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US troops tortured Iraqi prisoner to death: report

BERLIN, May 14 (AFP) - German television reported Friday that US troops tortured to death an Iraqi prisoner in their custody in January this year and captured the abuse on film.

Spiegel TV said in a statement that it had witness accounts and documents to prove that 47-year-old Asad Abdul Kareem Abdul Jaleel had been killed at the US military base Al Asad west of the town Khan Al Baghdadi.

The investigative news program said that he had been picked up on the open road and taken to the base on suspicion of belonging to an insurgent group.

'A fellow prisoner gave Spiegel TV a detailed description how the man was sadistically tortured in the five days after his arrest,' the statement said.

'US soldiers also took photos of this abuse.'

The US occupation in Iraq has been rocked by a series of photographs showing abuse of Iraqi detainees by US military personnel at the Abu Ghraib prison outside Baghdad.

Spiegel TV said that US forces had tried to cover up the death of the prisoner at Al Asad by declaring in a report that he had 'died in his sleep' in a document signed by pathologist Luis A. Santiago. The death certificate stated that no autopsy had been conducted.

But an Iraqi coroner who received the body of the prisoner from US forces told Spiegel TV that man's body showed 'clear signs of torture'.

'The photographs of the corpse, which Spiegel TV has also seen, indicate

the man was tortured,' it said, adding that the body also appeared to have undergone an autopsy using 'Western methods'.

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