

Dear Sir/Madam,

The sanctions on Iraq have been in effect for a decade now, yet they have failed to achieve the stated goal of weakening the oppressive regime in Iraq. On the contrary, it has strengthened it by weakening Iraq's population and crippling the economy.

Over one million people have died directly as a result of the sanctions. These are internationally accepted numbers. 5000 children die every month as a direct result of this murderous and genocidal policy which has proved to be the most inhuman organized isolation of any country in history. And people continue to die, mostly children.

The new medical report below provides hard scientific evidence of the devastation and death that these sanctions have caused to the innocent children in Iraq. These sanctions must be stopped in the name of morality, decency and humanity.

When Jewish US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright was pointedly asked last year if she thought that the American policy supporting the sanctions was worth the enormous toll it was taking on children's lives in Iraq, she shamelessly said "I think it's worth it".

I hope that each one of us is able to look at our children before bed tonight and know that precious children just like these are dying daily as a result of this treacherous policy. Do you and/or your government support this policy? If no, have you spoken out against it?

Unfortunately, there are still some self interest groups in the USA that continue to lobby for support for the sanctions. We hope that you are able to see past the motives of groups such as these because injustice can never prevail.

We urge each and every world leader to use his/her authority to undermine this oppressive policy which has devastated the Muslim people of Iraq. Please speak out against the sanctions in Iraq.

Sincerely,

Dr. Asim Ashique  
Director  
United Muslims' Action Centre

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#### CHILD DEATH RATE DOUBLES IN IRAQ

Iraqi child mortality is soaring

The toll of war and years of sanctions on the health of Iraq's children has been revealed by new research.

In the parts of the country most affected by both, infant mortality has more than doubled, rising well beyond 100 per 1,000 live births.

This puts Iraq, once a highly prosperous country with an advanced health system, on a par with some of the poorest developing countries when it comes to infant mortality.

The new study, led by scientists at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, was published in the Lancet medical journal.

However, it found that infant and child mortality in the autonomous, mainly Kurd region in the North of the country, has actually fallen, perhaps reflecting the more favourable distribution of aid in that area.

Iraq's oil wealth led to swift economic and social development leading up to the start of the 1991 conflict.

Shortly before the start of UN sanctions, the healthcare system reached approximately 97% of the urban and 79% of the rural population.

Infant mortality - children born alive, but dying before their first birthday - had fallen to 47 per 1,000 live births between 1984 and 1989.

This compares to approximately 7 per 1,000 in the UK.

#### Overall health

Infant and child mortality is a good indicator of the overall health of the population, as poor nutrition of the mother may lead to premature birth, one of the key factors in early death.

The surge in mortality also reflects low access to health services, and clean drinking water and sanitation, which affects everyone.

The researchers looked at 23,000 women aged between 15 and 49 years, asking about the health of their children.

They found that in south and central Iraq, infant mortality had risen to 108 per 1,000 between 1994 and 1999, while child mortality - covering those between one and five years - rocketed from 56 to 131 per 1,000.

The sanctions have been now eased to allow an "Oil for Food" aid scheme which pushed back the threat of mass malnutrition. The sanctions were relaxed even further in December.

However, charity Save the Children says much more needs to be done.

A spokesman said: "These figures for infant mortality graphically illustrate the problems in Iraq.

"The Oil for Food programme has been under resourced to date and this has inevitably affected children's growth and development.

"The belated removal of the restriction on oil sales by the UN should slowly increase the resources available.

"But removal or suspension of sanctions would not guarantee immediate improvements for vulnerable groups."

"We consider a long term plan is required for both the infrastructure and human needs of the population - talk of food and medicines after nearly 10 years of sanctions means we 'forget' the educational and social needs of young people."