

IRAQ REVIEW

ISSUED BY THE ISLAMIC DAAWA PARTY - INFORMATION BUREAU

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THE HISTORIC ROLE FOR THE U.N. IN PROTECTING THE SHIAS OF IRAQ

OUR VIEW

The world community has reacted courageously to the plight and tragedy of the Kurds in Iraq and has taken effective measures to protect them from being annihilated by the Saddam regime. Unfortunately, world opinion has not focused its attention with equivalent rigour to the plight of the other sections of Iraqi society and in particular, the Shia majority in Iraq. The Shia in Iraq constitute over 70% of the population yet they have been denied the most basic rights. Politically, they are excluded from all the effective and important circles of decision making. Economically, a systematic policy by Saddam has destroyed the economic base of the Shias who were traditionally the most affluent people in Iraqi society and very successful in business, commerce and trading. Socially, they have always been looked upon as second class citizens, especially in the recent past. Al-Thawra newspaper, the mouth piece of Saddam and his clique in May 1991 ran a series of articles in which abusive and degrading language was used against the Shias to 3rd or 4th class citizens. Religiously, Shia call to prayers has been banned, mosques across the Shia provinces are being systematically destroyed. Cemeteries are being bulldozed. Religious libraries and priceless old manuscripts have disappeared. Shia religious books have been banned and religious scholars have been systematically executed since the early seventies by the Saddam regime. The two holy cities of Karbala and Najaf which represent the heartland of the Shia world have been extensively destroyed and are still under martial law.

Saddam, with all his untrustworthy promises before, now claims to have embarked on an era of democracy for Iraq. Unfortunately, his understanding of democracy as he has told the Kurds is to join hands with the Kurds to isolate and further oppress the Shia. Thus his democracy aims to exclude the majority of the population from any basic right which contradicts the basic principles of democracy. Unfortunately, the west still seems to be gullible to Saddam's ploys. In particular we refer to the west's fears of the Shias, as a result of a mistaken concept by the west who associate the Shias with terrorism, a radicalism and fundamentalism. Despite the fact some terrorist acts were

The U.N. acted boldly and humanly last week when Prince Sadrudin Agha Khan alerted the world to the suffering of the Shias in the Southern marshlands of Iraq. Saddam's army has temporarily halted its attempted genocide against the deprived, hungry and disease stricken Shias who are trapped in the marshes. The U.N. must continuously monitor and highlight the plight of the oppressed Shias throughout Iraq. Once international pressure begins to waiver, Saddam inevitably returns to his brutal and animalistic character of violence and bloodshed to solve the country's internal problems.

The U.N. has a historic responsibility incumbent upon it to keep up the pressure on Saddam regime and prevent him from resorting to his violent nature and to protect the Shias from genocide and extinction.

It is very encouraging to hear of the fact that the U.N. is going to strictly monitor the sale of Iraqi oil in order to feed and provide medical equipment to the millions of ordinary Iraqis who are suffering from hunger, malnutrition and disease. The U.N. should make sure that it takes its responsibility to distribute the food and medicines to the people and to prevent such assistance from being channelled to Saddam and his henchmen. This is what has been happening in the very recent past, with the result that the humanitarian help has ended up in Tikrit, Saddam's home town and in bellies of the Republican Guards. This U.N. policy of equal distribution should be implemented vigorously and quickly so that it may alleviate the chronic and unprecedented economic situation in Iraq. For example, the middle class which used to be affluent, suddenly became impoverished and desperate to feed itself while the working class who were reasonably well off are now below the poverty line and have taken the full brunt of the economic tragedy. Basic foodstuffs like sugar, oil, wheat and rice are hard to come by. Beggars are a common sight, young girls are turning to prostitution and as the U.N. reports describe, people are turning to crime in order to obtain food for their families.

Such is the tragedy that Saddam has brought upon the Iraqi people and this will continue as long as Saddam remains in power. Thus it is in the interest of the neighbouring countries as well as in the

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NEWS

The Dawa Party highlights the plight of the Shias of Iraq to the U.N. Secretary General.

In a letter dated 9th April 1991 the Political Bureau of the Islamic Dawa Party, (IDP) of Iraq sent a letter to the UN Secretary General, Senior Peres de Cuellar. In it the (IDP) brought to the attention of the Secretary General the massacres that are continuing to take place in the predominantly Shia cities of mid and southern Iraq. As such, the letter states the need to brand Saddam and his henchmen as war criminals who should be brought to justice and that the popular uprising in Iraq showed that the Saddam regime had no legitimacy in the eyes of the Iraqi people. The letter went on to request the following points.

