

# NOW IS THE TIME TO STAND UP AND SAY NO TO WAR

## STOP THE WAR ON IRAQ

The Peace Pledge Union calls on the UK and USA governments to bring the war on Iraq to an end immediately. This war is clearly illegal under international law. This is a war that could and should, like all other wars, have been avoided.

***We urge all parties to the conflict to work for negotiated solutions through the UN to bring peace with justice to the whole of the Middle East region.***

This war has been caused by the actions of the major industrialised countries of the West and Russia. They supported Saddam Hussein's regime, they armed his regime, they turned a blind eye when he gassed his own people at Halabja and carried on supporting him in spite of that appalling attack. The West must understand that they have helped to create this situation by supplying and supporting dictatorships and unstable regimes with arms. The five main powers in the UN Security Council are the five main arms traders in the world. They bear a significant responsibility for the dangerous state of the world.

***We urge the UK government to start the process of disarmament by ending its role in the international arms trade.***

It is hypocritical of Western governments to hold up their hands in horror at the weapons of mass destruction that they helped Iraq to obtain. The five main powers in the UN Security Council have weapons of mass destruction of their own in their acknowledged proud possession of nuclear weapons. They have failed to implement their role in nuclear disarmament provided for under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. They can set an example by disarming themselves and supporting international disarmament treaties on nuclear, chemical and biological weapons.

***We urge the UK and USA governments not to use their own weapons of mass destruction in the conflict, and to start the process of dismantling their own nuclear weapons.***

We are appalled at the UK government's use of cluster bombs and depleted uranium. Their refusal to use landmines, in accordance with international law, is to be commended, but the USA ignores these, as many other, international rules, which makes a mockery of allied troops supposedly working together.

***We urge the UK and USA governments to stop using weapons such as cluster bombs and depleted uranium shells which can cause death and suffering amongst the civilian population for years after the war has ended.***

The people who have suffered under the regime of Saddam Hussein for so long are the same people who are now suffering and dying under coalition bombing. The ordinary people of Iraq have suffered under years of punitive and ultimately useless UN sanctions. The war is stopping supplies of food under the UN oil-for-food programme on which most of the population has come to depend. The bombing has affected the power and water supplies in the cities. In the already weakened condition of Iraqi people it is highly likely that there will be an appalling humanitarian catastrophe with thousands more deaths. Starvation and disease kill even more than bombs and weapons. The UK and USA governments have a legal responsibility to care for civilians in areas under their control.

***We urge that immediate provision is made for the humanitarian support of the civilian victims of this war by providing safe and secure water and food supplies, and support for refugees. This support will be required for years after the war until the economy that the UK and USA have helped to destroy is re-established.***

Whatever efforts were made to use the UN to avoid the war were undermined by the USA's prior decision to go to war on its own if the decision wasn't to its liking. Such behaviour makes it impossible to operate a co-operative international system. The UN Security Council must be urgently reformed so that such a situation never arises again. The USA and UK are not entitled to go outside the internationally agreed laws and systems.

***We call for the UK government to co-operate fully with the United Nations Secretary-General and all states in the UN to improve the ability of the UN to bring about peace and justice without war.***

Wars are not accidental events or simply caused by 'evil' people; they are the outcome of antagonistic attitudes and social, political and economic structures over which we can have control. The manufacture and sale of weapons and the use or threat of use of armed force denies us this control and results in death and suffering, which in turn causes bitterness and further tension. This vast worldwide military expenditure impoverishes all our societies. We must break the cycle of violence.

The PPU calls on all people of goodwill to oppose the violent behaviour of the UK government, and the support being given to it by the majority of MPs and many sections of the media. We welcome the MPs who have had the courage to resist the pressure for war, and applaud the ministers who have resigned their posts.

Public opposition to this war is unprecedented. If you are not already doing so, take action locally – link up with pacifists and others in your area campaigning against this war. Use leaflets, petitions, vigils, letters and phone calls to the media, MPs, the Prime Minister, US Embassy etc. Join nonviolent demonstrations, and nonviolent actions at military bases. Make sure that the voice of nonviolent dissent is heard loud and clear.

If you think that war is no solution to the problems facing us, now is the time to make a pledge for peace and join us in the worldwide nonviolent struggle for a better world.

3 April 2003

Copies available at [www.ppu.org.uk/iraq](http://www.ppu.org.uk/iraq)

Peace Pledge Union 41b Brecknock Road London N70BT