

## **The destruction of Iraq's education system**

Running parallel with the massive corruption and destruction of Iraq's infrastructure, including electricity, potable water and sewage systems, merciless repression led to the mass forced displacement of the bulk of Iraq's educated middle class — the main engine of progress and development in modern states. Iraq's intellectual and technical class has been subject to a systematic and on-going campaign of intimidation, abduction, extortion, random killings and targeted assassinations. The decimation of professional ranks took place in the context of a generalized assault on Iraq's professional middle class, including doctors, engineers, lawyers, judges as well as political and religious leaders. Let's have a closer look.

"The Education system in Iraq, prior to 1991, was one of the best in the region; with over 100% Gross Enrolment Rate for primary schooling and high levels of literacy, both of men and women. The Higher Education, especially the scientific and technological institutions, were of an international standard, staffed by high quality personnel". (UNESCO Fact Sheet, March 28, 2003).

As a result of U.S. Invasion and occupation of Iraq, today Iraq is more illiterate than it was twenty-five years ago, because the occupying power began its occupation by destroying every aspect of Iraq's education.

### **Destruction of educational institutes**

Iraq's education system, once vaunted as the most advantaged in the region, has suffered a patterned process of degradation and dismantling. Iraqi schools and universities were bombed and destroyed. Under the occupation, according to a report by the United Nations University International Leadership Institute in Jordan, some 84% of Iraq's institutions of higher education have been burned, looted, or destroyed. Some 2,000 laboratories need to be re-equipped and 30,000 computers need to be procured and installed nationwide.

"Buildings have been burnt and looted in what appears to be a random spree of violence aimed at Iraqi academia."

### **Looting and burning of educational institutes**

Like most higher education institutions across Iraq, Baghdad University escaped almost unscathed from the bombing. In the subsequent looting and burning, 20 of the capital's colleges were destroyed. No institution escaped: the faculty of education in Waziriyya was raided daily for two weeks; the veterinary college in Abu Ghraib lost all its equipment; two buildings in the faculty of fine arts stand smoke-blackened against the skyline. In every college, in every classroom, you could write "education" in the dust on the tables. "Looters began ransacking Mustansiriyah University on April 9, 2003, the day Hussein's government collapsed. By April 12, the campus of yellow-brick buildings and grassy courtyards was stripped of its books, computers, lab equipment and desks. Since March 2003, more than 700 primary schools have been bombed, 200 have been burnt and over 3,000 looted.

### **Occupation of educational institutes**

The US forces, the Iraqi Army and Iraqi police units occupied school buildings for military purposes. It occupied more than 70 school buildings for military purposes in the Diyala governorate alone, in clear violation of The Hague Conventions.

The origins of armed resistance in Fallujah can be traced almost precisely to April 28, 2003, when U.S. troops, who had arrived in the city five days earlier, massacred 17 apparently unarmed protesters. The April 28 protest had demanded an end to Fallujah's occupation and, more specifically, that U.S. troops vacate the al Qaid primary school, where classes had been scheduled to resume on April 29.

### **Illiteracy on the rise**

A report published in March 2011 by UNESCO confirmed the urgency of the situation currently faced by Iraqi educators and students. According to UNESCO, several Middle Eastern countries, including Iraq, are unlikely to achieve the education-for-all Millennium Development Goals by 2015 due to insecurity and conflict. Decades of war, UN sanctions, insecurity and economic decline have adversely affected education in Iraq. Illiteracy levels have risen dramatically over the past years. According to data produced by the government and UNESCO in September 2010, at least five million of Iraq's almost 30 million people are illiterate.

### **The solution according to the US occupying authorities**

John Agresto, in charge of the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research in 2003-2004, initially believed that the looting of Iraq's universities was a positive act in that it would allow such institutions to begin again with a clean slate, with the newest equipment as well as a brand new curriculum. This curriculum removed any criticism to the US policy in the Middle East, as well as any reference to either the 1991 war or to Israeli policy in the occupied Palestinian territories.

