

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PRESS RELEASE

AI Index: MDE 14/056/2003 (Public)
News Service No: 071
28 March 2003

Iraq: Amnesty International Week's Round-Up - March 28 2003

1615 GMT

War Crimes during military operation

Reports that war crimes may have been committed by both sides in the recent fighting, are still a concern to Amnesty International.

"The bombing of a television station simply because it is being used for the purposes of propaganda is unacceptable. It is a civilian object, and thus protected under international humanitarian law," said Claudio Cordone, Senior Director for International Law at Amnesty International.

"Attacking a civilian object and carrying out a disproportionate attack are war crimes. The onus is on the Coalition forces to demonstrate the military use of the TV station and, if that is indeed the case, to show that the attack took into account the risk to civilian lives."

There have been reports that Iraqi forces, have deliberately shelled civilians in Basra and to placing military objectives in close proximity to civilians and civilian objects.

Respect for all POWs

Amnesty International has called on the Iraqi, US and UK authorities to treat all prisoners of war in full conformity with the Third Geneva Convention. They should not be subjected to any form of torture or ill-treatment and should be given immediate access to the International Committee of the Red Cross. All prisoners of war are entitled to these provisions. Amnesty International also called on all media to ensure in its use of images that the dignity of all prisoners of war, whether Iraqi or US or other, is respected.

Humanitarian needs of civilians must be met

Amnesty International continued to lend its voice to concerns expressed by the International Committee of the Red Cross, and UNICEF at the plight of civilians in Basra, in Southern Iraq, who have been without water since Friday afternoon. The city of Basra, has been under siege and under fire by the US and its allied forces for the last four days.

Both the Iraqi authorities and the military authorities of the USA and its allies must facilitate access and the operations of humanitarian organizations, without delay.

**For more information on the Iraq Crisis go to http://web.amnesty.org/pages/iraq_summary
and for latest news releases and 24 hour media contacts go to <http://news.amnesty.org>**

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