

# TIME TO END

# THE OCCUPATION OF IRAQ

**L**ife under occupation has been an unending tragedy for the people of Iraq. Over 34,000 Iraqi civilians were killed in 2006, and the violence has forced over one million Iraqis to flee their country. One in five Iraqis is living in poverty and more than half are unemployed, all while the costs of basic goods have skyrocketed. Many Iraqis still don't have enough drinking water or electricity.

No wonder more than 80% of Iraqis want the U.S. military to leave.

## THE U.S. OCCUPATION: THE SOLUTION OR THE PROBLEM?

**A**ll people of conscience are concerned with the intensifying civil war in Iraq. But the U.S. military cannot prevent civil war. This was clear when Sunni guerrillas blew up a sacred Shiite shrine in February 2006, sparking attacks and counter-attacks among Iraqis. "The [U.S.] military largely watched the violence from the sidelines," according to the *L.A. Times*.

**78 percent of Iraqis think the US military is creating more conflict than it is preventing.**

The only way to end the civil war in Iraq is for the different groups of Iraqis to negotiate a solution. This is impossible as long as the U.S. military remains in Iraq, because many of these groups are opposed to the occupation and the U.S. is openly trying to destroy them. Furthermore, extremist groups who actually do want civil war have very little support among the Iraqi people and are only tolerated because they are attacking occupation forces. If the US troops leave, these groups will be isolated and powerless.

The vast majority of Iraqis think the US military is creating more conflict than it is preventing. They are right. A series of atrocities created widespread anger against U.S. soldiers and fueled the armed insurgency: torture in the Abu Ghraib prison, arbitrary and indefinite imprisonment, massacres such as the shooting of 24 civilians at close-range in Haditha, and the rape and murder of a 14 year-old girl, to name a few.

The occupation makes a civil war more likely, not less. The US military's main goal is destroying the mostly Sunni resistance, not preventing a civil war. But when the US military attacks a Sunni area with Shia soldiers, they generate retaliatory attacks by Sunni against Shia. The best chance to stop the cycle of violence is to end the occupation.

## WHAT ABOUT OUR MORAL OBLIGATION TO THE IRAQI PEOPLE?

**T**he occupation fulfills no moral obligation; it has fostered corruption instead of genuine reconstruction. But, because of the catastrophic effects of U.S.-led sanctions and military



Maliya Abdul Hamid Hassan Ali holds a picture of her brother, Waleed, one of 24 unarmed Iraqi civilians killed during a raid by U.S. soldiers at Haditha.

occupation we do have a responsibility to support the process of rebuilding Iraq, if the process is led by the people of Iraq. Individuals can support Iraqi groups struggling for women's rights and workers' rights, and efforts to cancel Iraq's foreign debt accumulated by Saddam. The U.S. government should support projects to clear Iraq of the depleted uranium, cluster bombs, and landmines in Iraq that poison, kill, and injure hundreds of Iraqis each year. It should also play a leading role in establishing a fund to rebuild Iraq, which will be controlled by the Iraqis themselves. The U.S. should be this fund's largest donor. This will provide Iraq with the resources to move forward.

## WHAT IS THE PATH TOWARDS REAL SECURITY FOR ALL?

**B**ush's endless anti-Islamic "war on terror" is alienating other governments and peoples. This is the wrong course. In order to create true security, we must work cooperatively with the global community to resolve situations where the roots of violent conflict – inequality and social instability -- are clear. In the Middle East, the U.S. must support a just resolution to the Israel-Palestine crisis that will allow Palestinians to live with rights and dignity.

The U.S. cannot play a positive role in promoting peace

and security without withdrawing from Iraq. Our military presence there is destabilizing the region, putting Iraqis, US soldiers, as well as people in the U.S. at risk. Worldwide, it has pushed resentment of U.S. foreign policy to the highest levels in recent memory, according to BBC polls. Getting out now will make another world possible.

## WHAT'S BEST FOR IRAQIS AND FOR U.S. SOLDIERS?

**A**ttacks on US troops in Iraq average several hundred each week. Frightened young GI's are shooting first, asking questions later.

The result: one-third of Iraq veterans suffer from depression, schizophrenia or post-traumatic stress disorder. On top of that, US troops are being sent to the frontlines even if they are mentally ill, just to keep the occupation going.

Iraq Veterans Against the War says:

"We, the veterans of the war, now know...the reasons for invading the sovereign country of Iraq were false, and we have paid a heavy price for these lies.... We call upon our President, the Congress, and all elected officials to immediately and unconditionally withdraw all U.S. troops from Iraq and the Middle East."

# BRING THE TROOPS HOME NOW

This flyer was prepared by War Times/Tiempo de Guerras with United for Peace and Justice. Take action to stop the war: go to [www.war-times.org](http://www.war-times.org) and [www.unitedforpeace.org](http://www.unitedforpeace.org) for more information.

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