The American with final authority over their appeals, Andrew Erdmann, a 36 year-old who had earned his PhD in history three years earlier, had almost no experience as a professor, none at all as a university administrator, and spoke no Arabic. He was officially U.S. Senior advisor to the Ministry of Education but, since the Minister of Education was under arrest, was effectively Minister of Education in the early days of the occupation. 10 The freelance journalist Christina Asquith wrote about this situation: "Let's pause for a minute. Sit yourself down at the mahogany table with the 22 Iraqi university presidents. Men in there [sic] 50s and 60s, who all have PhD's from top universities in England, Scotland and America; erudite, accomplished intellectual men. Due to the US invasion, they had just lost their offices, libraries and research equipment. The textbooks were burned and stolen. US soldiers occupied the dormitories. The Ministry building itself was burned to the ground, along with every file, computer and desk. In May, Paul Bremer instituted the DeBaathification Policy, which forced the firing of all the top university administrators and professors because they were Baath Party members. Half of the intellectual leadership in academia was gone. Now, in a haphazard selection process, they were given 36-year old Drew Erdmann. He controlled the budgets, the staffing, the curriculum, and the physical renovation."

The scale of the attacks on academic staff, the appointment of ignorant people and the total chaos created by the occupation authorities, the inhuman debaathification policy, together with the

magnitude of the destruction of academic infrastructure—crimes that have occurred under the watchful eye of the US led Multi-National Forces—has no precedent in recent history and raises serious questions about the real intentions of the US occupiers, who should be held accountable for the total collapse of the Iraqi education sector.

### **Chaos and mismanagement**

Only in the first year of the occupation were elections held for the posts of dean and head of departments. Subsequently these posts were filled by government appointments of the ruling sectarian parties. As a result, al-Mustansriya University (to cite one example) now has three presidents (directors): one appointed by the previous minister; a second appointed by the present minister; and a third appointed by the prime minister himself. The three perform their duties in the same campus and each has his personal office, team of bodyguards and secretariat.

### **Killing of educators; threats against education staff; educators forced into exile**

Roughly 40 percent of Iraq's middle class is believed to have fled by the end of 2006, the U.N. said.

In 2005, alone, 296 members of education staff were killed. An estimated 331 schoolteachers were slain in the first four months of 2006, according to Human Rights Watch and 180 teachers were killed between February and November 2006, according to the Brookings Institute in Washington.<sup>16</sup> According to the UN office for humanitarian affairs, up to 100 teachers have been kidnapped and over 3,250 have fled the country.

The International Medical Corps reports that populations of teachers in Baghdad have fallen by 80%. 467 Iraqi professors and lecturers have been assassinated since 2003, according to the BRussells Tribunal database. The exodus of academics has dramatically lowered educational standards<sup>18</sup>. Most are fleeing systematic persecution and have no desire to return.

### **Insecurity prevents students from attending classes**

The rapidly deteriorating conditions and a complete failure to establish a functioning education system has produced a spiralling dropout rate of almost 50%.

Violence since the U.S.-led invasion has driven thousands of students away, with enrolment off by more than half at some universities in 2006 alone, officials said. Universities in other parts of the country are open, but have become deserted. (Washington Post 18/01/2007)

"Education in my area is collapsing," said on 05 October 2006 a teacher from a high school in Amariya who quit four months earlier. "Children can't get to school because of road blocks. The parents of others have simply withdrawn them from the school because of the fear of kidnapping.

### **Corruption in Iraqi education**

The effort to rebuild Iraq's infrastructure, including schools and higher education institutions, have been plagued by shoddy construction, corruption and diverting funds to "security".

Hundreds of health, education and infrastructure projects have been delayed because of corruption and the smuggling of oil. Education and health projects are the most affected, as hundreds of schools require repair and hospitals are hit by shortages of equipment and medicines, said the Electronic Iraq article.<sup>19</sup> Complaints of government corruption put the ministry of education among the worst offenders. "Haramia," or "thieves," is the new name given to local contractors who receive money to fix up schools, then allegedly do such a poor job that they can put most of the money in their pockets.

### **Financial hardships**

In March 2010, two deans of different science colleges and one head of department, told of their academic sufferings. They reported that there had been no new financial allocation or any increase in the budgets of higher education. As a result, university laboratories had not been able to procure new equipment and supplies since 2003 (this, of course, coming on top of the already dramatic situation that existed during the sanctions), while classrooms and libraries were lacking in new books and computers. This situation is further exacerbated by the lack of electricity and other services.

