

Advocacy dossier

Sajjad Al-Iraqi

سجاد العراقي

Forcibly disappeared **Iraq**

Sajjad Al-Iraqi is a civil society activist and a leading figure of the Tishreen protest movement in Nasiriyah who was abducted by armed men on 19 September 2020. His fate remains unknown, and in January 2026 a retrial ended with the release of the two men previously sentenced in absentia for his kidnapping.

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The case at a glance

Sajjad Al-Iraqi is a civil society activist and a leading figure of the Tishreen protest movement in Nasiriyah who was abducted by armed men on 19 September 2020. His fate remains unknown, and in January 2026 a retrial ended with the release of the two men previously sentenced in absentia for his kidnapping.

Status	Arrested	Country
Forcibly disappeared	**19 Sep 2020**	**Iraq**

What we ask

We call on the authorities to:

01 Immediately disclose the location, legal status, and condition of Sajjad Al-Iraqi.

02 Grant unrestricted access to family and independent legal counsel.

03 Bring Sajjad Al-Iraqi promptly before a competent judicial authority, or release them.

04 Investigate the disappearance as a crime under international law and hold all responsible officials accountable.

02

How the case unfolded

4 September 2020

Threats and intimidation

Threatened over his social media writing

Syriac Press reported that on 4 September 2020 Sajjad Al-Iraqi, known for outspoken writing on social media, was threatened by a member of the Sadrist movement, about two weeks before he was abducted.

19 September 2020

Start of enforced disappearance

Abducted by armed men near Nasiriyah

Armed men abducted Sajjad Al-Iraqi from a vehicle in which he was travelling with friends in the Al-Azirj area on the outskirts of Nasiriyah, Thi Qar governorate. GCHR reports seven armed men in two white Toyota pick-up trucks. A friend travelling with him, Bassem Fleih, was shot and taken to hospital. His fate and whereabouts have remained unknown since.

21 September 2020

Other act

Prime Minister sends counter-terrorism forces to search for him

Prime Minister Mustafa Al-Kadhimi ordered a special counter-terrorism force, backed by army aviation, to Thi Qar to locate and free him, according to the Security Media Cell. Protesters in Nasiriyah blocked bridges over the Euphrates and closed most official offices. Police said they had identified the kidnappers through witnesses, including the injured companion.

15 November 2020

Arrest warrant issued

Arrest warrants issued for two suspects

The Thi Qar Appeals Court issued arrest warrants for two individuals over his kidnapping. Neither suspect was arrested at the time.

March 2023

Ruling in absentia

Two men sentenced to death in absentia for his kidnapping

The Thi Qar Criminal Court sentenced two men, named in reports as Idris Kurdi and Ahmed Mohammed Abboud, to death in absentia for kidnapping Sajjad Al-Iraqi. Neither was in custody. Amnesty International called for a retrial in the defendants' presence without recourse to the death penalty.

1 November 2023

Reprisal against relatives

Amnesty reports repeated threats against his family

In an urgent action, Amnesty International reported that his family had received numerous threats from people believed to be linked to the abductors and to the Popular Mobilization Units, who pressed them to drop the court case and came to the family home at least four times. A relative said a meeting with Prime Minister Mohammed Shia Al-Sudani had produced promises but no progress.

12 January 2026

Acquittal

Retrial ends with release of the two defendants

The two men, named by GCHR as Ahmed Mohamed Al-Ibrahimi and Idris Kridi Al-Hassari, surrendered after an international arrest warrant and were retried in person. On 12 January 2026 the Thi Qar Criminal Court ordered their release for insufficient evidence under Article 421 of the Penal Code. Both had denied involvement.

14 April 2026

Other act

Fate still unknown; family objects to the ruling

GCHR reported that his mother questioned how a witness could retract testimony after six years and said the court had shown sympathy for the kidnappers. GCHR described the release as part of a pattern of impunity since October 2019. His fate and whereabouts remain unknown.

03
The full story

Update, 12 November 2026: more than six years after armed men abducted him near Nasiriyah on 19 September 2020, the fate and whereabouts of Sajjad Al-Iraqi remain unknown. In January 2026 a retrial ended with the release of the only two men ever convicted in the case.

Background and Work

Sajjad Al-Iraqi, also known as Sajjad Al-Mushrifawi, is a civil society activist from Nasiriyah in Thi Qar governorate. He was a prominent figure in the Tishreen (October) protest movement that began in October 2019. Amnesty International reports that he had been involved in civil society activism for years, including documenting corruption, and that a friend described him as the spokesperson for Tishreen since October 2019. The Gulf Centre for Human Rights (GCHR) says he took part in sit-ins in Nasiriyah and used social media to support the movement and oppose corruption, and that he has become a symbol of the movement in Thi Qar.

Syriac Press reported that he was known for outspoken writing on social media and that on 4 September 2020 a member of the Sadrist movement threatened him.

The Abduction

On the evening of 19 September 2020 armed men stopped a vehicle in which he was travelling with friends in the Al-Azirj area on the outskirts of Nasiriyah and took him away. GCHR reports seven armed men in two white Toyota pick-up trucks. His friend Bassem Fleih was shot and taken to hospital. Asharq Al-Awsat reported that activists in Nasiriyah blamed members of a local tribe and described the abduction as politically motivated, and Syriac Press reported claims that the kidnappers were affiliated with the Popular Mobilization Forces. Amnesty International states that he was abducted for his role in the Tishreen protests.

Protesters blocked the bridges over the Euphrates and closed most official offices in Nasiriyah. On 21 September 2020 Prime Minister Mustafa Al-Kadhimi ordered a counter-terrorism force, backed by army aviation, to Thi Qar to find and free him. Police said they had identified the kidnappers through eyewitnesses. He was not found, and no authority has disclosed his fate.

Legal Proceedings

On 15 November 2020 the Thi Qar Appeals Court issued arrest warrants for two individuals for his kidnapping, but neither was arrested. In March 2023 the Thi Qar Criminal Court sentenced the two men to death in absentia. Amnesty International called for a retrial in their presence and without the death penalty, and for his fate and whereabouts to be revealed.

According to GCHR, the two men, Ahmed Mohamed Al-Ibrahimi and Idris Kridi Al-Hassari, later surrendered after an international arrest warrant and were retried in person. On 12 January 2026 the Thi Qar Criminal Court ordered their release for insufficient evidence; Shafaq News reported that the decision was taken under Article 421 of the Penal Code and that both men denied involvement. GCHR reported that his mother questioned how a witness could retract testimony after six years and said the judiciary had shown sympathy for the

kidnappers. Enforced disappearance is not a distinct crime under Iraqi law, as Amnesty International has noted.

Reprisals Against the Family

Amnesty International reported in November 2023 that his family had received numerous threats from people believed to be linked to the abductors and to the Popular Mobilization Units, who pressed them to drop the court case and came to the family home at least four times. A relative told Amnesty that a meeting with Prime Minister Mohammed Shia Al-Sudani had produced promises but no progress.

International Response

Amnesty International issued an urgent action on 1 November 2023 calling on the Iraqi authorities to reveal his fate and whereabouts, protect his family from reprisals and hold those responsible to account in fair trials. GCHR maintains a case page on him and reported on the January 2026 ruling in its periodic report of April 2026, describing it as part of a pattern of impunity for attacks on Tishreen activists since October 2019.

Latest updates on this case Scan the code or visit: https://humena.org/defenders/sajjad-al-iraqi/

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