

FEBRUARY 12, 2004

**SCHAKOWSKY EXPRESSES CONCERN ABOUT LONG TERM DETENTION
OF IRAQI JUVENILES ABSENCE
OF FORMAL CHARGES**

WASHINGTON, D.C. - U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) today expressed her concern about the long term detention of 13,000 Iraqis, including juveniles, without being formally charged, adding that this policy "further aggravates distrust of our troops" thus putting them in greater danger.

In a letter to Ambassador L. Paul Bremer, Administrator of the Coalition Provisional Authority, Schakowsky wrote: "In accordance with the standards of basic human rights, detained civilians must be released in the shortest possible period of time, unless they are charged with a recognized criminal offense and brought to trial. The continued imprisonment of Iraqi detainees without explanation is sure to further aggravate distrust of our troops-further endangering their lives. . We cannot expect to successfully help Iraq set up an effective democracy if we do not live up to democratic principles ourselves."

Below is Schakowsky's letter to Ambassador Bremer:

February 11, 2004

Ambassador L. Paul Bremer
Administrator of the Coalition Provisional Authority
1000 Defense Pentagon
Room 2E791
Washington, D.C. 20310

Dear Ambassador Bremer:

I am concerned about the status of Iraqi citizens, and particularly children, currently imprisoned by U.S. Forces in Iraq. I understand that there are approximately 13,000 Iraqi prisoners detained by U.S. forces-most of whom have not been formally charged.

□ According to family members many Iraqi detainees were handcuffed, blinded, and taken away without any explanation.□ In accordance with the standards of basic human rights, detained civilians must be released in the shortest possible period of time, unless they are charged with a recognized criminal offense and brought to trial. In all circumstances, they must be allowed the right to challenge the lawfulness of their detention.□ The United States can and should live up to that standard.□ The continued imprisonment of Iraqi detainees without explanation is sure to further aggravate distrust of our troops-further endangering their lives.□ Moreover, we cannot expect to successfully help Iraq set up an effective democracy if we do not live up to democratic principles ourselves.

While I am glad to see that U.S. forces have recently undertaken a plan to release 506 prisoners who have been identified as non-violent, I am disturbed to hear that this group includes 28 juveniles.□ Jailing young people without due process runs the risk of instilling a distrust, fear, and hatred of our country that could last for generations.□ I am even more disturbed by reports on the British Broadcasting Channel (BBC) that show children in Iraq as young as ages 13 and 10 held in crowded prisons with adults.□ □

The recognition that children are entitled to special care and assistance has been formally recognized by our nation and the international community in the United Nation's Convention on the Rights of the Child.□ We must not abandon that principle in our detainment of Iraqis.□ In our own nation, we recognize the fact that young offenders must be held and treated differently from adults.□ We should also respect that difference in Iraq.

I would like to know what steps you are taking to ensure that U.S. forces are respecting the human rights of Iraqi prisoners.□ Specifically, I would like a timeline of when you expect to either formally charge or release all Iraqi detainees.□ Additionally, I would like to know the number of juveniles in detention and what provisions are being made for them.

Again, thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.□ I look forward to your response to my questions.

□ Sincerely,

□ Jan Schakowsky
□ Member of Congress