

IRAQ

COUNTRY ASSESSMENT

**COUNTRY INFORMATION AND POLICY UNIT
ASYLUM AND APPEALS POLICY DIRECTORATE
IMMIGRATION AND NATIONALITY DIRECTORATE**

Version .03 MARCH 1999

CONTENTS

I SCOPE OF DOCUMENT

II GEOGRAPHY

III HISTORY

Origins of Iraq	3.1 - 3.4
Iran - Iraq War	3.5
Invasion of Kuwait	3.6 - 3.7
Northern Iraq (Kurdistan)	3.8 - 3.9
Events since 1990	3.10 - 3.25
Economy	3.26 - 3.29

IV INSTRUMENTS OF THE STATE

Political Situation	4.1
Security Forces	4.2 - 4.3
Legal Framework	4.4
Northern Iraq	4.5 - 4.8

V HUMAN RIGHTS

A: HUMAN RIGHTS: GENERAL ASSESSMENT

A.1 - A.14

B: HUMAN RIGHTS: SPECIFIC GROUPS

Women	B.1 - B.5
Religious Groups	B.6 - B.24
Ethnic Groups	B.25 - B.30

C: HUMAN RIGHTS: OTHER ISSUES

Freedom of Political Opinion	C.1 - C.2
Freedom of the Individual	C.3 - C.4
Freedom of Assembly	C.5
Freedom of Speech and Press	C.6 - C.11
Freedom of Travel	C.12 - C.14

ANNEX A: POLITICAL PARTIES

ANNEX B: CHRONOLOGY

ANNEX C: CHRONOLOGY OF UNSCOM CRISIS DURING 1998

ANNEX D: ABBREVIATIONS

ANNEX E: BIBLIOGRAPHY

I. SCOPE OF DOCUMENT

1.1 This assessment has been produced by the Country Information & Policy Unit, Immigration & Nationality Directorate, Home Office, from information obtained from a variety of sources.

1.2 The assessment has been prepared for background purposes for those involved in the asylum determination process. The information it contains is not exhaustive, nor is it intended to catalogue all human rights violations. It concentrates on the issues most commonly raised in asylum claims made in the United Kingdom. It represents the current assessment by the Immigration & Nationality Directorate of the general socio-political and human rights situation in the country.

1.3 The assessment is sourced throughout. It is intended to be used by caseworkers as a signpost to the source material, which has been made available to them. The vast majority of the source material is readily available in the public domain.

1.4 It is intended to revise the assessment on a 6-monthly basis while the country remains within the top 35 asylum producing countries in the United Kingdom.

1.5 The assessment will be placed on the Internet (<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/ind/cipu1.htm>). An electronic copy of the assessment has been made available to the following organisations:

Amnesty International UK
Immigration Advisory Service
Immigration Appellate Authority
Immigration Law Practitioners' Association
Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants
JUSTICE
Medical Foundation for the care of Victims of Torture
Refugee Council
Refugee Legal Centre
UN High Commissioner for Refugees

II. GEOGRAPHY

2.1 The Republic of Iraq is a virtually land locked state in Western Asia, with a narrow outlet to the sea on the Persian (Arabian) Gulf. Its neighbours are Iran to the east, Turkey to the north, Syria and Jordan to the west, and Saudi Arabia and Kuwait to the south. [1 & 2]

2.2 Since the end of the Gulf War in 1991, Iraq is essentially divided into two parts - the north east of the country, which is also known as Kurdistan; and the rest of the country. [1 & 2]

2.3 The Republic of Iraq has a population of 17,903,000 (official estimate as at mid 1991). Ethnically and linguistically, the Iraqi population includes Arabs, Kurds, Turkomen, Yazidis, and Armenians. The official language is Arabic, which is spoken by approximately 80% of the population. About 15% speak Kurdish, while there is a small Turkoman speaking minority. [1 & 2]

III. HISTORY

A. Origins of Iraq

3.1 Iraq was formerly part of Turkey's Ottoman Empire. During the First World War (1914-18) when Turkey was allied with Germany, the territory was captured by British forces and was placed under a League of Nations mandate, administered by the United Kingdom. In 1921 Amir Faisal ibn Hussain was proclaimed King of Iraq. During the early years the new kingdom was faced by Kurdish revolts (1922-32) and by border disputes to the south. The British mandate ended on 3 October 1932, when Iraq became fully independent. [1]

3.2 Following the overthrow of King Faisal II during a military revolution on 14 July 1958, which brought to power a left-wing nationalist regime headed by Brig. (later Lt-Gen.) Abd al-Karim Kassem, the 1925 Constitution was abolished, the legislature was dissolved, and in March 1959 Iraq withdrew from the Baghdad Pact, a British-inspired agreement on collective regional security. Until his assassination in February 1963, during a coup by members of the armed forces, Kassem maintained an increasingly isolated position. The new government of Col. (later Field Marshal) Abd as-Salem Muhammed Aref was more pan-Arab in outlook and sought relations with the United Arab Republic (Egypt). [1]

3.3 Following his death in 1966 President Aref was succeeded by his brother, Maj.-Gen. Abd ar-Rahman Muhammed Aref, who remained in power until he was ousted by members of the Arab Renaissance (Ba'ath) Socialist Party on 17 July 1968. Maj.-Gen. (later Field Marshal) Ahmad Hassan al-Bakr became President and Prime Minister, and supreme authority was vested in the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC), of which President al-Bakr was also Chairman. [1]

3.4 Since the Baath Party came to power in 1968 Iraq has witnessed a one party system of government. Although it has allowed political parties, trade unions and peasant associations to function as part of a "patriotic front" in a facade of devolution, such bodies could only function under complete Baath Party control. On 16 July 1979 the Vice-Chairman of the RCC, Saddam Hussein, who had long since exercised the real power in Iraq, replaced Al-Bakr as Chairman. [1]

B. Iran - Iraq War

3.5 Relations with Iran, precarious for many years developed into full scale war in September 1980. The Algiers agreement between Iran and Iraq, signed in 1975, had defined the southern border between the

two countries as a line along the middle of the Shatt al-Arab waterway. In the ensuing years Iraq had become dissatisfied with the 1975 agreement and called for the withdrawal of Iranian forces from Abu Musa and the Tumb islands, dependency of the UAE which Iran had occupied in 1971. The Iranian revolution of 1979 escalated the situation. Border disputes occurred in the summer of 1980 and in September Iraqi forces advanced into Iran. The fighting continued until August 1988 when a cease-fire was agreed after Iran announced its unconditional acceptance of the UN Security Council Resolution 598. However, negotiations on the full implementation of the Resolution made little progress until Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in August 1990, at which point Iraq abruptly sought a formal peace agreement with Iran, by accepting all the claims that Iran had pursued since the cease-fire, including the re-instatement of the Algiers Agreement of 1975, dividing the Shatt al-Arab. [1]

C. Invasion of Kuwait

3.6 In mid-1990 the Iraqi Government criticised countries (Principally Kuwait and the UAE) which persistently produced petroleum in excess of the quotas imposed by OPEC. Iraq also accused Kuwait of violating the Iraqi border in order to secure petroleum resources, and suggested that Kuwait should waive Iraq's debt repayments. In July Kuwait and the UAE agreed to reduce their petroleum production, and it was agreed that the minimum price of crude petroleum should be increased. Direct negotiations between Iraq and Kuwait began at the end of July, with the aim of resolving their disputes over territory and Iraqi Debt. The discussions failed and on 2 August 1990 Iraqi forces invaded Kuwait. On 8 August Iraq announced the formal annexation of Kuwait, claiming that its forces had entered Kuwait at the invitation of insurgents, who had overthrown the Kuwaiti government. [1]

3.7 The UN Security Council responded by unanimously adopting, on the day of the invasion, Resolution No. 660, which demanded the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait. Subsequent resolutions imposed mandatory economic sanctions on Iraq and occupied Kuwait, and declared Iraq's annexation of Kuwait to be null and void. Diplomatic efforts to achieve a peaceful solution to the crisis all foundered on Iraq's refusal to withdraw its forces from Kuwait. In late November the UN Security Council adopted a resolution (No. 678) which permitted member states to use 'all necessary means' to enforce the withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait, if they had not left by 15 January 1991. On the night of 16-17 January 'Operation Desert Storm' began with attacks on Baghdad by the multinational force. A cease-fire was declared by the US government on 28 February. Iraq agreed to renounce its claim to Kuwait, to release prisoners of war, and to comply with the relevant UN Security Council resolutions. [1]

D. Northern Iraq (Kurdistan)

3.8 A Kurdish Autonomous Region was formed in 1970 where the Kurds exercised limited powers of self determination. During the 1980's representatives of Iraq's Kurds demanded greater autonomy. Resources were repeatedly diverted from the war with Iran to control Kurdish rebellion in the north-east of the country. Discussions began in December 1983, following a cease-fire between the Iraqi government and Jalal Talabani, the leader of the main Kurdish opposition party in Iraq, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK). The collapse of negotiations in May 1984 frustrated hopes for a government of national unity, including the PUK and the Iraqi Communist Party. In January 1985 armed conflict was resumed in Kurdistan between PUK guerrillas and government troops. The PUK blamed the Government's continued persecution and execution of Kurds; its refusal to permit consideration in autonomy talks of one-third of Kurdistan which, in Kirkuk province, contains some of Iraq's main oilfields, and an agreement with Turkey to act jointly to quell Kurdish resistance. [1]

3.9 In February 1988 PUK and KDP (Democratic Party of Kurdistan, the other main Kurdish group) guerrillas (assisted by Iranian forces) made inroads into government-controlled territory in Iraqi Kurdistan.

