

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PRESS RELEASE

## News Flash

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### **Iraq: UK government dossier on human rights abuses**

Amnesty International has not yet had time to study the report issued by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office detailing human rights abuses in Iraq. The organization has for many years documented gross human rights violations in Iraq and campaigned for adequate redress of these violations through proper internal and international mechanisms.

The statement attributed today to the Secretary General of Amnesty International is an extract from a previous statement published by the organization in September in response to statements and documents from the British and American governments in which they quoted from reports that Amnesty International had published over the years, on human rights abuses in Iraq.

The human rights situation in Iraq or elsewhere should not be used selectively. The US and other Western governments turned a blind eye to Amnesty International reports of widespread human rights violations in Iraq during the Iran-Iraq war, and ignored Amnesty International's campaign on behalf of the thousands of unarmed Kurdish civilians killed in the 1988 attacks on Halabja.

As the debate on whether to use military force against Iraq escalates, the human rights of the Iraqi people, as a direct consequence of any potential military action, is sorely missing from the equation.

Life, safety and security of civilians must be the paramount consideration in any action taken to resolve the current human rights and humanitarian crisis. The experience of previous armed intervention in the Gulf and other conflicts has shown that, all too often, civilians become the acceptable casualties of war.

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