

PUBLIC

AI Index: MDE 14/011/2003

27 February 2003

Further Information on EXTRA 12/03 (MDE 14/006/2003, 11 February 2003) Fear for Safety

IRAQ The people of Iraq and surrounding countries

On 18 and 19 February 2003, over 60 United Nations member states debated the situation in Iraq. Most states argued that all peaceful means must first be exhausted before any resort to war could be considered. Many also expressed deep concern about the impact of war on the humanitarian plight of Iraqi civilians.

The Security Council however has not yet made a balanced assessment of the impact of war on human rights and the humanitarian situation in Iraq, against the threat that Iraq is said to constitute to peace and security. Amnesty International will therefore continue to campaign for the Security Council to make that assessment before any decision is taken whether to resort to war. The organisation will also continue calling on the Security Council to do everything possible to protect civilians and immediately to deploy flexible teams of human rights monitors to report on human rights abuses throughout Iraq by any party.

On 28 February, Amnesty International's UN representative in New York will present the organization's online petition containing over 50,000 names to the outgoing President of the Security Council, Dr Gunter Pleuger. This will be his last day as President, before the monthly presidency of the Security Council rotates and Mr Mamady Traore of Guinea takes over. For further information on Amnesty International's position on the Iraq crisis visit http://web.amnesty.org/web/web.nsf/pages/iraq_faq

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in English or your own language:

- urging the Security Council to immediately deploy human rights monitors throughout Iraq to report on human rights abuses by any party;
- expressing concern for the safety of the civilians in Iraq and surrounding countries in the event of military action;
- welcoming the start of a public debate in the UN Security Council on the likely consequences of war;
- over the coming weeks, urging the UN Security Council to:
 - consider the potentially grave violations of international humanitarian law, including direct attacks on civilians, the use of human shields and the use of inherently indiscriminate weapons;
 - make a full assessment of the likely human rights and humanitarian consequences of war;
 - consider the effects on the humanitarian situation as Iraqis are already suffering under severe economic sanctions;
 - consider the risk that military action would lead to massive numbers of people being forced into flight.

APPEALS TO: Please write to two or three of the following:

UK Foreign Minister

Rt Hon Jack Straw MP

Secretary of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO)

King Charles Street, Whitehall

London SW1A 2AH, United Kingdom

Fax: + 44 20 7839 2417

Salutation: Dear Secretary of State

US Secretary of State

The Honorable Colin Powell
Office of the Secretary of State
2201 C Street, N.W.
Washington DC 20520, USA

Fax: + 1 202 261 8577
Salutation: Dear Secretary of State

Russian Federation Minister for Foreign Affairs

Igor Ivanov
Rossiiskaia Federatsia, 121200 g. Moskva
Smolenskaya-Sennaya pl., 32/34
Ministerstvo inostrannykh del Rossiiskoi Federatsii
Ministru IVANOVU I.

Fax: + 7 095 230 21 30/ 244 91 57
Salutation: Dear Minister

Minister of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China

TANG Jiaxuan Buzhang
Waijiaobu, 2 Chaoyangmen Nandajie
Beijingshi 100701, People's Republic of China

Fax: + 86 10 6596 3374
Telegram: Foreign Affairs Minister, Beijing, China
Salutation: Your Excellency

Minister of Foreign Affairs of France

Monsieur Dominique de VILLEPIN
Ministre des affaires étrangères
37, Quai d'Orsay, 75700 Paris 07SP, France

Fax: +33 1 455 16012
Salutation: Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

Permanent Representatives to UN of the five permanent members of the Security Council
H.E. Mr. Wang Yingfan
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H.E. Mr. Jean-Marc de la Sabliere
Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations
One Dag Hammarskjold Plaza,
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Fax: + 1 212 421 6889
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email: missionofguinea@aol.com

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.