In March the Iraqi Government retaliated by using chemical weapons against the Kurdish town of Halabja. The cease-fire in the Iran-Iraq War in August enabled Iraq to divert more troops and equipment to Kurdistan, and to launch a new offensive to over-run guerrilla bases near the borders with Iran and Turkey, during which chemical weapons were allegedly used, forcing Kurdish civilians and fighters to escape across the borders. The Kurdish political factions achieved greater unity of purpose following their alliance in May when the Kurdistan Iraqi Front (KIF) was formed. In September the Iraqi Government began to evacuate inhabitants of the Kurdish Autonomous Region to the interior of Iraq and by October 1989 an uninhabited 30 Km wide 'security zone' was in place. [1]

E. Events since 1990

3.10 The conflict with the United Nations was followed by domestic unrest. In early March 1991 rebel forces, including Shi'a Muslims and disaffected soldiers were reported to have seized Basra and other southern cities gaining control of much of the country, but the rebellion was soon crushed by troops loyal to Saddam Hussein. In the north, Kurdish separatists over-ran a large area of Kurdistan, however they were unable to resist the onslaught of the Iraqi armed forces, which were redeployed northwards as soon as they crushed the uprising in Southern Iraq. By mid-June 1991 the United Nations and the Iraqi government had negotiated a 'memorandum of understanding' whereby the UN was permitted to establish humanitarian centres ('safe havens' for the Kurdish population) on Iraqi territory for a period of 6 months which was subsequently extended. In response to renewed attacks by Government forces on southern Iraqi Shi'a communities and on the inhabitants of Iraq's southern marshlands, on 26 August 1992 the US, British, French, and Russian Governments announced their decision to establish a zone in southern Iraq, south of latitude 32°N, from which all Iraqi fixed-wing aircraft would be excluded. [1]

3.11 In late April 1991 it was announced by the leader of the PUK, Jalal Talabani, that President Saddam Hussein had agreed, in principle, to implement the provisions of the Kurdish peace plan of 1970. However, following a breakdown of negotiations the Iraqi Government withdrew all services from the area, effectively subjecting it to an economic blockade. The KIF proceeded to organise an election to a Kurdish national assembly, and for a paramount Kurdish leader. The results of the election, in which virtually all the 1.1 million strong electorate voted, was that the PUK and KDP were entitled to an almost equal number of seats, with none of the smaller Kurdish parties represented. The results for the overall Kurdish leader was inconclusive and a run-off election was to be held at a future date. [1]

3.12 In March 1993 the Kurdish Cabinet was dismissed by the Kurdish national Assembly for its failure to effectively deal with the crisis in the region. A new cabinet was appointed at the end of April. Armed conflict between fighters belonging to the PUK and the KDP in May 1994, led to the division of the northern Kurdish-controlled enclave into two zones. A peace agreement was reported to have been concluded in early June, but fighting broke out again in August. Numerous other peace agreements were short lived and sporadic fighting continued between the two factions for several years. [1]

3.13 In May 1994, facing an economic crisis, Saddam Hussein assumed the post of Prime Minister in a reshuffle of the Council of Ministers. In January 1995 a comprehensive reorganisation of military ranks took place, apparently as a result of an unsuccessful attempt to stage a military *coup d'état* in the same month. In March another attempted coup, organised this time by the former head of Iraqi military intelligence and supported by Kurdish insurgents in the north and Shi'a rebels in the south, was reported to have been suppressed. In 1996, there were numerous credible reports that the regime executed persons allegedly involved in plotting against President Hussein, including high ranking civilian, military, and tribal leaders, as well as members of his family and clan. Hussein Kamel and Saddam Kamel, Saddam Hussein's sons in law, were executed by the Government in February 1996, when they returned from Jordan after defecting in August 1995. Although the Government announced amnesties for both men, they and over

40 relatives, including women and children, were killed in what the official Iraqi press described as the spontaneous administration of tribal justice. The Special Rapporteur, Max van de Stoel, noted in his November report that "the killings occurred without any legal process and with total impunity". He also cited continued reports of the frequent use of the death penalty for such offences as "insulting" the President or the Baath Party and the pervasive fear of death for any act or expression of dissent. [2]

3.14 In February 1996 Turkey agreed to continue with NATO 'Operation Provide Comfort' in order to protect the Kurdish enclave in areas of Iraq north of latitude 36°N. However, on 31 August 1996, government troops, tanks, artillery, and helicopters first shelled and then captured the city of Irbil (aka Arbil, Erbil) in northern Iraq. Several other cities and villages in northern Iraq were shelled by artillery and then were entered by government troops. The Special Rapporteur stated in November 1996 that indiscriminate shelling by Iraqi forces of civilian settlements had been a recurrent practice well before these most recent clashes. Disappearances in northern Iraq also increased in 1996 as Iraqi and Iranian intelligence units grew more active. The Special Rapporteur stated that the fate of these individuals remains unknown. Unconfirmed reports blamed Iran for the disappearances of several Iranian opposition figures who resided in the north. [1]

3.15 Also during 1996, fighting continued between the KDP and PUK in Northern Iraq, in which both fighters and civilians were killed. KDP co-operation with the Iraqi Government in the attack on Irbil on 31 August 1996 and PUK co-operation with Iran increased instability and the ability of both governments to act against political opponents in the area. A cease-fire established on 23 October 1996 ended fighting for the rest of 1996, albeit with a few sporadic clashes. [2]

3.16 On several occasions in 1996, Turkish armed forces entered northern Iraq in pursuit of members of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) and their bases. Terrorist activities in northern Iraq and Turkey by the Turkish PKK terrorist organisation, also resulted in the death of both fighters and civilians. Both Iraqi Kurdish groups and the PKK reportedly committed serious abuses, including killings, torture, arbitrary arrest and detention. [2]

3.17 Also in 1996, Iraqi military operations continued to target Shi'a Arabs living in the southern marshes. In central and southern Iraq, the regime continued to divert humanitarian supplies to its security forces, the military, and other supporters. Government forces reportedly executed more Shi'a inhabitants of the southern marshes in 1996, but there remains no independent means to verify these reports. Credible reports confirm the ongoing destruction of the marshes by the army continuing to construct canals, causeways, and earthen berms to divert water from the wetlands. Hundreds of square kilometres have been burned in military operations. Moreover, the regime's diversion of supplies in the south limited the population's access to food, medicine, drinking water and transportation. [2]

3.18 The Government reportedly continued to target Shi'a Muslim clergy, and their supporters, who are concentrated in the south of the country, for arbitrary arrest and other abuses in 1996. The Government also reportedly continued to forcibly move various Shi'a populations from the south to the north, especially in the Shi'a centres of Kut and Naja, and other minority groups such as Assyrians and Turkomen from the north to government controlled territory. As in previous years, in 1996, the armed forces conducted deliberate artillery attacks against Shi'a civilians in the southern marshes and against minority groups in northern Iraq. [2]

3.19 In 1997 sporadic fighting between the KDP and PUK continued. A truce brokered by the United States, the United Kingdom and Turkey called the "Ankara Peace Process" was broken when PUK forces attacked KDP positions and occupied the Safeen mountain positions on 12 October 1997. The situation in Kurdistan has been further complicated by Turkish forces entering the area to attack members of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK). The PKK has also come under attack from KDP forces after they attempted to support PUK forces. [3(a)(b)]

3.20 Opposition groups have claimed the Iraqi regime has carried out large numbers of executions in 1997. The Iraqi National Congress (INC) claimed in December 1997 that at least 1,200 prisoners were executed as part of a so called "prison cleansing campaign". It was claimed that most were suspected of belonging to opposition groups. Also in December 1997 four Jordanian students were executed for smuggling car parts. However, in January 1998 Iraq released 95 Jordanian prisoners. [3(c)(d)(e)(f)]

3.21 In January 1998 a military build-up occurred in the Gulf region when the United Nations withdrew its inspection teams (UNSCOM), who were searching for chemical weapons facilities, when they were unable to inspect certain Iraqi sites. Military action was avoided when the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Kofi Annan signed a Memorandum of Understanding in February with the Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister, Tareq Aziz. A further crisis between Iraq and the UN occurred in August 1998 when the Iraqi National Assembly voted to suspend most co-operation with UNSCOM. As a result of Iraq's attempts to restrict the work of UNSCOM, the UK and the US came very close to taking military action. [3(i)(j)(l),4(p),5(d)]

