

NGOs appeal to halt anti-Iraq sanctions

The following Appeal was read to the full Assembly of the Human Rights Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and the Protection of Minorities in late August in Geneva, Switzerland. It is part of the official record of the session. A more extensive verbal report was submitted to the sub-commission on Aug. 13 by Warren Hamerman, representing the International Progress Organization, one of the Appeal's signatories. Hamerman's remarks appeared in EIR, Aug. 23.

Appeal

To the Chairman of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and the Protection of Minorities

Representatives of non-governmental organizations, meeting in Geneva for the Forty-third Session of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and the Protection of Minorities 5-30 August 1991, call upon the Chairman of the Sub-Commission to take up the question of the ongoing human tragedy among innocent Iraqi civilians caused by the continuation of the economic sanctions.

The most basic right, the right to life, is being denied in fact to 18 million people by the continuation of the sanctions policy implemented through the United Nations Security Council. This policy violates both the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. That such a policy be carried out on the basis of decisions made by a U.N. organ is unprecedented in the history of the U.N., as it involves a total boycott, following the deliberate destruction of Iraq's infrastructure; a further special feature of this human rights violation is that it is being carried out not by a national government, but by an intergovernmental body against the population of a member state of the U.N.

The most egregious example of the violation of human rights and fundamental freedoms committed through the sanctions policy against Iraq is constituted by the fact that the population is being deprived of the food, water and medicine required to keep it alive. This calamitous situation was documented in the July 1991 report issued by the inter-agency task force led by the U.N. Secretary General's Executive Delegate, Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan, and composed of experts from Unicef, WHO, FAO, WFP, UNHCR, UNDP and others. Earlier, U.N. Undersecretary General Martti Ahtisaari had issued similar findings after his tour to Iraq (see document S/22366, Security Council).



Committee to Save the Children in Iraq

This Iraqi girl from Najaf suffered leg injuries from a bomb blast that couldn't be treated in her home country because of the continuing embargo. She was brought to Germany for treatment through the efforts of the Committee to Save the Children in Iraq.

The situation in postwar Iraq can be characterized as similar to that of a medieval city under siege: cut off from outside assistance, its population, deprived of adequate food, water, medical care and the means to produce its subsistence, is condemned to perish. According to a May 1991 Harvard Study Team Report, the most affected are children with estimates that as many as 170,000 further children will die this year as a result of these postwar conditions.

We believe that it must be said that the members of the U.N. Security Council bear a particular responsibility for the grave consequences of the continuation of the sanctions, because they have been duly informed of the findings of Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan and the Harvard Study Team.

We call upon the Chairman to activate the means at his disposal to bring this case of systematic violations of human rights, as defined by the very humanitarian principles enshrined in the U.N. Charter, before the Secretary General, to urge the Security Council to take the necessary measures to alleviate the suffering of the civilian population in Iraq.

Signed:

International Progress Organization

Union des Juristes Arabes

International Organization for the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination

International League for the Rights and Liberation of Peoples

Pan-Africanist Congress of Azania

Afro-Asian Peoples Solidarity Organization

International Indian Treaty Council

International Association of Democratic Lawyers