

Write to your MP, Geoff Hoon (Secretary of State for Defence), Jack Straw (Foreign Secretary) and of course, Tony Blair, to demand:

- that the US and UK end their illegal occupation of Iraq
- Iraqis must be left to determine their own political future free from foreign interference.
- that so long as US/UK forces illegally occupy Iraq they adhere strictly to international human rights and humanitarian law. In particular under the Geneva Convention and Hague Regulations an occupying power has a duty 'to ensur[e] the food and medical supplies of the population' and to restore and maintain public order and safety (see <http://web.amnesty.org/library>).
- an immediate end to the economic sanctions on Iraq. Over the past twelve years these sanctions – which remain in place - have created massive poverty in Iraq, devastating the lives of millions of ordinary Iraqis. The existing UN humanitarian programme ('oil-for-food') has not resolved – and cannot resolve - this humanitarian crisis. Sanctions must end immediately.
- an immediate ban on the use of cluster bombs, Depleted Uranium (DU) and weapons such as the 21,000 pound Massive Ordnance Air Blast (MOAB). According to Oxfam 'cluster bombs ... can by their very nature only be indiscriminate' and their use is therefore illegal. The same is true of weapons such as the MOAB. As at 10th April cluster bombs were still being loaded onto B-52s at USAF Fairford. The Pentagon is currently (11th April) threatening to deploy the MOAB – the biggest non-nuclear bomb in its arsenal.
- that the US/UK pay compensation to people in Iraq who have lost family members, houses, businesses or who have been injured, by the US/UK invasion and occupation.
- that the aid agencies are allowed to fulfil their function of providing the aid which is so desperately needed to the people of Iraq. Under the Geneva Convention if the population of an occupied territory is 'inadequately supplied' the occupying power is obliged to 'agree to and facilitate by all the means at its disposal' humanitarian relief by 'impartial humanitarian organisations.'
- that the reconstruction of Iraq takes place free from foreign interference and allows the full use of Iraq's resources by its own people. Prior to the war BP, Shell, and ExxonMobil indicated that they might exploit the fall of Saddam Hussein to fight for their old 'possessions' in Iraq by arguing that the compensation/nationalisation deal they agreed to in 1973 was signed under duress.
- that ordinary Iraqis are not forced to pay Saddam Hussein's debts and 'reparations' for the 1991 Gulf War. Saddam Hussein owes almost \$400bn in debts and reparation claims. These must be cancelled if Iraq is to begin to reverse the devastating effects of war and sanctions. (www.jubileearaq.org)
- that no further countries are attacked in the so-called 'war on terrorism.' Now is the time to get commitments - from your MP and from the Government - rejecting the creation of further conflicts with countries such as Syria, Iran and North Korea. In recent statements US Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld 'implied [that] some of President Saddam's suspected weapons of mass destruction might have been moved [to Syria]' (*Independent*, 10 April). Britain must not permit the use of US bases in Britain for any future military attack.

These images are available as placards, postcards (to send to Geoff Hoon) and leaflets from: Voices in the Wilderness UK on 0845 458 2564, 5 Caledonian Road, London N1 9DX www.voicesuk.org, voices@viwuk.freemove.co.uk.



This six year old girl has a spinal cord injury from a cruise missile explosion. photo by the Iraq Peace Team at Al Kindi Hospital

This man was soon to be married. His bride was still missing at the bomb site. photo by the Iraq Peace Team at Al Kindi Hospital



TAKE ACTION - SAVE LIVES

voices in the wilderness uk 12 april 2003

The war is not over

The war continues to pose a threat to the lives of ordinary people in Iraq. Before the war started, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs estimated "In the event of a crisis, 30 percent of children under 5 would be at risk of death from malnutrition". (See leaked draft report of 7 Jan., www.casi.org.uk.) **Bush and Blair started the war knowing that it could lead to up to 1.26 million children starving to death.** The threat came from the disruption of the monthly 'oil-for-food' humanitarian distribution system and the destruction or disruption of essential public services (electricity and drinking water supplies) which could lead to malnutrition and death, especially for young children. These continue to be grave problems in Iraq.

UNICEF spokesperson Wivina Belmonte warned on 7 Apr., "With each passing day, as the conflict continues, a humanitarian clock is ticking - it's a question of access, it's a question of distribution, it's a question of time, and it's a question of the lives of Iraqi children." On 9 Apr., UNICEF Representative Carol de Rooy said, "Before this conflict took place, UNICEF had networks and systems inside Iraq that helped us achieve our life-saving vaccination campaigns, nutrition campaigns and work in education, What is horribly worrying about the looting, chaos and breakdown of order is that those systems we counted on may completely disappear or collapse."