More affected were the students. Even under sanctions, the vast majority of them were housed in lodgings rented by the government, and all of them were provided with suitable clothes. Those pursuing higher studies were provided with a salary. With the onset of occupation, all these things were either stopped or cut to less than half.

As the monthly food ration disappeared or shrunk, market prices more than quadrupled. In the end the educators salaries were only enough to keep them alive. Those who had suffered under sanctions suffered even more under occupation. As insecurity poisoned the atmosphere of university campuses, the spectre of bribery raised its ugly head. Corruption increased because of economic need and the lack of any supervision or disciplinary actions.

### **Collapse of Iraq's universities**

Iraqi academic institutions, once leaders among universities and research centres in the rest of the Arab World, were instrumental in creating a strong Iraqi national identity after years of colonization. The virtual collapse of Iraq's educational infrastructure has gutted the vehicle that has served to cement a unifying history in the public mind.

The results of the policies of the occupying authorities are disastrous. Iraq's universities are now probably the worst in the Arab region, Asia and the world. The Ranking Web of World Universities is published twice a year (January and July), covering more than 20,000 Higher Education Institutions worldwide. On the Arab level only 3 Iraqi universities are in the top 100 of Arab universities in the ranking of January 2011. On the global level only 8 Iraqi universities figure in the top 12,000. The showpiece of Iraq: Baghdad University, doesn't even figure in the top 12,000.

The facts on the ground in Iraq show that there is no reconstruction whatsoever in Iraq's education system, there is only destruction, corruption and decline. It is well known that the destruction of the

Iraqi education system is part of the plan to culturally and ethnically cleanse Iraq, to “end the state” as Paul Wolfowitz declared in 2003.

### **The Plight of Iraqi Academics**

On 11 April 2003, a number of Iraqi scientists and university professors sent an SOS e-mail complaining that American occupation forces were threatening their lives. The appeal stated that looting and robberies were taking place under the watchful eye of occupation soldiers. These soldiers, the e-mail added, were transporting mobs to the scientific institutions, such as Mosul University and different educational institutions, to destroy scientific research centres and confiscate all papers and documents to nip in the bud any Iraqi scientific renaissance. The e-mail also noted that occupation forces had drawn up lists of the names, addresses and research areas of the Iraqi scientists to assist them in their harassment tasks in light of the anarchy that existed after the occupation.

### **The assassination campaign**

Among the many tragedies that have befallen Iraqi society as a consequence of the US-led 2003 invasion, has been the physical elimination of hundreds or thousands of Iraqi academics in what has every appearance of being a systematic campaign of targeted assassination.

Iraqi academics began to fall victim to well-organised teams of assassins who ambushed them as they went about their daily lives, typically killing them instantly. Such killings account for the substantial majority of recorded deaths.

Whilst some initial speculation suggested that the killings targeted scientists who had been involved in weapons programmes, the victims included many that could not have been.

By May 2004 the Iraqi academic community had come to recognise itself as a targeted group, and by September the Association of University Teachers (AUT), established by Issam al Rawi in June 2003, had recorded the deaths of some 250 academics that had been killed since the occupation began<sup>4</sup>.

On 17 January 2005 Dr. Al Rawi, head of the Iraqi University Professors Union stated:

—Approximately 300 academics have been killed (...) In a country with distinct political, ethnic and religious fault lines, the university killings seem to follow no pattern. The dead have been Shiites and Sunnis, Kurds and Arabs, and supporters of various political parties. They have a common thing: they are Iraqis». On the 30th of October 2006 Dr. Al-Rawi himself was assassinated. The occupation forces and the —Iraqi Special Police Forces raided his office on 19 October 2006. He issued a communiqué on 28 October 2006, condemning the raid.

The incident on Tuesday 14 November 2006, when paramilitary gunmen in the uniforms of Iraqi National Police commandos raided a building belonging to the Ministry of Education in Baghdad's Karrada district and arrested around 100 members of staff from two departments and around 50 visitors, in broad daylight, 1km from the Green Zone, exposed the extent of the danger facing educators, and particularly those in higher education. An unknown number of those arrested was later found killed, and again, there was no investigation. Again, there was ample evidence of

involvement of Iraqi official bodies, creating chaos and mayhem instead of establishing security. It is equally clear that US authorities in Iraq had no interest in carrying out an investigation or restraining the killers.