3.22 In Northern Iraq the main Kurdish parties, KDP and PUK, continued a dialogue leading to a peace agreement. It was reported that in March 1998 the KDP and PUK released a number of prisoners of war (POW's), following an agreement between the parties to release all detainees and POW's. However, the peace did not continue throughout the whole of Northern Iraq. Reports continued throughout 1998 of Turkish forces entering Iraq to battle with PKK forces. It has been reported that the Turkish forces have the backing of the KDP, and there have also been reports of fighting between KDP and PKK forces. [4(d)(e)(f)(g)]

3.23 In September 1998 the KDP and PUK agreed a conciliatory and peace agreement following talks in the United States of America. The agreement planned for parliamentary elections next summer, and guaranteed the lawful rights of Turkomen, Assyrians and Chaldeans in Iraqi Kurdistan. The agreement did not call for a separate Kurdish state but protected the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Iraq. [4(h)(i)]

3.24 UNICEF reported in October 1997 that one million children were chronically malnourished and that the death rate of children under five in 1996 was eight times greater than before the Gulf War. "What we are seeing is a dramatic deterioration in the nutritional well-being of Iraqi children since 1991," said Philippe Heffinck, UNICEF representative in Baghdad. "And what concerns us now is that there is no sign of any improvement since Security Council resolution 986 came into force." In September 1998, former UN co-ordinator Denis Halliday observed that "4,000 to 5,000 children dying unnecessarily every month due to the impact of sanctions because of the breakdown of water and sanitation, inadequate diet and the bad internal health situation." [23]

3.25 The Iraqi Government ended all forms of co-operation with the UN Special Commission

(UNSCOM) in October 1998. They asserted that all of UNSCOM's activities would be halted until; the UN Security Council adopted "a positive and honest view of Iraq's firm right" to the lifting of UN sanctions; and Richard Butler was dismissed as the UNSCOM chairman and UNSCOM was restructured in "a manner that makes it a neutral and professional institution". This decision came the day after the Security Council had agreed outline terms of reference for a comprehensive review of Iraq's compliance with its obligations. Faced with the prospect of imminent military strikes Iraq backed down and gave, and the Security Council demanded, an unconditional undertaking to allow the weapons inspectors unrestricted access. Richard Butler was given one month to report on Iraqi co-operation. His December report indicated that the Iraqi Government had failed to meet its obligations and continued to obstruct the weapons inspectors. Operation Desert Fox was initiated in December 1998. The confrontation escalated in January 1999 with dispute over the "no-fly zones" (see Annex C for Chronology of UNSCOM crisis during 1998). [5(d)(e)]

3.26 The US Government designated 7 Iraqi opposition groups, in January 1999, eligible for US\$97 million worth of financial assistance under the Iraqi Liberation Act approved by Congress in October 1998. The groups were the Iraqi National Congress, Kurdish Democratic Party, Patriotic party of Kurdistan, Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, Iraqi National Accord, Islamic Movement of Iraqi Kurdistan, Movement for Constitutional Monarchy. [5(e)]

F. ECONOMY

3.26 The Government controls most of the economy, which is largely based on oil production, and owns all major industries. Damaged by the Gulf War and subjected to United Nations sanctions as a result of Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait, the economy continues to deteriorate. The sanctions ban all exports and allows imports only of food, medicine, and materials and supplies for essential civilian needs. The Government's failure to comply with UN Security Council resolutions has led to repeated extensions of the sanctions. In May 1996, after a year of obstruction and delay, the Government reached agreement with the UN on a plan to implement UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 986, which would allow a controlled sale of Iraqi oil to purchase food and other humanitarian goods to improve the deteriorating situation of the Iraqi people, so called "oil for food" program. Throughout the rest of 1996, however, the Government continued to engage in delaying tactics and other actions which the UN and other observers cited as delaying implementation. The Government's actions threatened the resolution's intended controls on oil sales and the conditions required to ensure fair and equitable distribution of relief. [2]

3.27 On 2 April 1997, the Government of Iraq began distributing the first food rations to its citizens under the "Memorandum of Understanding" or "oil for food" programme arranged with the UN. The first ship carrying food under the programme, which had been approved in December 1996 arrived in Iraq on 31 March. Sanctions were still in effect at throughout 1998, and the "oil for food" program was continuing. There have been reports of the sanctions affected not only health, food and educational systems but also Iraq's power system which is on the brink of collapse. The Government's failure to comply with UN Security Council resolutions has resulted in the maintenance of the sanctions. In March 1998 the ceiling on Iraq's oil exports was raised from \$2 billion to \$5.3 billion every 6 months and provision has been made for the import of approved spare parts to facilitate expansion of U.N.-controlled oil exports. Baghdad steadfastly refused to meet the conditions that will allow sanctions to be lifted. [3(g)(h)(i),4(a)(b),5(b),20]

3.28 The Government continued to interfere routinely with the international community's provision of humanitarian assistance to the populace by placing a higher priority on importing industrial items than on

food and medicine, diverting goods to benefit the regime, and restricting the work of UN personnel and relief workers. UN and European Union observers attribute the country's poor economic conditions to the Government's actions, not to the sanctions regime. In response to an increase in international humanitarian aid, the Government announced on June 6 that it would refuse to accept shipments of humanitarian aid from other governments and non-governmental agencies (NGO's). The Government stated that it previously had accepted such aid only to effect contacts with organisations and nations that might support Iraq politically. Some humanitarian aid was allowed into the country after June, but only on a case-by-case basis and with clear political overtones. For example, aid from Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, and Saudi Arabia was refused consistently. The Iraqi opposition reports that the Government ordered the confiscation of all agricultural crops in February in order to maintain its monopoly on the supply of food. Later, in what appeared to be a further attempt to strengthen political power by controlling food supplies, the Government imposed a tax on all imported goods. [20]

IV INSTRUMENTS OF THE STATE

A POLITICAL SITUATION

4.1 Political power in Iraq lies exclusively in a repressive one-party apparatus dominated by Saddam Hussein and members of his extended family. The provisional Constitution of 1968 stipulates that the Arab Ba'ath Socialist Party (ABSP) governs Iraq through the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC), which exercises both executive and legislative authority. President Saddam Hussein, who is also Prime Minister, Chairman of the RCC, and Secretary General of the Regional Command of the ABSP, wields decisive power. [11]

B SECURITY FORCES

4.2 Military service is compulsory for all men at the age of 18 years, in central Iraq, and lasts between 18 months and two years, extendable in wartime. There is no provision for military service for those people residing in Northern Iraq. It is possible to begin military service at the age of 14, however those under the age of 18 require the consent of their father. In August 1997 the Iraqi Government announced for the fourth year a 3-week training course in weapons use, hand-to-hand fighting, rappelling from helicopters and infantry tactics for children 10 to 15 years of age. Camps for these "Saddam Cubs" operated throughout Iraq, with 8,000 children participating in Baghdad alone. There were reports of some reservists being called for one month's training in 1998. [4(j)(k),6,11,18,22]

4.3 In August 1997 the armed forces totalled an estimated 387,500 regular members; the army had an estimated total strength of 350,000 (including an estimated 100,000 active reserves); the air force had a strength of 35,000, and the navy an estimated 2,500. Defence expenditure in 1996 was estimated at us \$1,300m. [1]

C LEGAL FRAMEWORK

4.4 There are two parallel judicial systems: the regular courts, which try common criminal offences; and special security courts, which generally try national security cases, but may also try criminal cases. Procedures in the regular courts theoretically provide for many protections. Trials in the regular courts are public, and defendants are entitled to counsel, at government expense in the case of indigents. Defence lawyers have the right to review the charges and evidence brought against their clients. There is no jury system; panels of three judges try cases. Defendants have the right to appeal to the Court of Appeal and then to the Court of Cassation, which is the highest court. Special security courts have jurisdiction in all cases involving espionage and treason, peaceful political dissent, smuggling, currency exchange violations, and drug trafficking. [11]

D NORTHERN IRAQ (IRAQI KURDISTAN)

4.5 Northern Iraq has effectively been split between the Kurdish forces of the KDP and PUK following the fighting May 1994. All central government functions have been performed by local administrators, mainly Kurds, since the Government withdrew its military forces and civilian administrative personnel

from the area after the 1991 uprising. A regional parliament and local government administrators were elected in 1992. This parliament last met in May 1995. Discussions among Kurdish and other northern Iraqi political groups continued on the reconvening of parliament, although fighting between the PUK and KDP prevented normal parliamentary activity. [1,11,22]

4.6 The latest peace agreement was signed in September 1998 in the United States of America with a follow up meeting in northern Iraq in January 1999. The Kurdish parties have insisted that the agreement will maintain the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Iraq, and is a step towards unifying the judiciary and education systems and would help to secure the services the region's inhabitants were seeking to obtain. [1,4(h)(i),11]

4.7 It was reported that the agreement will guarantee the lawful rights of the Turkomen, Assyrian and Chaldean Christian minorities in the area. Elections are due to be held, in July 1999, for a Kurdish Assembly with 105 members, 5 of which would be representing the Assyrians and may include representatives of the Turkomen minority. [4(h)(i)]

4.8 The KDP and PUK have control of their own areas apart from the Halabja region (PUK territory) where the IMIK (Islamic Movement of Iraqi Kurdistan) is influential, and in the mountains of northern Iraq (KDP territory), where the PKK has bases. The Kurdish regions under their authority both have a system of justice, based on Iraqi legislation, with police to enforce public order; there are also hospitals, schools and universities. Both regions have their own government, in which several parties have seats. [21]

