

PUBLIC

AI Index: AMR 51/31/99

18 February 1999

Further information on EXTRA 101/98 (AMR 51/110/98, 16 December 1998) and follow-ups (AMR 51/112/98, 17 December 1998, AMR 51/114/98, 18 December 1998, AMR 51/117/98, 23 December 1998) - Fear of indiscriminate mass killing of civilians in Iraq

USA/UK/IRAQ

Since the end of Operation Desert Fox in December 1998, US, UK and Iraqi forces have been engaged in regular conflict caused by the imposition of air exclusion zones in northern and southern Iraq. Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of civilians in these areas, where US and UK attacks have killed or injured a number of civilians.

On 25 January 1999 two missiles launched by US forces landed in residential areas in southern Iraq, in the al-Jumhuria district of the city of Basra and in the village of Abu Khasib, reportedly killing 17 civilians, including 10 children, and injuring 100 others. Forty-five houses were said to have been destroyed or damaged. These reports have been confirmed by UN humanitarian workers.

Iraqi government sources claim that up to 11 people, including civilians, were killed, and many others injured, following air strikes by US and UK forces in northern and southern Iraq between 10 and 15 February 1999.

Background Information

In 1991 two air exclusion zones were imposed on Iraq, north of the 36th parallel and south of the 32nd parallel, enforced by US, UK and French forces. They were intended to protect Iraq's Kurdish and Arab Shi'a Muslim populations respectively. In September 1996 the southern air exclusion zone was extended to the 33rd parallel. French forces pulled out of enforcing the northern exclusion zone in December 1996.

FURTHER RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/faxes/express/ airmail letters in English or in your own language:

To the US and UK Governments:

- expressing concern at civilian deaths following air strikes by US and UK forces inside the air exclusion zones in January and February 1999;
- asking what steps the US and UK governments have taken to prevent further civilian casualties.

APPEALS TO:

Bill Clinton

President

The White House

Office of the President

1600 Pennsylvania Avenue

Washington DC 20500

United States of America

Telegrams: President, Washington DC, United States America

Faxes: + 1 202 456 2461

E-mails: president@whitehouse.gov

Salutation: Dear President

Tony Blair
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London SW1 2AL
United Kingdom

Telegrams: Prime Minister, London, United Kingdom

Telephone: + 44 171 270 3000

Faxes: + 44 171 925 0918 / 270 0196

Salutation: Dear Prime Minister

COPIES TO: diplomatic representatives of the US and UK accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.

Amnesty International members in the UK and US are requested not to write appeals to their own governments on this issue.