

New claims of Iraqi journalist torturing

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The Iraqi journalist who hurled his shoes at U.S. President George W. Bush has been severely tortured, one of his brothers says.

Uday made the remark on Monday after he visited his brother, Muntadhar al-Zaidi, in prison for the first time on Sunday.

"I met my brother for around an hour. He has been tortured while in detention for 36 hours continuously. He has been hit with iron rods and cables," Uday told *AFP*.

"There is very severe bleeding in his eye, and he has bruises on his feet and nose, and he

was also tortured with electric shocks," he added.

Last week, al-Zaidi, a correspondent for the al-Baghdadiya TV channel, threw his shoes at President Bush during a press conference in Baghdad. The reporter was arrested and frogmarched out of the building by security officials.

Uday also said that his brother was forced to sign a statement confessing to receiving money from different groups and saying that he did not throw his shoes for the honor of Iraq.

Meanwhile, the White House shrugged off the torture reports of the Iraqi journalist in prison.

"He's in the hands of the Iraqi system. I don't have anything more on the shoe-thrower," said White House spokesman Tony Fratto.

When asked if the White House was concerned about reports that the Iraqi journalist showed signs of having been tortured, the spokesman said, "I think that's been explored extensively and I have nothing new for you."

This is while Iraqi investigating judge Dhiya al-Kenani rejected the torture allegations and said 'the investigation phase is over'.

Al-Zaidi is expected to face trial on Wednesday, Dec. 31, after he failed to appear for a hearing in court last Wednesday. Reports say that his absence in court was due to severe beatings.

