

PUBLIC

AI Index: AMR 51/117/98

23 December 1998

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

USA/UK/IRAQ

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Air strikes by US and UK forces against Iraq were halted on 19 December 1998.

Reports of civilian casualties have variously referred to scores, hundreds or even thousands of people killed. Nizar Hamdoon, Iraq's Ambassador to the UN, is reported to have said that thousands of people had been killed and injured whilst Iraq's Deputy Prime Minister, Tariq 'Aziz, said in a press conference in Baghdad on 21 December that 62 soldiers had been killed and 180 injured but that civilian casualties were "much, much higher".

Houses, hospitals and schools were also reportedly destroyed or damaged, with the southern city of Basra being particularly badly affected. In Baghdad, some damage reportedly occurred as a result of shock waves from the bombing of targeted sites. According to some press reports, US naval commanders have apparently admitted that more than a quarter of the laser-guided bombs dropped by US air-craft missed their targets.

No further action is required at present by the Urgent Action network. Many thanks to all who sent appeals. Amnesty International may consider further action as information becomes available.