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Four U.S. Soldiers accused of rape, murder

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MNF-I spokesperson: 'We will leave no stone unturned in our pursuit of the facts'

Compiled from official DOD sources

BAGHDAD, Iraq (July 10, 2006) - Multi-National Corps-Iraq authorities announced charges against five U.S. Soldiers in connection with their alleged participation in the rape and murder of a young Iraqi woman and three members of her family in Mahmudiyah on March 12.

Four Soldiers were charged July 8 in connection with their alleged participation in the rape and murder, and a fifth Soldier was charged with dereliction of duty for his failure to report the rape and murder of these Iraqi civilians, but is not alleged to have been a direct participant in the rape and killings.

All are charged with conspiring with former Pfc. Steven D. Green to commit these crimes.

The preferral of court-martial charges is merely an accusation. Those accused are presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

The next step in the legal process will be an investigation pursuant to Article 32, Uniform Code of Military Justice. Article 32 investigations are similar to grand jury hearings.

In a message delivered July 5, Maj. Gen. William B. Caldwell IV, spokesman for Multi-National Force-Iraq, discussed allegations of misconduct by U.S. servicemembers.

Caldwell said that there's not one servicemember in Iraq who is immune from prosecution if they do something that is of a criminal or unethical nature.

"Coalition forces came to Iraq to serve, to uphold human dignity, to protect the rights and freedoms of ordinary Iraqis, and to defend democratic values in a troubled nation," the general said. "As such, we will face every situation honestly. We will leave no stone unturned in our pursuit of the facts, and we'll hold our servicemembers accountable if and when [they are] found guilty of misconduct in a court of law."

Caldwell said all Coalition forces are trained to carry out their duties to the utmost of their ability and integrity.

"They are expected to fully comply with the Law of Armed Conflict and with the rules of engagement," the general said. "We take allegations of wrongdoing by Coalition forces very seriously and are committed to thoroughly investigating such allegations."

In a joint statement July 6, Gen. George W. Casey Jr., Commander of MNF-I, and Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad, U.S. Ambassador to Iraq, expressed their condolences to the family members who lost loved ones in Mahmudiyah on March 12.

"On behalf of the U.S. Mission and the multinational force in Iraq, we wish to express our heartfelt condolences to all the family members who lost a loved one in Mahmudiyah on March 12, 2006. We understand this is painful, confusing and disturbing not only to the family who lost a loved one, but to the Iraqi people as a whole. The loss of a family member can never be undone."

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