1. That the U.N. Security council should pass a resolution in which Saddam should be tried before a war crimes tribunal.
2. That Iraq should be considered a country without a legitimate government and one which is certainly not representative of the people. As such, the U.N. is called upon to try and organise and supervise free and fair elections so that a constitutional democratic system of government can emerge in Iraq that is representative of the people.

A reply to the letter was received on 10th June 1991 from the Director of the security council and political committees division in which the Director acknowledged the concerns expressed in our letter, on behalf of the secretary General. The Director also gave an assurance that the representative on the security council will have an opportunity to acquaint themselves with the contents of our letter.

Massacres in Iraq continues in many forms

The Saddam regime is continuing to carry out a brutal policy of detaining thousands of Iraqi people and taking them to detention camps in Ridhuania area, south of Baghdad. After undergoing severe torture at the hands of Saddam's security forces, the detainees are taken to a large brick factory in the Muhawil area and are thrown alive in the factory's burning furnaces.

IN the light of these horrific crimes, the Islamic Dawn Party

Cont. From "Historic"

interest of the west to aid the Iraqi people to topple Saddam from power and thus overcome the huge problems facing them, not least of which is the economic situation.

Cont. From "Our View"

committed by some individuals, the majority should not be made to pay dearly for these isolated acts. Saddam has played on the west's fears of Shias and has almost had a free hand in the genocide and annihilation of the Shias in Iraq without this prompting any serious international cries and action. In particular, the Shias in Iraq have historically and still today show a considerable degree of pragmatism and a will of co-existence. the west are called upon to appreciate and understand this uniqueness and should not give Saddam the opportunity to exterminate the Shias in Iraq.

organised a series of Pickets from 15th July to 19th July 1991 and coinciding with the meeting of the G7. Pickets were held outside the American, Soviet, French and Chinese embassies as well as in front of the U.N. Office and the Foreign office. The pickets aimed to bring these massacres to the world's attention so that a more responsible and active role can be played by the world community in order to try to put an end to the massacres.

Meeting between a prominent Shia Iraqi Scholar and a U.N. representative takes place

Seyid Mohammad Al-Musawi, the General Secretary of the Ahlul-Bait foundation was invited and met Prince Sadrudeen Agha Khan on Wednesday 17th July at the U.N. offices in Geneva. During the meeting, Prince Sadrudeen made it clear that enormous damage had been inflicted on the Shia Holy Shrines in Karbala and Najaf and during his visit to Iraq he had noticed real and clear persecution and discrimination against the Shia in Iraq. Prince Sadrudeen also promised that he would be arranging a meeting with the Secretary-General of the U.N., Senior Peres De Cuellar within the coming couple of weeks.

The latest news from inside Iraq

An Iraqi Kurd who is a member of the British Overseas Development Agency and whose name shall remain anonymous for his and his family's safety, has just returned from Iraq and given a vivid description of the hell that the Iraqi people are going through.

Concerning the Shia population, he reported that the situation in Southern Iraq is much worse than in the North because of the concentration of humanitarian aid efforts in the North and the lack of it in the South. He reported that there were severe and chronic shortages of basic food stuffs and basic medical facilities. The degree of destruction in the south in some areas was described as being over 90%. Martial law is still in place in the holy cities of Najaf and Karbala. The general picture of life in Iraq was of hellish conditions in which people young and old are making plans and finding means and ways to leave the country and settle abroad. The atmosphere is one of terror, constant disappearance of people and mass executions. The barrier of fear that the people used to have seems to have broken down and people are publicly and loudly talking against Saddam and do not believe his propaganda machine for one second.

All of Saddam's concern and attention seems to have been focused on the capital Baghdad, while the rest of the provinces continue to deteriorate and are in a state of decay. Only 12 hours of electricity exist in Baghdad and there is very little pure and clean water. Food, what little is available is very expensive. Employees have gone for several months without receiving any salaries. Even Iraqis who have savings in the bank cannot withdraw more than 400 Dinars per month. Thousands of high ranking army officers have taken refuge either in the southern marshes or in Kurdistan Iraq. Only in Silopi, a refugee camp in Turkey, there are thought to be over 6000 military personnel and they outright refuse to return unless Saddam is removed from power. As for the British and American servicemen who were patrolling Kurdistan, they predominantly felt that this victory was and will remain a hollow victory as long as Saddam is still in power. Many soldiers spoke of the unfinished business to overthrow Saddam.

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P.O.Box 2068, London, NW6 5TZ