Even beyond the loss of life and accumulated human knowledge that such loss represents, the effect of these killings on Iraq's academic community has been catastrophic, with thousands fleeing the country and those who remain frightened into silence.

To date, the *BRussells* Tribunal has campaigned most actively to raise these killings as an issue and has kept a comprehensive database recording the killings of Iraqi university teachers and administrators, which on 30 January 2012 contains 467 names. They established this list in order that mandated human rights authorities investigate the killings and find a way to protect Iraq's academic and cultural wealth. Despite serious attempts to try to make Human Rights bodies investigate these killings and take actions, nothing has been done to date and no case has been seriously investigated inside Iraq.

### **US occupation's responsibility**

Iraqi professors direct most of their ire towards the U.S. occupation. —Iraqi professors are being killed by everyone, and nobody has told us if any killers have been caught. Nothing has been done, Dr.Saad Jawad, an Iraqi professor of political science said. —One U.S. soldier was kidnapped and Baghdad is on full alert, but the killing of an Iraqi professor? Nothing happens.

Omar Al Hajj, a professor at the University of Technology said: "Death squads accused of killing Iraqi professionals and scientists are the same forces that invaded Iraq, looted its museums and stole its banks. They are also the same parties, which abduct businessmen and foreigners for high ransoms."

### **All academic disciplines targeted**

The killings were widely dispersed by geographic area and by academic discipline and that the rate of killings of academics has increased over time. Very high proportion of senior academics have been killed, with the bulk of victims having attained PhDs and over two thirds holding the positions of rector/chancellor, dean or vice dean, department head or professor. In the vast majority of cases it appears that the victims have been specifically singled out, either as the immediate target of professional assassins or as the object of so-called kidnappings, which resulted in their deaths.

A former general described the pattern in the following terms: —Many of them get killed near their houses or on the way to their work, and others get kidnapped, and we find their dead bodies in the street. When you follow these crimes you will be sure that the criminals have special training and their purpose is to make Iraq empty of any professionals.

### **Death threats**

Alongside the targeted assassinations of academics have come explicit and implicit threats of assassination. Such threats have taken a variety of forms. Although no statistics are available, it

appears that the threats are most commonly issued in the forms of letters. The letters are typically pushed under doors or even delivered through the internal mail within academic institutions.

### **Religious fundamentalism**

The climate of fear within universities is also exacerbated by the incursion of religious fundamentalism, which can take a variety of forms. One form is for demands to be issued by anonymous or unknown groups for students to be segregated by gender and for the institution to stop teaching “Western ideals”. Students are reported to have felt such pressures to the extent that thousands have requested transfers to campuses where their sect is in the majority<sup>15</sup>. Such incursions also contribute to undermining the non-sectarian and essentially secular character of the Iraqi system of higher education.

### **Forced emigration**

The number of prominent Iraqi academics and professionals who fled the country surpasses 20,000. Of the 6700 Iraqi professors who have fled since 2003, the Los Angeles Times reported in October 2008 that only 150 of them had returned. But it’s not safe to return. The BRussells Tribunal warned already on 26 April 2009 that —those academics who return are finding jobs few and the welcome far from warm. The statement further alarmed the academics who are invited or forced to return, to be aware of criminal acts like kidnappings or assassinations.

Iraq’s US Administrator Paul Bremer’s de-Baathification policy disembowelled the middle class that cemented Iraqi society, and thrust some 15,500 researchers, scientists, teachers and professors into unemployment.

