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@HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE SHADOW OF WAR

Amnesty International today (Thursday 21 February 1991) said that the Gulf war - which is already claiming a rising toll of war victims - should not be allowed to further count "human rights as one of its casualties".

Starting today, the organization is launching an international drive - Human Rights in the Shadow of War - to ensure that human rights issues are not sacrificed to political and military concerns at this time.

"Countries around the world have done virtually nothing over the years to put a stop to serious human rights violations - in Iraq and elsewhere - that have set the scene for the present war," Amnesty International said. "Now those violations are being exploited as propaganda and others are being committed in the name of national security."

International newspaper ads starting today detail Amnesty International's grave fear for the threat to human rights during the war and in its aftermath.

Amnesty International said that since 16 January, it had documented human rights violations related to the war in some dozen countries - often committed by governments to suppress opposition to the war or in the name of national security.

"The fear is that such measures will be tolerated and eventually become systematic for as long as the war and its aftermath persists," Amnesty International said.

Those human rights could be at further risk if abuses by "friendly" countries are ignored during the war and if serious violations elsewhere are simply overlooked by a world rivetted on the Gulf.

The text of the full statement follows:

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