The UN World Food Programme says that it is about to undertake the biggest operation in its history, providing food for up to 27 million people - the entire Iraqi population - for a period of four months. "However, we need to operate in a safe environment in order to deliver food successfully," spokesperson Maarten Roest said on 9 Apr. "Unless law and order prevail, it would be extremely difficult to guarantee the required food aid - 480,000 tons - reach the people." Referring to the reported looting of warehouses in Basra - "the very warehouses which WFP is aiming to replenish for the May distribution" - he said that WFP operations did not seem possible under such circumstances. >>>>



Razek al-Kazem al-Khafaji lost his entire family of 15 in Hilla, including his wife and 6 children, 1 April 2003. His truck was hit by a missile.

Muhammed Adnan, aged 4, received cuts to his head and face from shrapnel. Photo by the Iraq Peace Team at Al Kindi Hospital



When asked, on CBS's 60 Minutes in 1996, whether the death of 500,000 Iraqi children was a price worth paying for the continued imposition of economic sanctions on Iraq, the US Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright, said "we think the price is worth it".

Despite warnings from numerous organisations that war would create a humanitarian crisis, Iraq has been invaded and the occupying forces are demonstrating what everyone suspected - that they are not interested in the welfare of the Iraqi people.

How many civilian casualties in Iraq today are a price worth paying to the US and UK governments?

>>>>> UNICEF said on 10 Apr. that while reports of continued chaos in Baghdad were seriously worrying and UNICEF's own offices had been looted yesterday - phones, chairs, essentially everything was taken away - **the most alarming information was the dramatic increase in diarrhoea in children during the past five days.** Doctors at the hospital in the southern port of Um Qasr reported a staggering increase directly related to the lack of clean water, with 50 cases for the first five days of April compared with 30 for the whole month last year, spokesperson Wivina Belmonte said. Based on what the doctors had seen, they concluded that malnutrition rates are likely to increase sharply by the end of the month all over southern Iraq due to the water situation. **These are precisely the conditions that could lead to the deaths of large numbers of young children through malnutrition and disease.**

HUMANITARIAN SUPPLIES

Save the Children UK warned on 4 Sept. 2002, that **'Three things resulting directly from military action will dangerously undermine the livelihoods and the very survival of Iraqi civilians':** 'First, supplies of humanitarian goods imported under the UN Oil-for-Food programme (OFF) will be interrupted. Neighbouring states may close their borders, UN agency, international and local aid staff will evacuate their posts, and local authorities may obstruct or be unable to deliver supplies to the needy.'

There continue to be problems with the distribution of humanitarian goods such as food and medicine. The UN has carried out a review of 'Oil-for-Food' goods on their way to Iraq, and has 'confirmed that only a modest portion of the supplies is likely to be shipped in time to meet emergency requirements in Iraq.' **Urgently needed items for refugees, health and nutrition, shelter, education and landmine protection are missing from these orders.** Also missing are such items as high protein biscuits and therapeutic milk needed to address malnutrition, and water purification supplies. Another limitation on rapid deliveries is the fact that commercial shipping to Iraq slowed noticeably in the run-up to the war and 'reactivation of the delivery chain could take some time'. (www.un.org/Depts/oip Weekly Update 29 Mar.-4 Apr.)

As in Afghanistan, the level of disorder and conflict means that it is dangerous for international aid agency staff to enter Iraq to carry out humanitarian work. On 9 Apr., the **International Committee of the Red Cross, which has operated without problems until now, suspended its humanitarian relief operations in Baghdad after two of its vehicles were hit by gunfire, leaving a Canadian staff member dead.** The ICRC said, 'Given the chaotic and totally unpredictable situation in the city, getting from one place to another involves incalculable risks.' (FT, 10 Apr., p. 4)

US Lieutenant Colonel Brian McCoy said on 10 Apr. that he was not bothered by the looting of ministries or the homes of Iraqi leaders. "What we must protect is the civilian infrastructure, such as hospitals, power stations and water plants, he said. **But when the al-Kindi hospital, one of Baghdad's key medical facilities, was attacked by armed looters, US troops failed to intervene, saying they had no orders to do so.**" "The coalition forces seem to be completely unable to restrain looters or impose any sort of control on the mobs that now govern the streets," said Veronique Taveau, spokeswoman for the UN Office of the Humanitarian Co-ordinator for Iraq (UNOHC). **"This inaction by the occupying powers is in violation of the Geneva Conventions."** (BBC News Online, 'Instability plagues Baghdad', 11 Apr.).

