

PUBLIC

AI Index: AMR 51/81/99

19 May 1999

Further information on EXTRA 101/98 (AMR 51/110/98, 16 December 1998) and follow-ups (AMR 51/112/98, 17 December 1998, AMR 51/114/98, 18 December 1998, AMR 51/117/98, 23 December 1998, AMR 51/31/99, 18 February 1999, AMR 51/40/99, 3 March 1999) - Fear of indiscriminate mass killings of civilians in Iraq

US/UK/IRAQ

At least 39 civilians, including women and children, have reportedly been killed as a result of US and UK air strikes since the beginning of April 1999, mostly within the northern air exclusion zone. Scores have reportedly been injured and several houses destroyed.

On 29 April, 20 civilians, including women and children, were reportedly injured and several houses destroyed when a laser-guided bomb hit the al-Wahda district in the northern city of Mosul. US military sources reportedly said that US forces had been targeting Iraqi radar and air defence systems. In another strike the next day, a shepherd and six of his family were killed in their tent near Mosul. A UN humanitarian official who visited the area confirmed the killing of the shepherd and his family. Two civilians were said to have been killed and 12 others injured when US warplanes bombed Iraqi missile sites near Mosul on 3 May.

Between 9 and 11 May 1999 five people were reportedly killed in bombing raids near the southern city of Basra and on 12 May 1999 laser guided bombs, reportedly targeting Iraqi missile sites and radars, hit farmers' tents near Mosul killing 12 civilians. Three children were said to have been killed when a residential quarter in the Naharawan area of Mosul was hit, also on 12 May 1999.

UK government officials have replied to Urgent Action network appeal writers saying that US and UK forces had been acting in self-defence and making great efforts to avoid civilian casualties. Amnesty International has also received several letters from the US and UK governments making the same point. However, the organization remains concerned that US and UK forces may have given insufficient consideration to the proximity of civilians to military targets, resulting in indiscriminate or disproportionate impact on civilians.

FURTHER RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express/airmail letters in English or in your own language:

To the US and UK Governments:

- expressing concern that in spite of assurances given by US and UK government officials civilian deaths and casualties continue to be reported;
- asking them to urge their forces to take the utmost consideration of the proximity of civilians;
- asking them to urge their forces to refrain from attacks expected to cause incidental loss of civilian life "which would be excessive in relation to the direct military advantage anticipated."

APPEALS TO:

President
Bill Clinton
The White House
Office of the President
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue

Washington DC 20500

USA

Telegrams: President, Washington DC, United States America

Faxes: + 1 202 456 2461

E-mails: president@whitehouse.gov

Salutation: Dear President Clinton

Prime Minister

Tony Blair

10 Downing Street

London SW1 2AL

United Kingdom

Telegrams: Prime Minister, London, United Kingdom

Telephone: + 44 171 270 3000

Faxes: + 44 171 925 0918 / 270 0196

Salutation: Dear Prime Minister

COPIES TO: diplomatic representatives of the US and UK accredited to your country.

Those in the US and UK are asked not to write appeals to their own governments.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 19 June 1999.