

Public

19 March 2003

MDE 14/027/2003

Open letter from AI Secretary General, Irene Khan to President George Bush, Prime Minister Tony Blair, Prime Minister José Maria Aznar and President Saddam Hussein.

Amnesty International is fearful that one of the first casualties of any war in Iraq will be human rights. Iraqi civilians, refugees and combatants, all have rights, and as we have seen in recent wars in Kosovo and Afghanistan each of these groups can be abused.

Amnesty International demands a public commitment from your Government that it will abide by the basic and specific measures outlined below:

- *Protect civilians by strictly adhering to the rules of international humanitarian law*
- *Refrain from using indiscriminate weapons*
- *Treat civilian detainees fairly and humanely*
- *Protect the rights of combatants*
- *Ensure the security and humanitarian needs of the Iraqi population are fully met*
- *Protect and assist refugees and internally displaced persons*
- *Make sure that perpetrators of crime are brought to justice under international law*
- *Commit to using the International Humanitarian Fact-Finding Commission to investigate violations of the Geneva Conventions*
- *Support and facilitate the deployment of human rights monitors in Iraq as soon as the security situation permits*
- *Support the UN in their humanitarian and human rights work*

Amnesty International is writing to the Governments of the USA, UK and Spain, who have declared their intention to launch military action against Iraq. AI demands adherence to obligations under international human rights and humanitarian laws in the event of war. Those intending to launch military action against Iraq have a particular responsibility to ensure that international human rights and humanitarian law are fully upheld.

Amnesty International is making the same demand of the government of Iraq which must equally abide by its obligations.

Yours truly,

Irene Khan

Secretary General

Amnesty International

For more information please refer to AI's document "People come first: Amnesty International's 10-point appeal to all parties involved in possible military action in Iraq" (AI Index MDE 14/022/2003, 18 March 2003)