### **Sectarianism and corruption**

On July 4 2011, a blaze started in the certificates office of the Ministry of Higher Education. Iraqi Newspaper Azzaman reported on 8 October 2011: —More than 30,000 Iraqi civil servants, among them high-level officials, have obtained their jobs on fake certificates and degrees, according to the parliamentary commission on integrity and transparency (CoI). A variety of sources indicate that fake diplomas and educational certificates have been trading at anywhere from \$1,500 and \$7,000. Officials at Iraq’s ministry of higher education have been singled out for blame. Officials at Iraq’s ministry of higher education have been singled out for blame, the ministry having also licensed a string of shadowy universities in recent years. There are around nineteen thousand fake functional degrees, at the ministries of interior and defense alone, the Chairman of Security and Defense Committee of House, Hassan Sinead revealed on 21 June 2011. Corruption, grade buying and fraudulent degrees are rampant in Iraq today, posing a serious threat to the country’s development. Additionally, the CoI reported, the forgeries do not appear confined to junior staff, but have also been used by high-ranking government members.

On 3 July 2011 it was reported that the Ministry of Health discovered that 17 people who practiced medicine in Iraqi hospitals had presented forged medical degrees during interviews for their employment. The doctors have been sacked but the incidence shows how easy it has become in Iraq

to fake documents and university degrees. It was also recently reported that fake pharmacies plague Iraq.

On the early morning of 31 July 2011, a group of unknown armed men assassinated the Director-General of Administration in Iraq's Ministry of Higher Education & Scientific Research—Dawood Salman Rahim and his son, Hassanein—as they drove in their car in west Baghdad's Ghazaliya district. Dr Rahim told his friends that he might get killed because he refused a request of Iraq's Minister of Higher Education & Scientific Research Ali Al-Adeeb to equate the Shia Hawza religion certificates with the Scientific PhD certificates. The minister threatened him to force his collaboration in this issue. Security officers of the Ministry raided his house two days before his assassination, and took his car registration certificate, and his rationing ticket. He was assassinated by silencer gun two days after the raid. The equation of the diplomas has recently been authorized.

### **Virulent sectarian policies**

The current Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research is Ali al-Adeeb, a senior member of the Islamic Dawa Party. He returned from Iran to Iraq in 2003 immediately with American invasion.

Iraqi sources claim that even Ali Al-Adeeb's diploma has been forged. His diploma certificate was issued on 30-09-2010, after his appointment as minister, and it shows that he had graduated from the College of Education/Baghdad University on 30/06/1965, meaning he was 19 years old, as he was born in 1946, and this is impossible in Iraq.

### **Ongoing harassment of Academics**

On 26 January 2011, Iraqi security forces arrested more than 100 intellectuals from the Province of Diyala. Among those arrested are four top medical professors teaching at the Diyala University's Medical College, professors Mazen Razzouqi, Adel al-Hussaini, Ali al-Husaini and Bahaa Abed. It is not clear why Iraqi security forces arrested those intellectuals.

The President of Tikrit University resigned on 14 October 2011 after the sacking of 300 university lecturers by Minister of Higher Education Ali Al-Adeeb, 140 employees and professors at the University of Tikrit alone. The President of the University stated that they were all very good lecturers. Iraqi sources claim that the minister has discharged some 1.200 lecturers since he became a Minister. He also wanted to impose Islamic law in Iraqi universities through the imposition of sectarianism and the veil and the separation of the sexes, leading to discontent in university circles.

The current Iraqi authorities have a policy of excluding experienced professors, and replace them with people with party affiliations, or some other ignorant people with fake university qualifications. Many Iraqi academics are obliged to retire against their will because the government orders them to do so, while they are at the height of their capacities. The situation of the Iraqi academics abroad is also dire, because the ones who live in Europe, the US and Asia lost their retirement rights in Iraq.

### **Independent international investigation is necessary**



To this date, there has been no systematic investigation of this phenomenon of terrorization of the professional middle class by the occupation authorities. Not a single arrest has been reported. This is consistent with the occupation powers' more general role in the decapitation of Iraqi society. Bremer's de-Ba'athification policy has not only removed professional leadership cadres in the political, economic and military spheres, but also the educational and cultural spheres, with alarming consequences. According to documents of the Iraqi Resistance 169.000 members of the formerly ruling Baath Party have been killed. Thousands more left the country. The end result of the purge of Baathists has been the almost complete and quite deliberate deconstruction of Iraq's human capital.