POWER AND CIVIL ADMINISTRATION

Save the Children UK also warned last Sept. that 'armed conflict is likely to encompass centres of high population density and affect key aspects of their infrastructure. Power cuts and closure of transport routes leading to public health hazards can endanger the lives of large number of Iraqis in the medium term.' Continuing disruption of electricity supplies paralyses the drinking water supply and forces the population to rely on unsafe water, leading to waterborne diseases, to which children are particularly vulnerable.

Save the Children UK also warned that 'a breakdown in communications and logistics in the Iraqi civil administration will leave civilians without access to centrally warehoused supplies and hamper distribution.' There seems at the moment to be a total breakdown in communications and logistics in the Iraqi civil administration, and this poses real risks to the general population.

The people of Iraq - and especially the children of Iraq - are in grave danger because of the damage and disruption caused by the war. 'Liberation' could actually be a disaster unless there is proper humanitarian aid, a safe environment, and a speedy restoration of civil administration.

Resist War - Save Lives: some protests, ideas and resources

Occupy your (pro-war) MP's office - use www.locata.co.uk/commons/ to find your local MPs and www.reselect.org.uk/mps.html to see their position on the war. Make your demands (see this leaflet). A short info. pack, including legal information, is available on www.j-n-v.org/occupy.htm or from Voices.

USAF Lakenheath, (Suffolk), Sunday 13 April. There are around 30 US nuclear weapons deployed at USAF Lakenheath. Come and celebrate the footpaths at Lakenheath. 01508 550446, www.lakenheathaction.org.

Really Big Blockade, Faslane Naval Base, Scotland, Tuesday 22 April. Help close down Britain's Trident Base. Info: 0845 458 8366, www.tridentploughshares.org

Women (with saucepans) against war, London - Thursday 24 April, from 6.30pm. Bring saucepans, wooden spoons etc to Downing Street to whip up a din for the man who dares to bomb in our names. Dizygals@aol.com or Voices on 0845 458 2564.

Carnival Against Oil Wars and Climate Chaos in London, Thursday April 24 from 10am outside BP's AGM at the Royal Festival Hall, Belvedere Road, South Bank. London Rising Tide, london@risingtide.org.uk

March for peace in Cardiff, Saturday 26 April, 11am Cardiff Castle. Wales Coalition for Peace: apgwynform@parliament.uk

Reports direct from Iraq

Read the Iraq Diaries from the **Iraq Peace Team**, and other reports from Iraq on www.electroniciraq.net

Other news sources and resources

You can keep up-to-date with **reports from aid agencies** on ReliefWeb (www.reliefweb.int) and UN Humanitarian Information Centre for Iraq (www.agoodplacetostart.org/)

The latest independent assessment of the numbers of **civilian casualties** is (www.iraqbodycount.net/)

Jo Wilding was in Iraq until the beginning of April - read her reports on www.bristolfoe.org.uk/wildfire/iraq/ or invite her to speak at a meeting. Contact Voices on 0845 458 2564.

Websites: www.reclaimthebases.org (groups protesting at military bases), www.indymedia.org.uk, www.cnduk.org, www.schnews.org, www.stopwar.org.uk, www.peaceneeds.info, www.casi.org.uk, www.amnesty.org, www.j-n-v.org; www.voicesuk.org, www.acttogether.org

May Day mass protests against war in workplaces, schools, colleges and communities across the UK. www.ourmayday.org.uk

Demonstration against the use of Depleted Uranium in Iraq and Galloway, 3 May, 1pm Dundrennon, by Kirkudbright, Galloway, South West Scotland.

Regular vigils and protests are still taking place all around the country. See www.j-n-v.org/events.htm for a full list.

Every Monday, London, 5-7pm, corner of Whitehall and King Charles Street. This AR-RROW (Active Resistance to the Roots of War) vigil has been going for 12 years.

Stop the War in Iraq: Rally every Wednesday, London at Parliament Square, between 5-7pm. Organised by Greenpeace, Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, Campaign Against the Arms Trade (CAAT), AR-RROW and Voices in the Wilderness. Guest speakers, musicians, poets, writers and artists will appear each week.

Women in Black, every Wednesday, London, 6-7pm at Edith Cavell statue on traffic island in St Martin's Place. Women only, wear black. See www.womeninblack.org.uk for other groups around UK. 020 7482 5670.

For many other protests see the websites below.

No War Radio

Listen to 'Entertaining the Troops'/Alternative Radio on Resonance FM (104.4 FM) from 11am to noon daily.

Parliament Peace Camp: www.parliament-square.org.uk

'RAF' Fairford Peace Camp, monitoring the B52s. www.gwi.org.uk

Prisoners for Peace

To support those who are behind bars for protesting for peace, see www.j-n-v.org/prisoners.htm