V HUMAN RIGHTS

A. GENERAL HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION

A.1 Full political participation in the Iraqi Government at the national level is confined to members of the Arab Ba'ath Socialist Party, estimated at about 8 percent of the population. The political system is dominated by the Party, which governs through the Revolutionary Command Council, headed by President Saddam Hussein. However, the RCC exercises both executive and legislative authority. It overshadows the National Assembly, which is completely subordinate to it and the executive branch. Saddam Hussein and his regime refer to an October 1995, nondemocratic "referendum" to legitimise his presidency in which he received 99.96 percent of the vote. This "referendum" included neither secret ballots nor opposing candidates, and many credible reports indicated that voters feared possible reprisal for a negative vote. [11]

A.2 There are strict qualifications for electoral candidates; the candidates for the National Assembly, by law, must be over 25 years old and "believe in God, the principles of the July 17-30 revolution, and socialism." Out of the 250 seats, 160 deputies reportedly belong to the Ba'ath Party, 60 are independent, and Saddam Hussein appointed 30 deputies to represent the northern provinces. According to the Special Rapporteur, the Ba'ath Party allegedly instructed a number of its members to run as nominally "independent" candidates. The first elections to the Iraqi National Assembly since 1989 took place on 24 March 1996. Two hundred and twenty of the 250 seats in the Assembly were contested by 689 candidates, all of whom had received the prior approval of a government selection committee (the remaining 30 seats were reserved for representatives of the Autonomous Regions of Arbil, D'hok, and As-Sulaimaniya and were filled by presidential decree). [1,11]

A.3 The judiciary is not independent, and there is no check on the President's power to override any court decision. However, the regime often assigns to the security courts cases which, on their merits, would appear to fall under the jurisdiction of the regular courts. [11]

A.4 The Government shields certain groups from prosecution for alleged crimes. A 1992 decree grants immunity from prosecution to members of the Ba'ath Party and the security forces who kill anyone while in pursuit of army deserters. Unconfirmed but widespread reports indicate that this decree was applied in 1997 to prevent trials or punishment of government officials. [11]

A.5 According to the Special Rapporteur and other sources, military officers or civil servants with no legal training head these tribunals, which hear cases in secret. Authorities often hold defendants incommunicado and do not permit contact with lawyers. The courts admit confessions extracted by torture, which often serve as the basis for conviction. There are reports that individuals who have co-operated with UN weapons inspectors have been subjected to secret trials. [11]

A.6 Many cases appear to end in summary execution, although defendants may appeal to the President for clemency. Saddam Hussein may grant clemency in any case that apparently suits his political goals. There are no Shari'a, or Islamic law, courts as such. Regular courts are empowered to administer Islamic law in cases involving personal status, such as divorce and inheritance. [11]

A.7 Although the Constitution and Legal Code explicitly prohibit arbitrary arrest and detention, the authorities routinely engage in these practices. The Special Rapporteur stated that arbitrary arrests are still common throughout the country and many times lead to detention for often long periods of time without access to a lawyer or being brought before a court. The military and security services, rather than the ordinary police, carry out most cases of arbitrary arrest and detention. It is claimed that numerous foreigners arrested arbitrarily in previous years remain in detention. [11]

A.8 It has also been reported that there is a widespread practice of holding family members and close associates responsible for the alleged actions of others. The Special Rapporteur notes that "guilt by association" is facilitated by administrative requirements on relatives of deserters or other perceived opponents of the regime. For example, relatives who did not report deserters, for example, could lose their ration cards for purchasing government controlled food supplies or be evicted from their residences. It has been reported that relatives often do not inquire about the whereabouts of arrested family members for fear of being arrested themselves. [11]

A.9 Mass arrests are also reportedly commonplace ; the Special Rapporteur learned of at least 3 such instances in southern Iraq in 1997. Twenty-five families are reported to have been interred in Al-Fajir prison in Nassariyah province; 30 persons (women, children and old men) from Al-Ghizlah reportedly were arrested and taken to Baghdad; on 3 April, a large number of persons were reportedly arrested in the Bani Said area and have yet to be released. [11]

A.10 As socio-economic conditions deteriorated, the regime punished persons accused of economic crimes, military desertion, and a variety of other charges with torture and cruel and inhuman penalties, including the extensive use of amputation. In his 1994 report, the UN Special Rapporteur refers to the recent laws for the punishment of thieves and military deserters as promoting the application of cruel and unusual punishments (see Annex C for the 1994 laws on desertion and draft evasion). [2,6]

A.11 Certain prisons are notorious for routine mistreatment of prisoners. Al-Rashidiya Prison, on the Tigris River north of Taji, reportedly has torture chambers. The Al-Shamma'iya Prison, located in east Baghdad, holds the mentally ill and is reportedly the site of both torture and disappearances. The Al-Radwaniyah Prison is a former prisoner-of-war facility near Baghdad and reportedly the site of torture as well as mass executions and has been estimated to hold more than 5,000 persons. This prison was the principal detention centre for persons arrested following the civil uprisings of 1991. Abu Gharib prison situated west of Baghdad, may hold as many as 15,000 persons, many of whom are reportedly subjected to torture. Al-Rashidiya prison, on the Tigris river north of Taji, reportedly has torture chambers. [2,11]

A.12 According to former detainees, torture techniques include branding, electric shocks, administered to the genitals and other areas, beatings, burnings with hot irons, suspension from ceiling fans, dripping acid on the skin, rape, breaking of limbs, denial of food and water, and threats to rape or otherwise harm relatives. Tormentors kill many victims and mutilate their bodies before returning them to the victims' families. [2,8]

A.13 The Iraqi authorities periodically eliminated large numbers of political detainee's en masse. During the year the Special Rapporteur continued to receive reports referring to an execution campaign taking

place in Abu Ghraib and Radwaniyah prisons. Opposition groups alleged that all political prisoners with sentences of more than 15 to 20 years were subject to summary execution. Specifically, sources in Iraq reported that 400 prisoners at Abu Ghraib prison were executed summarily in February, with 60 more killed in March and 62 in June. In March the Shi'a opposition reported that 60 Iraqis from al Nasiriyah province were executed. In April 100 detainees from Radwaniyah Prison reportedly were taken to Ramadi province where they were buried alive in a pit. In May opposition sources released the names of 38 individuals who were executed summarily. Lists of more than 170 detainees executed between mid-December 1997 and July 1998 were provided to the Special Rapporteur. In July and August, 13 more summary executions reportedly took place. [20]

A.14 The Government's motive for so many summary executions--probably more than 2,000 to 3,000 since 1997--is not known. Some observers believe that it is simply a inhuman effort to clear out overcrowded prisons. Others (noting the abusive nature of some of the killings and that, in some cases, bodies are released to family members bearing clear signs of torture) believe that this is an attempt to intimidate anyone considering protesting against or working to change the present Government. [20]

B. HUMAN RIGHTS : SPECIFIC GROUPS

WOMEN

B.1 The Iraqi Government has stated that women constitute 48.7 per cent of Iraq's total population, and that like all other Iraqi citizens, have suffered the adverse effects of the embargo in the form of a drop in income, rapidly escalating prices and a sinking level of food and health security. The Government claims that it is committed to equality for women, who make up about 20 percent of the work force. It has enacted laws to protect women from exploitation in the workplace and from sexual harassment; to permit women to join the regular army, Popular Army, and police forces; to require education for girls; and to equalise women's rights in divorce, land ownership, taxation, and suffrage. It is difficult to determine to what extent these protections are afforded in practice. However, reports indicate that the application of these laws has declined as Iraq's political and economic crisis persists. A large number of Iraqi women have been forced to abandon working life by resigning or retiring from jobs and are denied the opportunity to participate in public life. [16,17,20]

B.2 The Iraqi Government has also claimed the embargo has an adverse impact on women's physical and mental health with a shortage of food, medicines and essential humanitarian needs. It has been claimed that 73 per cent of women suffered from anaemia and the maternal mortality rate had risen from 36 per 1,000 to 120 per 1,000. [16,17]

B.3 Although the Government has stated that women have suffered because of the embargo, the Special Rapporteur, human rights organisations, and opposition groups continued to receive numerous reports of women suffering severe psychological trauma after they were raped in custody. The security forces allegedly raped women captured during the Anfal campaign and during the occupation of Kuwait. The Government has never acknowledged these reports of rape or conducted any investigation. Although the Government made a variety of announcements against rape and other violent crimes throughout 1997, it took no action against those who committed this abuse. [11]

B.4 The Special Rapporteur also noted that there is an unusually high percentage of women in the Kurdish areas, purportedly caused by the disappearances of tens of thousands of Kurdish men during the Anfal Campaign. The Special Rapporteur has reported that the widows, daughters, and mothers of the Anfal Campaign victims are economically dependent on their relatives or villages because they may not inherit the property or assets of their missing family members. [20]

