



Sir William Gage's inquiry made uncomfortable reading for the Army, with its blow-by-blow account of the violent abuse suffered by Baha Mousa and the other Iraqi detainees in the custody of the 1st Battalion the Queen's Royal Lancashire Regiment in 2003.

Today, the head of the British Army, General Sir Peter Wall, said Mr Mousa's death had "cast a dark shadow" over the Army's reputation and soldiers were now in no doubt about the need to treat detainees humanely and respectfully.

Had that been the case in Basra in 2003, Gen Wall said the Iraqi hotel worker would not have died in British custody.

The Army says steps to improve training, communications and Army doctrine have been taken and more are under way to ensure that such an incident can never happen again.

The inquiry has made 73 recommendations, many of which the Army says are already being implemented, ranging from the need to retain the Ministry of Defence's (MoD) current ban on the use of hoods on detainees to improvements to law training for soldiers and better training in prisoner handling.

After an investigation - and the most expensive court martial in British history in which only one of the accused was found guilty - senior officers looked for the reasons behind such a serious breakdown of accepted standards.

Both the Queen's Lancashire Regiment (QLR) and the 1st Battalion the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers had faced difficult and arduous tours.

Yet so had many other regiments, who had also lost men - or whose soldiers saw their comrades terribly wounded by roadside bombs - without resorting to the kind of violence inflicted by those who killed Baha Mousa, and then tried to cover up.

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