Very few positive identifications of those responsible for killings of academics have been made. However, in at least six cases, direct accusations or sufficient eye-witness observations have been recorded to offer some evidence of culpability. In the four cases where direct accusations have been recorded, the culprits seem to enjoy an ambiguous identity as both representatives of the new security forces (the Special Police Commandos) and simultaneously Shiite militiamen. The Special Police Commandos are created by the US occupation. The report of the Human Rights Office of UNAMI, issued on September 8th 2005, written by John Pace was very explicit, linking the campaign of detentions, torture and extra-judicial executions directly to the Interior Ministry and indirectly to the US-led Multi-National Forces.

The starting point for any investigation into the killings of Iraqi academics is with those forces and their political leaders themselves.

### **Silence is Complicity**

Why is there still no Special Rapporteur on Human Rights for Iraq? Why do the international Human Rights bodies keep silent? Why are they not attending this conference? Why do they not organise an official event themselves, when even the international media are currently commemorating the 10 years of catastrophe in Iraq?

According to the UN Human Rights report, upon a request for clarification by UNAMI, the MNF confirmed that *"the US government continued to regard the conflict in Iraq as an international armed conflict, with procedures currently in force consistent with the 4th Geneva Convention"* and not that the civil rights of Iraqis should be governed by the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and other human rights laws. The admission that the US was still legally engaged in an *"international armed conflict"* against Iraq at the end of 2007 also raises serious questions regarding the responsibilities of the occupation forces for the extrajudicial killings, abductions, forced displacement of Iraqi academics, the destruction of the educational infrastructure and the legality of changes made in Iraq in the educational laws and system by the occupation forces and their installed government during the war and subsequent occupation.

Have the occupying powers, international human rights bodies and the Iraqi government done their best to protect and nurture Iraq's 'intelligentsia' or have they facilitated their murder and removal?

Whilst the situation has frequently been characterized as one of lawlessness in mainstream reporting, it is important to recognize that what we actually appear to be witnessing is an

institutionalized culture of impunity that is a common aspect of state-sanctioned terror and is endemic in the violence of counterinsurgency conflicts. It would strain credulity to its limits to believe that the agents of foreign governments without military presences in Iraq, rogue agents operating within the security institutions established under US military occupation, armed rebels, foreign jihadis and criminal gangs could have continued to murder so many of Iraq's intelligentsia so brazenly and enjoyed such complete immunity from prosecution. To this date, there has been no systematic investigation of this phenomenon by the occupation authorities. Not a single arrest has been reported in regard to this terrorization of the intellectuals.

The starting point for any investigation into the killings of Iraqi academics, which began with the illegal invasion and occupation of a sovereign nation by British and American forces, is with those forces and their political leaders themselves. If we began our investigation from this starting point, we would find that the invading powers had systematically set about the creation of paramilitary outfits designed to fight a war in the shadows against opponents designated as belonging to a specific political background that overlaps with the identity of at least a proportion of the murdered academics. We would find that certain shadowy paramilitary or militia organisations with links to the DeBaathification process, as well as an array of political murders, appear to have been groomed or nurtured by the hidden hand of the occupation. We would find that not only had the occupying authorities systematically failed to prevent these killings or apprehend the assassins, but that in several important cases where thorough and proper investigation might have revealed a great deal about the authors and mechanisms of these crimes, the occupation has shown no interest in establishing even rudimentary and transparent enquiries.

Recently a BBC / The Guardian investigation provided proof beyond doubt that the US occupying authorities created, funded, trained, armed and deployed the death squads, known as the "Special Police Commandos" renamed afterwards the "National Police". These forces are responsible for the most terrible torture practices and killings and for encouraging sectarian strife. These forces have tortured and killed tens and tens of thousands Iraqi civilians.

An international and independent inquiry into these assassinations is absolutely needed and we appeal to the High Commissioner of Human Rights in Geneva once more to organize an investigation and to appoint a Special Rapporteur for Iraq.

