

- Iraq has conducted a systematic "Arabization" campaign of ethnic cleansing designed to harass and expel ethnic Kurds and Turkmen from government-controlled areas. Non-Arab citizens are forced to change their ethnicity or their identity documents and adopt Arab names, or they are deprived of their homes, property and food-ration cards, and expelled.

### SADDAM HUSSEIN'S ABUSE OF CHILDREN

- Saddam Hussein has held 3-week training courses in weapons use, hand-to-hand fighting, rappelling from helicopters, and infantry tactics for children between 10 and 15 years of age. Camps for these "Saddam Cubs" operated throughout the country. Senior military officers who supervised the courses noted that the children held up under the "physical and psychological strain" of training that lasted for as long as 14 hours each day. Sources in the opposition report that the army found it difficult to recruit enough children to fill all of the vacancies in the program. Families reportedly were threatened with the loss of their food ration cards if they refused to enroll their children in the course. The Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq reported in October 1999 that authorities were denying food ration cards to families that failed to send their young sons to Saddam Cubs compulsory weapons-training camps. Similarly, authorities reportedly withheld school examination results to students unless they registered in the Fedayeen Saddam organization.<sup>31</sup>
- Iraq often announces food ration cuts for the general population, blaming US or UK actions. Among the most controversial have been cuts in baby milk rations. Iraq has blamed the shortages on US and UK contract rejections, although the UN has approved all baby milk contracts submitted.
- Child labor persists and there are instances of forced labor.
- There are widespread reports that food and medicine that could have been made available to the general public, including children, have been stockpiled in warehouses or diverted for the personal use of some government officials.<sup>32</sup>

### DISAPPEARANCES

- Amnesty International reported that Iraq has the world's worst record for numbers of persons who have disappeared or remain unaccounted for.<sup>33</sup>
- In 1999, the UN Special Rapporteur stated that Iraq remains the country with the highest number of disappearances known to the UN: over 16,000.

### BASIC FREEDOMS : FREEDOM OF SPEECH, FREEDOM OF THE PRESS, FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

- In practice, Saddam Hussein does not permit freedom of speech or of the press, and does not tolerate political dissent in areas under its control. In November 2000, the UN General Assembly criticized Saddam Hussein's "suppression of freedom of thought, expression, information, association, and assembly." The Special Rapporteur stated in October 1999 that citizens lived "in a climate of fear," in

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<sup>31</sup> Page 1, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices – Iraq*, March 4, 2002; US Department of State; [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov)

<sup>32</sup> *ibid*, Page 16

<sup>33</sup> *ibid*, Page 3