B.5 The Special Rapporteur has stated that the Iraqi Government discriminates against women. An example of this is a 1990 decree which grants immunity to men who commit "honor [sic] crimes", i.e kill their female family members for a perceived lack of chastity. [11]

RELIGIOUS GROUPS

B.6 The Provisional Constitution of 1968 states that "Islam is the religion of the State." The Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs monitors places of worship, appoints the clergy and approves the publication of religious literature. However, the Government severely limits freedom of religion. [2,11]

B.7 About 95% of the population of Iraq are Muslims, of whom 50% belong to the Shi'a Sect. However, since the present regime came into power in 1968, it has been dominated by members of the Sunni Sect. Despite legal guarantees of sectarian equality, the regime has in recent years repressed the

Shi'a clergy and followers of the Shi'a faith. Security forces have desecrated Shi'a mosques and holy sites, particularly in the aftermath of the 1991 civil uprisings. Reports have claimed that Iraqi Government forces attacked residential areas of southern Iraq where the Shi'a population is concentrated. [1,2,4(l)]

B.8 The Special Rapporteur for Iraq expressed his concern that the killings of two leading Shi'a scholars were part of an organised attack by Iraqi officials against the independent leadership of the Shi'a religious community in Iraq. On 21 April 1998 Ayatollah Shaykh Murtada al-Burujerdi was assassinated after leading congregational prayers. This was followed by the killing of Grand Ayatollah Shaykh Mirza Ali al-Gharawi on 18 June 1998. It was also alleged that Ayatollah al-Burujerdi had suffered various forms of harassment by Iraqi officials in the two years prior to his arrest. [19]

B.9 The Iraqi authorities accused foreign parties of carrying out the killings of the Shi'a scholars. Following these killings the Iraqi authorities developed a security plan to provide protection for religious scholars. This involved the Iraqi military intelligence service directly supervising the security of all religious centres in southern Iraq and will also be assigned to provide protection to the religious scholars there. [4(m)]

Sunni Muslims

B.10 Sunni Arabs make up 12-15% of the population have traditionally dominated economic and political life. The wealthier Muslims tend to be made up of the Sunni Sect. Saddam Hussein and most of the ruling Ba'ath Party are of Sunni persuasion. [12,7(a)]

Shi'a (Shi'ite) Muslims

B.11 Shi'a Muslim Arabs make up between 50-65% of the population in Iraq. They live predominantly in the southern Iraq, Baghdad and in Saddam City, a satellite town on the outskirts of Baghdad. Despite their demographic majority, Iraqi Shia's have historically played a subordinate role to the country's Sunni population. Shi'a under representation in government positions persisted after the Ba'athist Party came to power in 1968. Despite legal guarantee's of sectarian equality the Government has in recent years repressed the Shi'a clergy and followers of the Shi'a faith. Security forces have desecrated Shi'a mosques and holy sites, particularly in the aftermath of the 1991 civil uprising. [12,13]

B.12 The Iraqi government continues to insist that its own appointee replace the late Grand Ayatollah Abul Qasim Al-Khoei, the formerly highest ranking Shi'a clergyman, who died in government custody in 1992. The Shi'a religious establishment refuses to accept the Government's choice and in 1998 two leading religious scholars were allegedly killed by Iraqi authorities after refusing to stop leading congregational prayers. The following government restrictions on religious rights remained in effect throughout 1998: A ban on the Muslim call to prayer in certain cities; a ban on the broadcast of Shi'a programs on government-controlled radio or television; a ban on the publication of Shi'a books, including prayer books; a ban on funeral processions other than those organised by the Government; and the prohibition of certain processions and public meetings commemorating Shi'a holy days. [1,11,19,20]

B.13 The Government reportedly continued to target Shi'a Muslim clergy and their supporters for arbitrary arrest and other abuses in 1998. It also reportedly continued forcibly to move Shi'a populations from the south to the north, and other minority groups such as Assyrians and Turkomen from the north to government-controlled territory. Large-scale assaults by the Government against the Shi'a population

were reported by several sources in September 1998, an estimated 20,000 persons reportedly were detained arbitrarily and trucked to tent-camp holding facilities in the desert region of al Rifa'i about 60 miles (100 kilometers) north of the marshes in southern Iraq. It was reported in January 1999 that the Iraqi Government had executed hundreds of Shia's and detained many more in the south. [20,21]

Christians

B.14 Iraq is home to 1½ million Christians who follow mostly eastern forms of Christianity with special rites. There have been allegations by Christians of discrimination but many have reportedly attained important official and private positions. The Deputy Prime Minister, Tariq Aziz, is a Chaldean Christian. Despite this the influence of Christians in the Ba'athist government has been small. [9,13]

Assyrians

B.15 Assyrians Christians are an ancient sect having sympathies with Nestorian beliefs and have speak Syriac. Public instruction in Syriac, which was to have been allowed under a 1972 decree, has never been implemented. The estimated 350,000 members of the Apostolic Catholic Assyrian Church of the East in Iraq traditionally live in the northern governates. Their leader is the Catholicos Patriarch, His Holiness Mar Dinkha IV. The Special Rapporteur and others report that the government has engaged various abuses against the Assyrian Christians, and has often suspected them of "collaborating" with Kurds. Military forces have destroyed numerous Assyrian churches. Numerous reports indicated continued systemic discrimination against Assyrians throughout 1998, especially in terms of forced movements from northern areas and repression of political rights there. Assyrian groups reported several instances of mob violence by Muslims against Christians in the North. In October 1998 Assyrian sources reported that regional Iraqi Kurdish authorities refused to allow secondary school classes in the Assyrian language. However, details of the practice were not available and regional authorities denied engaging in this practice. The Assyrians are expected to form part of the Kurdish Assembly. [1,2,4(i),7(b),20]

Chaldean Rite

B.16 There were an estimated 220,945 Chaldean Catholics in Iraq at December 1994. They are scattered through Iraq and are a unite Church, i.e. they recognise the supreme authority of the Pope. The agreement between the Kurdish parties in Northern Iraq is planned to guarantee the lawful rights of Chaldeans there. [1,4(h)]

Armenian Aposolitic Church

B.17 It is an Orthodox church with 18,000 followers and nine churches situated mainly in Baghdad (4 churches in Baghdad). The head of the church is Garegin I. [1,10]

Armenian Rite

B.18 They are members of the Roman Catholic faith and at 31 December 1994 the archdiocese of Baghdad contained an estimated 2,100 adherents. The head of the church is Hovhannes XIX Gasparian [1,10]

Mandeans (also known as Nasoraeans, Sabians or Subbis)

B.19 There are various differing views on Mandeans in Iraq. Mandeism, has been classed as an ancient Middle east religion still surviving in Iraq and Khuzistan (Southwest Iran). The religion is usually treated

as a Gnostic sect that resembles Manichaeism in some respects. Another viewpoint describes the religion as having affinities with Judaism and Christianity and exhibits early influences from the Iranian religious milieu and the Mandeans live, as their ancestors did along the rivers and waterways of southern Iraq and Khuzistan. However others have claimed that Mandeans can be found in Baghdad. [7(c)]

B.20 Another viewpoint claims that Mandeans have claimed to be Christians of St. John, but this claim appears to have been made largely in order to gain status in Arab eyes as 'people of the book', in order to claim certain religious and legal rights. Their scriptures and other documents suggest they are pre-Christian and that they were regularly in doctrinal and sometimes in political conflict with early Christians. [7(c)]

Yazidis or Yezidis

B.21 The Yazidis are a Kurmanji speaking group and are exclusively Kurdish. Yazidi beliefs incorporate aspects of several major religions in the region, including Zoroastrianism, Islam, Nestorian Christianity, Judaism and Manichaeism. There are figures of the Yazidi population in Iraq ranging from 30,000 to 120,000 and they live predominately in the Mosul region of Iraq. The leader is Tashin Baik, Ainsifni. The allegation that they are devil-worshippers and many other things do not bear scrutiny. [1,13,14]

Baptists

B.22 No sources could be found on Baptists in Iraq. Baptists have a relationship with the Mandeans, who are known as Subbi(baptisers), a Gnostic Baptist Community. [7(c)]

Sabeans

B.23 They are said to have originated from a people from South Arabia in pre-Islamic times who were founders of the Kingdom of Saba. There is an estimated 20,000 adherents whose head is Sheikh Dakhil and they live mostly in Nasiriyah. [1]

Jews

B.24 Most of Iraq's Jews have emigrated to Israel, leaving only 200 to 300 Jews in Iraq, principally in Basra and Baghdad. They are free to practice their religion but face restrictions in travelling abroad and in contacting Jewish groups outside the country. The Iraqi cabinet condemned the killings of two Jews and two Muslims when a synagogue for Iraqi Jews was stormed by an individual. [4(n),13]

ETHNIC GROUPS

Kurds

B.25 The Kurds constitute the largest ethnic minority and comprise approximately 20% of the population. Historically they have suffered political and economic discrimination, despite the token presence of a small number of Kurds in the national Government. The majority live in or around the northern hill country of Iraq, where they retain their tribal organisation, although there are a proportion who reside in Baghdad. The Kurds have been seeking independence from Iraq for many years. In 1970, they came close to an agreement, however, this broke down in 1974. The Iraqi regime is known to have employed some particularly harsh methods of crush the Kurdish resistance, such as the Anfal Campaign in 1988, during which the people were attacked with chemical bombs. However, since the end of the Gulf War, the "Safe Haven" was set up in April 1991. Since then, the north of Iraq has been effectively under Kurdish control (see sections on Northern Iraq). [1,6,12,20]

