi authorities in both Baghdad and the Kurdistan region have sought to crack down on peaceful protestors instead of upholding their citizens' rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly, including the right to protest.

As an immediate response to this crisis, we call on the European Union to:

- Ask the Iraqi authorities to restrain police and security forces, demand governmental accountability for human rights violations and bring perpetrators to justice
- Demand that the Iraqi authorities guarantee the right to peaceful protest and afford protection to peaceful protesters from excessive force by police or violence by others
- Publicly call for full, thorough and transparent investigations into the killings and attacks on protesters and the assaults and threats against journalists and others

We are, of course, happy to discuss these issues further should you wish to.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Nicolas J. Beger
Director