

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PRESS RELEASE

## News Flash

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### **Iraq: Investigate civilian deaths**

Amnesty International is calling for an immediate and impartial investigation into the deaths of civilians during the conflict in Iraq.

According to reports, at least 15 Iraqi civilians were killed today and around 30 wounded when missiles hit a residential area in north Baghdad.

"Conflicting reports about the origin of the missiles reinforce the need for a proper investigation," Amnesty International stated.

"Given claims about the sophisticated nature of the weapons being used in this conflict, it should be possible for Coalition forces to account for munitions used."

Amnesty International is calling for all relevant information to be disclosed to allow for a full investigation.

"Any credible allegation of a serious violation of the Geneva Convention must be fully investigated and those found responsible individually held to account," Amnesty International stated.

"Urgent measures must be taken to avoid civilian deaths and casualties."

Amnesty International is concerned about the increase in civilian casualties caused by targeting errors in this war. In one instance on 23 March, five Syrian nationals were killed and another 10 were hurt when a US missile hit a bus in Rutba, western Iraq, as it was returning to Syria. A US military spokesman admitted that a US missile had hit the bus and that the real target was a bridge.

On 22 March, four Jordanian students were killed near Mosul, north-east of Iraq, when a missile exploded near their car as they were driving out of the city to flee US and UK bombardments. They were planning to drive to Jordan.

"All forces must take sufficient precautions to protect civilians in selecting military objectives and means of attack," Amnesty International declared.

An attack must be cancelled or suspended if it becomes apparent that the objective is not a military one or it is causing a disproportionate loss of civilian life.

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