Faili Kurds

B.26 In describing the Faili Kurds, the Special Rapporteur noted that this group reflect in their persons the fault lines of much of the Iraqi society under Ba'ath rule: Arab versus Kurd; Sunni versus Shia; and Iraq versus Iran. He added that the Faili Kurds have suffered considerably since the beginning of Ba'ath rule because they were suspected of disloyalty by their non-Arab, Shia nature and their almost Iranian geographical location. Hundreds of thousands of Faili Kurds were reportedly expelled in mass waves during the 1970's and in April and May of 1980. Following this suppression took the form of arbitrary arrests, detention and expulsion. In the early 1970's after the seizure of the Arab islands of Abu Musa, Tunb al-Sughra, and Tunb al-Kubra in the straits of Hormuz 100,000 Shia Faili Kurds had their possessions confiscated and were forcibly expelled from Iraq to Iran. [12]

B.27 The Special Rapporteur received a report in May that indicated that hundreds of Faili (Shi'a) Kurds and other citizens of Iranian origin who had disappeared in the early 1980's during the Iran-Iraq war are being held incommunicado at the Abu Ghraib prison. According to the report, these persons have been detained for 17 to 18 years in extremely harsh conditions without specific charges or trials. The report alleged that many of these detainees had been used as experimental subjects in Iraq's outlawed chemical and biological weapons programs. [20]

Turkomans or Turcomans

B.28 The Turkomans are predominately Sunni Muslims although there exists a small community of Shi'a Turkomans. The Turkomans are concentrated in northern Iraq, principally in the governates of Kirkuk (the main centre of Turkoman population), Mosul, Arbil and Diyala. The population estimates of the Turkomans range from 300,000 to as high as two million. The Special Rapporteur stated that the most basic problem of the Iraqi Turkomans is that their national identity, their civil and political rights are not recognised by the Constitution of Iraq. They speak Turkik language which is written in Arabic script. The Turkoman minority are restricted in the use of their language, cultural and propriety rights, even in areas where they constitute the majority of the population. [4(o),11,12]

B.29 Multiple sources in the Turkomen community reported a brief outbreak of fighting between Turkomen and Iraqi Kurds in Irbil in August and September. The incidents apparently were related to Turkomen political and cultural activity with dozens of Turkomen offices temporarily closed by local Kurdish authorities. Turkomen and Kurdish officials disagreed about responsibility for the incidents. Kurdish officials claimed that they closed the Turkomen offices to prevent spontaneous violence.

However, Turkomen sources claimed that the violence was instigated by the local Kurdish authorities. Initial reports that the clashes resulted in several deaths apparently were exaggerated and, by late October, the situation was calm. [20]

Marsh Arabs

B.30 The Marsh Arabs, followers of the Shi'a religion live in the area of permanent lakes and marshes surrounding the Tigris and Euphrates rivers in south-east Iraq. In 1988, at the end of the Iran-Iraq war, there were about half a million Marsh Arabs. By early 1994 almost all Marsh Arabs had been forced from their homes as Saddam Hussein asserted his control of the area with massive drainage programmes and continuous military attacks. Many were forcibly resettled on artificial waterways or on dykes built to separate one Marsh region from another. Here their movements are closely supervised by the Iraqi army. Approximately two thirds of the Amarah and Hammar marshes - representing the bulk of Iraq's traditional marshland - had been drained. [12]

C HUMAN RIGHTS : OTHER ISSUES

FREEDOM OF POLITICAL OPINION

C.1 Citizens do not have the right to change their government. Although the Government has taken steps to increase the perception of democracy, the political process still was controlled firmly by the State. The 1995 "referendum" on Saddam Hussein's presidency was not free and was dismissed as a sham by most international observers. It included neither voter privacy nor opposing candidates, and many credible reports indicated that voters feared possible reprisal for a negative vote. A total of 500 people reportedly were arrested in Karbala, Baghdad, and Ramadi provinces for casting negative ballots, and a member of the intelligence services reportedly was executed for refusing to vote for the President. [11,20]

C.2 Opposition political organisations are illegal and severely suppressed. Membership in certain political parties is punishable by death. In 1991 the RCC adopted a law that theoretically authorised the creation of political parties other than the Ba'ath Party; in practice the law is used to prohibit parties that do not support Saddam Hussein and the Government. New parties must be based in Baghdad and are prohibited from having any ethnic or religious character. The Government does not recognise the various political groupings and parties that have been formed by Shi'a Muslims, as well as Kurdish, Assyrian, Turkomen, and other Iraqi communities. These political groups continued to attract support despite their illegal status (See Annex A for details on political parties). In contrast, in Kurdish-controlled northern Iraq, numerous political parties and social and cultural organisations exist. [11,20]

Freedom of the Individual

C.3 The Government frequently disregards the constitutional right to privacy, particularly in cases allegedly involving national security. The law defines security offences so broadly that authorities are virtually exempt from the legal requirement to obtain search warrants. In 1996 the authorities subjected citizens of various ethnic groups and tribal affiliations to searches without warrants. [2]

C.4 The regime routinely ignores the constitutional provisions safeguarding the confidentiality of mail, telegraphic correspondence, and telephone conversations. The Government periodically jams news broadcasts, coming from outside Iraq including those of opposition groups. [2]

Freedom of Assembly

C.5 Citizens may not peacefully assemble or organise for any political purpose other than to express support for the regime. The Government regularly orchestrates crowds to demonstrate support for the regime and its policies through financial incentives for those who participate and threats of violence against those who do not. The Government controls the establishment of political parties, regulates their internal affairs, and monitors their activities. Several parties are specifically outlawed, and membership in them is a capital offence. A 1974 law prescribes the death penalty for anyone "infiltrating" the Ba'ath Party. [2]

Freedom of Speech and of the Press

C.6 Max van der Stoep, the Special Rapporteur for Iraq appointed by the UN Human Rights Commission (UNHCR), confirmed again that freedom of speech, the press, assembly, and association do

not exist, except in some parts of the northern areas, beyond control of the Government. [2]

C.7 The Government and the Ba'ath Party own all print and broadcast media and operate them as propaganda outlets. They generally do not report opposing points of view that are expressed either domestically or abroad. According to the Special Rapporteur, journalists are under regular pressure to join the Ba'ath Party. The Special Rapporteur and other observers have described how journalists are under instruction to mention Saddam Hussein positively in any article, regardless of the subject. The same sources have detailed how journalists may fall under suspicion for not writing about Saddam Hussein every few months. [2]

C.8 Negative articles can carry extreme consequences: one journalist was reportedly executed extrajudicially for criticising an article written by Saddam Hussein under a pseudonym, while another was sentenced to life imprisonment for telling a joke about the President. [2]

C.9 The Special Rapporteur also reported that the Ministry of Culture and Information periodically holds meetings at which orientation and general guidelines for the press are provided. Furthermore, books can be published only with the authorisation of the Ministry of Culture and Information. [2]

C.10 Several statutes and decrees suppress freedom of speech and the press. These include a 1986 decree stipulating the death penalty for anyone insulting the President or other high government officials; Section 214 of the Penal Code, which prohibits singing a song likely to cause civil strife; and the Press Act of 1968, which prohibits the writing of articles on 12 specific subjects, including those detrimental to the President. [2]

C.11 In northern Iraq, several newspapers have appeared over the past five years, as have opposition radio and television broadcasts. The absence of central authority permits some freedom of expression, although most journalists are influenced or controlled by various political organisations. [2]

Freedom of Travel

C.12 The Government controls the movement within the country of citizens and foreigners. Persons who enter sensitive border areas and numerous designated security zones are subject to arrest. Police checkpoints are common on major roads and highways. [2]

C.13 All Iraqis who wish to travel abroad must obtain exit permission. Efforts to control currency exchange have led, since September 1986, to further travel limitations being imposed. Permission to travel abroad is now restricted to only a few categories of Iraqis. These include government officials, government approved students and persons needing medical treatment abroad. The government can require a prospective traveller to post a substantial bond to assure return. It also seeks to limit the countries that an Iraqi may visit and should the traveller visit an unauthorised country he may have to pay a small fine on his return. Students travelling abroad must provide a guarantor who, along with the student's parents, will guarantee the student's return or be held financially liable. A 1987 RCC decree stated that those students who did not return to Iraq would be obliged to pay the government for all

education received in Iraq and abroad at the government's expense. [2]

C.14 The Government prohibits the granting of approval for foreign travel to journalists, authors, and all the employees of the Information Ministry. Security authorities interrogate all media employees, journalists, and writers who have travelled outside Iraq about the reasons for their travel and who they met during their trips. [2]

Annex A. MAJOR POLITICAL PARTIES

Baath Party - Arab Ba'ath Socialist Party (Hizb al-Baath al-Arabi al-Ishtiraki)

