

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PRESS RELEASE

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## Iraq: Amnesty International Daily Digest - March 31 2003

**1500 GMT**

### **Humanitarian**

Amnesty International expressed concerns at the lack of access for international NGOs, to civilian populations in Iraq, to assess their humanitarian needs. In particular, Amnesty International supports the International Committee of the Red Cross, and their concern about the situation in Najaf, Nasiriyah, Kerbala, and other regions. Since Friday continued power cuts in the district of Al Anbar, have caused a serious water storage.

Both the Iraqi authorities and the military authorities of the USA and its allies must facilitate access and the operations of humanitarian organizations, without delay.

### **Petition to Tony Blair**

Amnesty International section heads from over 50 countries around the world, representing over 1.6 million members, yesterday delivered a petition to Tony Blair urging the UK government to abide by international law in the Iraq war. They also called on the UK to use its influence to ensure that its allies obey these laws, as required by Article 1 of the 1949 Geneva Conventions.

To read the full text of the petition please go to <http://public.amnesty.org/iraq>

### **Global backlash against human rights**

Human rights abuses connected to the war on Iraq have not been limited to that country -- the war's impact on human rights has been seen in many countries around the world, Amnesty International declared yesterday as it released its report *In the shadow of war: backlash against human rights*.

"Governments appear to be using the world's focus on the theatre of war to violate human rights shielded from public scrutiny."

Amnesty International's initial report documents examples of how, since the beginning of the military operation, there has been a significant backlash against certain human rights in many countries.

**For more information on the Iraq Crisis go to** [http://web.amnesty.org/pages/iraq\\_summary](http://web.amnesty.org/pages/iraq_summary)

**and for latest news releases and 24 hour media contacts go to <http://news.amnesty.org>**

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For more information please call Amnesty International's press office in London, UK, on +44 20 7413 5566

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