What is the answer of the OHCHR (Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights) to the Iraqi killing fields? Did they appoint a Special Rapporteur on Human Rights for Iraq? No they didn't. They shut their eyes and stepped into the fantasy story of a "blossoming democracy" in Iraq, repeating the fictitious US tales about overall improvements for the Iraqi people, repeating the fictitious tales of "Iraqis killing each other". What can be more hypocrite and cynical that this quote on the main webpage of OHCHR in Iraq: *"From 2006 to 2009, UNAMI Human Rights Office carried out a number of training courses for the staff of the Ministry of Human Rights, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Defense on the relevant human rights standards and the international humanitarian law (IHL), and sponsored several high-level seminars on the protection of human rights within the framework of Iraq's counter-terrorism measures. UNAMI Human Rights Office and OHCHR was also actively engaged on the development of capacity of the Ministry of Human Rights and the Ministry of Justice by sponsoring workshops and training courses for their staff in Baghdad and*

*governorates on detention standards and human rights monitoring, and it assisted and continues to assist with the establishment of the Iraq's High Commission of Human Rights, a Center for Missing and Disappeared Persons and a national Center for the Rehabilitation of the Victims of Torture."* The World Community has clearly abandoned the Iraqi people. Because they knew perfectly well what was going on in Iraq. Human Rights don't apply to the Iraqi people.

Even the International Criminal Court has abandoned the Iraqi people. "The Office of the Prosecutor has received over 240 communications concerning the situation in Iraq.(...) The available information provided no reasonable indicia that Coalition forces had "intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group as such", as required in the definition of genocide (Article 6). Similarly, the available information provided no reasonable indicia of the required elements for a crime against humanity, i.e. a widespread or systematic attack directed against any civilian population. (...)The available information did not indicate intentional attacks on a civilian population. (...) After analyzing all the available information, it was concluded that there was a reasonable basis to believe that crimes within the jurisdiction of the Court had been committed, namely wilful killing and inhuman treatment. (...) The information available at this time supports a reasonable basis for an estimated 4 to 12 victims of wilful killing and a limited number of victims of inhuman treatment, totalling in all less than 20 persons. Even where there is a reasonable basis to believe that a crime has been committed, this is not sufficient for the initiation of an investigation by the International Criminal Court.", was Special Prosecutor Moreno Ocampo's answer on 9 February 2006. This was after the urbicide of Fallujah, Ramadi, Al Qaim and other cities in Iraq. This was after the disgusting practices in Abu Graib.

Silence is complicity and silence kills. And the International Human Rights bodies are complicit by negligence. They knew what happened and didn't act.

It's our duty as peace activists to continue exposing the crimes of the occupation and point to the responsibilities of the OHCHR. Iraq needs a Special Rapporteur on Human Rights urgently. How many more Iraqi civilians are they willing to sacrifice on the imperial altar of greed and neoliberalism. How much more destruction are they willing to accept? When will they demand the Anglo-American warmongers to accept their responsibilities under international humanitarian law?

Dirk Adriaensens, 14 March 2013, Geneva.

**Dirk Adriaensens** is criminologist and coordinator of SOS Iraq, an organisation that campaigned against the sanctions imposed on Iraq (1990-2003) and organised many delegations to Iraq to observe the devastating effects of UN imposed sanctions. He is a member of the executive committee of the **BRussells** Tribunal, a renowned international network of intellectuals, artists and activists who denounce the logic of permanent war promoted by the American government and its allies, affecting for the time being particularly one region in the world: the Middle East. It was the opening session of the World Tribunal on Iraq, a people's court against the PNAC, but continued ever since. It tries to be a bridge between the intellectual resistance in the Arab World and the Western peace movements. He was also an international observer at the Kuala Lumpur War Crimes Tribunal.

The **BRussells** Tribunal initiated the campaign against the assassinations of Iraqi academics and organised in 2011 the International Seminar on the situation of Iraqi academics, in cooperation with Ghent University. Dirk Adriaensens was a member of the International Organizing Committee of the World Tribunal on Iraq (2003-

2005). He is co-coordinator of the Global Campaign Against the Assassination of Iraqi Academics. He is co-author of *Rendez-Vous in Baghdad*, EPO (1994), *Cultural Cleansing in Iraq*, Pluto Press, London (2010), *Beyond Educide*, Academia Press, Ghent (2012), the online interactive I-book '*The Iraq War Reader: A History of War Crimes and Genocide. The Unleashing of America's New Global Militarism*', Global Research, Canada (2012), '*Het Midden-Oosten, The Times They Are a-Changing*', EPO (2013) and is a frequent contributor to GlobalResearch, Truth-out, The International Journal of Contemporary Iraqi Studies and other Belgian and international media.