The Baath Party was established in Damascus in the early 1940s and is the ruling party in Iraq. It came to power in Iraq on 17 July 1968 when Maj.-Gen (later Field Marshal) Ahmed Hassan Al-Bakr became President and Prime Minister, and supreme authority was vested in the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC), of which President Al-Bakr was also Chairman. On 16 July 1979 Saddam Hussein replaced Al-Bakr as Chairman and as President of Iraq. His rule has continued and in May 1994, facing a deepening economic crisis, he also assumed the post of Prime Minister in a reshuffle of the Council of Ministers. [1,15]

A referendum on 15 October 1995 approved an amendment of the Constitution whereby the elected Chairman of the RCC would automatically assume the Presidency of the Republic, subject to the approval by the National Assembly and endorsement by the national plebiscite. Out of the turnout of 99.47% of the estimated 8 million electorate, 99.96% of the votes cast were in support of the President continuing in office. However, the results of the election were declared null and void in a statement issued by nine opposition groups. [1]

The first elections to the Iraqi National Assembly since 1989 took place on 24 March 1996. Two hundred and twenty of the 250 seats in the Assembly were contested by 689 candidates, all of whom had received the prior approval of a Ba'ath party selection committee (the remaining 30 seats were reserved for representatives of the Autonomous Regions of Arbil, D'hok, and As-Sulaimaniya and were filled by presidential decree) [1,11]

National Progressive Patriotic Front (NPPF)

The NPPF was formed in 1973 as the National Progressive Front when the Baath Party and the Iraqi Communist Party signed a joint manifesto agreeing to establish a comprehensive progressive nationalist front. In 1975 representatives of Kurdish and independent organisations joined the front. In March 1979 the Iraqi Communist party left the National Progressive Front. [1]

Iraqi Communist Party

The Iraqi Communist Party is now a small party based in Damascus and led by Hamid Majid Musa Al-Bayati. It was founded in 1934 following the independence of Iraq in 1932. It became a legally recognised party in July 1973 on formation of the National Progressive Front (NPF). In 1979 it was made illegal following its withdrawal from the NPF and has remained illegal up until the present day. It is now a small party based in Damascus and led by Aziz Mohammad. The Communist party have been reported as possibly entering the elections for the Kurdish assembly in northern Iraq. [1,4(i)13,15]

Iraqi National Congress (INC)

The Iraqi National Congress (INC) was launched in June 1992 aiming to unite the various Kurdish, Sunni and Shi'a factions of the opposition and consists of a Presidential Council of 3 members. Although launched initially by Kurdish exiles, 170 representatives from a wide spectrum of Iraqi opposition groups attended the INC's conference held in Iraqi Kurdistan in October 1992. Participants committed themselves to the non-violent overthrow of Saddam Hussein and the establishment of a federal system that would permit a substantial degree of ethnic autonomy without partition of the country. However, the INC's unification efforts encountered some obstacles, for example, the INC has neglected to provide an essential place for the Shi'a religious movement. The triumvirate presidency of the INC acknowledges the three principal Iraqi communities but does not offer a framework for communal existence. [13,15]

Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP)

The KDP is a largely tribal party based in northern Iraq close to the Turkish border. Throughout the 1960s there was fighting as Kurdish groups tried to gain autonomy within Iraq. After the coup of 1968 the Baath Party wanted to solve the Kurdish problem and in 1969 Saddam Hussein entered into negotiations with Mulla Mustafa Barzani, the KDP's leader. The talks between the Baath Party and the KDP brought about a cease-fire and the declaration of a peace agreement on 11 March 1970. This agreement recognised the Kurdish people as a distinct national entity and therefore with the right of autonomy. A general amnesty was declared and the government subsidised the KDP. It was agreed to implement the agreement within 4 years. [15]

In 1974, through the Autonomy Law, the Baath Party acknowledged the existence of Kurds as a distinct group and granted them a level of autonomy. However, it also imposed limits on this autonomy and effective authority remained with the central government in Baghdad. The KDP rejected the law and in April 1974 hostilities broke out again. Their campaign collapsed when the Shah abandoned the Kurds as the counterpart for gaining the control he wanted in the Shatt-al-Arab waterway in the Algiers Agreement of 1975. Mulla Mustafa Barzani, went into exile in the United States of America and the KDP broke into several factions. The Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) was formed in June 1975 under the leadership of Jalal Talabani. Ma'sud Barzani, the son of Mulla Mustafa Barzani, took command of the KDP. [15]

In 1987 Kurdish political and military strength gathered through the rapprochement of the two main parties, the KDP and PUK, in early 1987 and the subsequent formation of the Iraqi Kurdistan Front (IKF) in July 1987. After the defeat of the Iraqi armed forces in Kuwait in February 1991 the KDP took part in the armed uprising in northern Iraq. Although the rising was initially successful, by April 1991 the Kurdish guerrillas had been driven out of the cities of northern Iraq. In mid April 1991 the KDP, with the PUK, accepted the offer of talks with the Iraqi leadership. The talks were suspended in the autumn of 1991 when the Iraqi regime imposed a partial economic blockade on Kurdish areas. [15]

In Kurdish elections in May 1992 the KDP and the PUK emerged as the two dominant Kurdish groups opposing the Iraqi government. In June 1992 the KDP and other Kurdish opposition parties met together in Vienna to establish the Iraqi National Congress (See above). However conflict between the KDP and PUK resumed, although meetings have been held to organise a transitional government. A conciliatory and peace agreement was reached with the PUK in September 1998. (See III) [3(j),4(h)(i),15]

Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK)

The PUK is led by Jalal Talabani and follows a Marxist Leninist ideology and was formed in 1975 following a split in the KDP. In the early years of the Iran-Iraq War the rivalry between the PUK and

KDP prevented a joint Kurdish strategy against the Baath Party. [15]

By 1985 the PUK were taking part in a full scale insurrection against the Baath regime. In July 1987 the PUK joined the Iraqi Kurdish Front (IKF) with the KDP following a rapprochement between the two parties. In Kurdish elections in May 1992 the PUK and the KDP emerged as the two dominant Kurdish groups opposing the Iraqi government. In June 1992 the PUK and other Kurdish opposition parties met together in Vienna to establish the Iraqi National Congress (See above). However conflict between the KDP and PUK resumed, although meetings have been held to organise a transitional government. A conciliatory and peace agreement was reached with the KDP in September 1998. (See III) [3(j),4(h)(i),15]

Al-Da'wah Party

The Al-Da'wah Party, or Islamic Call, is a militant Shi'a organisation, formed in 1968 and is based in Tehran. The Al-Da'wah was not just a reformist movement but rather a revolutionary party advocating the replacement of the modern secular state by an Islamic social political order. It was inspired by the prominent Iraqi Ayatollah Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr. After the Iranian Revolution a massive wave of enthusiasm engulfed the Shi'a community in Iraq and drove the Al-Da'wah party, which openly endorsed Ayatollah Khomeini as its spiritual leader, to step up its activities against the regime. In 1989 the Baath regime responded to demonstrations in support of Khomeini by imposing martial law in southern cities. Membership of the Al-Da'wah Party became punishable by death. It has made assassination attempts on Saddam Hussein. [15]

Supreme Council of the Islamic Revolution of Iraq (SCIRI)

SCIRI was founded in 1982 and is a Shi'a organisation. It was led for the first three years of its' existence by its' founder, Hojjat al-Islam Muhammad Baqr al-Hakim, and then by a collective leadership. SCIRI was based in Iran and provided a focal point for Iraqi Shi'a opposition to the war with Iran. [15]

The 10,000 strong military arm of SCIRI, largely under the control of the Iranians, is largely made up of Iraqi Shi'a prisoners taken by the Iranians during the Iran-Iraq War. [15]

Al Khoi Foundation

A religious body established by Ayatollah al Khoi, the Shi'a Mirja of Naja, in the 1970's and run as a charitable organisation. Co-operates with opposition to Saddam Hussein. [15]

Association of Iraqi Democrats

Grouping of Iraqi's who share the same national, democratic and liberal views. [15]

Iraqi National Accord Party - Wifaq

Led by Ayad al Alawi a former Iraqi Director of Intelligence and is based in London. Opposes Saddam Hussein from within the Baath party and the army. [15]

Iraqi Socialist Party

Small party of Arab Nationalists [15]

Democratic Islamic National Association

Based in Tehran. [15]

Free Iraqi Council (FIC)

Based in London, formed 1991 by middle class intellectuals. [15]

Komalah (Revolutionary Organisation of the Workers of Kurdistan)

left-wing Kurdish group (sometimes described as Marxist). Banned and has been in an armed struggle with Iran since 1980, when it took a firm line on Kurdish autonomy. [15]

Kurdish Tribal Association

Leading Kurdish tribal grouping (about 20 tribes), established 1991. [15]

Iraqi Baath Party

Section of Baath party in exile in Syria. [15]

Iraqi Democratic Accord Assembly

London based. [15]

Iraqi Free Officers

Connected to Iraqi Independent Alliance (see below). The group appears to have support in Iraq and has attempted to poison Saddam Hussein at least once. [15]

Iraqi Kurdistan Front

Coalition of main Kurdish parties (KDP, PUK and Unity Party of Kurdistan). Front began in 1988 (co-operating began 1986). [15]

Royalists

Followers of Sherif Ali Hussain, cousin of King Faisal who was killed in the 1958 coup. [15]

Unity Party of Kurdistan

Coalition of three of the smaller Kurdish parties - the Kurdistan Popular Democratic party (DPDP), the Kurdistan Socialist Party of Iraq (KSPI) and the Popular Alliance of Socialist Kurdistan (PASOK). Merged with the KDP in the summer of 1993. [15]

Annex B. CHRONOLOGY OF IMPORTANT EVENTS

14 July 1958

The monarchy was overthrown. The new Government consisted of military and civilian members under Brigadier Abd Al-Karim Qassem.

