

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PRESS RELEASE

AI Index: MDE 14/101/2003 (Public)  
News Service No: 104  
28 April 2003

## **Iraq: US and UK forces must restore law and order**

(Basra) Everyone here needs security. There is no safety. These are statements that Amnesty International delegates in southern Iraq have heard repeated over and over again.

"The US and UK as occupying powers in Iraq have clear responsibilities to restore law and order and are the current guardians of security," said Ghanim Alnajjar, a member of the Amnesty International delegation in Iraq.

Amnesty International has seen widespread looting and scavenging of public buildings in Basra and Umm Qasr. In the University of Basra the organization's delegates saw the burnt and destroyed building where people were still scavenging for what is left of the building materials.

"Looting is effecting more than just buildings -- in the process countless documents are being burnt and destroyed" Ghanim Alnajjar added.

"The destruction of documents will have an incalculable effect on Iraqis, on the settlement of property claims and establishment of students academic records, to providing accountability for past human rights violations."

Today Amnesty International delegates came across a vacant lot next to the Security Directorate in Basra where British soldiers were dumping cart loads of documents. In the absence of overall clear communications with the Iraqi people, and given the location of the vacant lot, Iraqis were anxiously searching through the documents. It was later established that they belonged to the electricity company.

Amnesty International called on the coalition forces to ensure that policing methods are put in place, including protecting evidence of human rights violations.

"Unless security measures are urgently put in place humanitarian aid will not reach the people who most need it and people will continue to be afraid of going out at night," Ghanim Alnajjar stressed.

"Now that coalition forces are in control of Iraqi territory, they must abide by all their responsibilities -- picking and choosing protection of strategic interests is not an option," Amnesty International concluded.

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For a full copy of Amnesty International's report: Iraq: Responsibilities of the occupying powers please go to:<http://web.amnesty.org/library/index/engmde140892003>

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