



TORTURERS NABBED FOURSOME MAY BE KIN OF SADDAM

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By Aly Sujo

As the hunt for Saddam Hussein intensified yesterday, coalition troops in Iraq said they had arrested four alleged torturers said to be cousins of the deposed Iraqi leader.

The suspect quartet was picked up along with other members of the former regime, according to Bernard Kerik, former New York City police commissioner and current U.S. security chief in Iraq.

Kerik, dubbed the "Baghdad Terminator" because of his uncompromising style, said coalition forces received a tip on the whereabouts of the former regime members, all of whom are suspected of violating human rights.

Kerik said the four had worked on the fugitive strongman's personal security force and that coalition forces had discovered pictures of them at work.

"We found a number of photos during the seizure and arrest that showed these people, these four cousins - allegedly cousins - torturing a man," Kerik said.

He did not name any of the men or say where they were picked up.

In recent weeks, the search for Saddam and dozens of his senior associates and mid-level loyalists has intensified in his home province of Salahuddin, northwest of Baghdad.

Spurred by reports from local informants and intercepted telephone conversations, U.S. officials believe Saddam and his closest henchmen may be filtering back to take advantage of the relative safety provided by a network of tribal and family connections. Raids have turned up new evidence, including photos, documents with satellite telephone numbers, and fake identity cards, officials said. Sheiks and farmers have provided tips, and U.S. intelligence units have picked up leads from phone intercepts and aerial surveillance.

"You get a lot of Saddam sightings," said Col. Don Campbell, chief of staff for the 4th Infantry Division. "People say, 'I can take you to Saddam' or 'I can tell you where he is.' If we believe it's credible, we follow it up."

A \$25 million reward for information leading to Saddam's capture or confirmation of his death has upped the number of tips slipped to U.S. officials.