February 1963

Qassem was killed in a coup organised by nationalist and Ba'athist officers, who then seized power under Abd Al-Salam Aref.

17 July 1968

A group of Ba'athist officers led by Ahmad Hasan Al-Bakr organised another coup.

30 July 1968

Ahmad Hasan Al-Bakr made President, and Saddam Hussein appointed Deputy President.

March 1970

An agreement was reached between Barzani (leader of the KDP) and the regime.

Spring 1974

Ba'ath Party promises regarding a Kurdish autonomy were not fulfilled which resulted in a major conflict between the Kurds and the regime.

March 1975

Iran and Iraq signed the Algiers agreement.

16 July 1979

Ahmad Hasan Al-Bakr resigned as President in favour of Saddam Hussein. At this time, real power moved away from the Ba'ath Party and almost exclusively to Saddam Hussein.

September 1980

Saddam Hussein ordered Iraqi forces into western Iran, which began the Iran/Iraq war (also at the time, called the "Gulf War"). Around this time, Saddam also expelled many Iraqis of possible Iranian extraction, mainly Shi'a, from Iraq. They were taken to the Iranian border and left. Many remain there, although some travelled to other countries and claimed asylum.

June 1987

The United Nations passed Resolution No.598 which called for a cease-fire of the Iran/Iraq war.

8 August 1988

The United Nations announced a cease-fire which came into effect on 20 August 1988. The economic situation in Iraq after the end of the war was precarious which led to high inflation and steep rises in the cost of living.

1988

Saddam launched the Anfal Campaign. This involved chemical bombing against the Kurds residing in the north of Iraq. Many thousands of Kurds were killed or disappeared during this campaign. Halabja was the most publicised town, as 5,000 people were poisoned there by chemical gases. This campaign was initially set up to resettle Kurds to where they were more easily controlled.

Spring 1990

Saddam demanded access to the Kuwait islands of Bubiyan and Warba as well as reviving Iraq's claim to

part of the Rumailia oil fields. This led to the Gulf War/Desert Storm.

2 August 1990

Iraq invaded Kuwait.

January 1991

The Gulf War commenced, in which Iraq was opposed by the UN with coalition forces including troops from 40 countries (including Egypt, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait).

27 February 1991

A cease-fire was agreed upon.

28 February 1991

The Intifada commenced (also known as the 1991 uprising by the people against the regime). This began in the southern city of Basra.

March 1991

There was a spontaneous uprising in the north of Iraq in the town of Ranya which spread across Kurdistan.

29 March 1991

Samawa (southern Iraq), which held out the longest against the authorities was retaken.

3 April 1991

The Iraqi army recaptured Sulaimaniya (northern Iraq). About 1.5 million Kurds fled to the mountains and this eventually led to setting-up of the "Safe Haven" in the north of Iraq.

October 1991

The Iraqi Government withdrew its armed forces from the north, together with police units and pro-Ba'ath employees from the governates of Irbil, Suliamaniya and the Dohuk areas which it had occupied.

1992

Gulf War allies imposed "no-fly" zones over both northern and southern Iraq.

October 1994

An attempted coup was uncovered resulting in the execution of senior army officers.

November 1994

The UN Security Council voted to continue economic sanctions imposed on Iraq after the Gulf War.

February 1996

Two of Saddam's son-in-laws, Hussein Kamel and Saddam Kamel, were executed after returning to Iraq following their earlier defection to Jordan.

31 August 1996

KDP forces with Iraqi Government troops, first shelled and recaptured the city of Irbil in northern Iraq. Disturbances continued in September until government authorities were forced to leave the "Safe Haven".

1996

Fighting resumed between the KDP and the PUK.

23 October 1996

A cease-fire between the KDP and PUK ended the fighting for the rest of 1996.

12 October 1997

Truce brokered by the United States, the United Kingdom and Turkey, called the "Ankara Peace Process" broken when PUK forces attack KDP positions.

December 1997

Reports of over 1,200 executions of prisoners.

January 1998

Crisis between the Iraqi Government and the United Nations Special Commission following the stopping of the work of the UN investigation team.

February 1998

Kofi Annan, the Secretary-General of the United Nations agrees a deal with the Iraqi Government, and averts a military attack.

An agreement for Iraq to double its oil output also accepted by the UN.

April and June 1998

Two Shi'a clerics murdered.

August 1998

The Iraqi National Assembly voted to temporarily suspend UNSCOM inspections.

September 1998

The Iraqi National Assembly voted to fully suspend dealings with UNSCOM and the IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency).

August 1998

most co-operation with UNSCOM.

September 1998

The Iraqi National Assembly voted to suspend all co-operation with UNSCOM and the IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency).

October 1998

The Iraqi National Assembly cease all co-operation with UNSCOM

November 1998

UK and US came very close to taking military action against Iraq.

December 1998

Operation Desert Fox launched.

January and February 1999

Iraq's repeated violation of the northern and southern no-fly zones and threats against UK and US aircraft caused the latter to respond in self-defence.

Sources [1,2,3,4,5,6,7,20]

Annex C. CHRONOLOGY OF UNSCOM CRISIS DURING 1998

Jan.13-14: Iraq prevents UNSCOM team led by Scott Ritter from carrying out inspection work.

Jan.17: President Saddam threatens to halt all co-operation with UNSCOM if sanctions are not lifted.

Feb.6: Amidst build-up of US and UK forces in the Gulf, President Clinton and Prime Minister Blair reiterate determination to prevent Saddam from threatening neighbours and the world with weapons of mass destruction.

Feb.23: UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan brokers a memorandum of understanding allowing UNSCOM to inspect eight "presidential sites".

March 2: UN Security Council adopts Resolution 1154 threatening Iraq with the "severest consequences" if it breaches the Feb.23 memorandum of understanding.

March 26: UNSCOM begin inspection of "presidential sites".

April 2: UNSCOM complete first round of inspections of "presidential sites".

April 27: After reviewing latest six-monthly UNSCOM report, UN Security Council decides against reviewing sanctions against Iraq.

April 30: Clinton announces intention to reduce strength of US forces in the Gulf.

June 11-15: UNSCOM head Richard Butler and Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz reach agreement on "road map" for verification of Iraqi disarmament and the eventual lifting of UN sanctions.

June 19: UN Security Council adopts Resolution 1175 allowing Iraq to purchase US\$300 million worth of equipment for its oil industry.

June 24: In a presentation to the UN Security Council, Butler asserts that Iraq had loaded missile warheads with the chemical weapon VX before the 1991 Gulf War.

July 27: The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) reports that there is evidence that Iraq was concealing nuclear weapons.

Aug.5: After the collapse of the latest round of Aziz-Butler talks, the Iraqi legislature votes for immediate suspension of UNSCOM inspections.

Aug.9: UNSCOM suspends inspections.

Aug.20: UN Security Council decides to maintain sanctions against Iraq.

Sept.9: UN Security Council adopts Resolution 1194 demanding that Iraq co-operate with UNSCOM and suspending indefinitely periodic reviews of UN sanctions against Iraq.

Oct.31: A joint meeting of the Revolutionary Command Council and the Ba'ath Party formally ends all forms of co-operation with UNSCOM and calls for Butler's dismissal.

Nov.5: Amidst a fresh build-up of US and UK forces in the Gulf, the UN Security Council adopts

Resolution 1205 demanding that Iraq rescind immediately and unconditionally the Oct 31 decision, but makes no mention of military threat.

Nov.15: Only hours before planned US and UK air-strikes, Saddam annuls the Oct.31 decision.

Nov.17: UNSCOM inspectors return to Iraq.

Nov.24: UN Security Council approves the renewal of the "oil-for-food" deal which allows Iraq to sell US\$5,200 million worth of oil over the next six months for the purchase of humanitarian goods.

Dec.9: Iraq blocks UNSCOM inspectors from entering a sensitive site in Baghdad.

Dec.15: Butler delivers a highly critical report to the UN Security Council.

Dec.16-20: US and UK launch air-strikes on Iraq.

Annex D. ABBREVIATIONS

ABSP - ARAB BA'ATH SOCIALIST PARTY

INC - IRAQI NATIONAL CONGRESS

KDP - KURDISH DEMOCRATIC PARTY

PUK - PATRIOTIC UNION OF KURDISTAN

PKK - KURDISTAN WORKERS PARTY

KIF - KURDISTAN IRAQI FRONT

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