

- **Support** non-governmental organisations and faith groups working for human rights, or with refugees, in the UK and in the region.

More information

Amnesty International - www.amnesty.org - has a special Iraq information page.

Christian Peace Witness for Iraq - www.christianpeacewitness.org - an ecumenical group based in the USA, committed to raising a Christian voice for peace. Website offers prayer and liturgy ideas. (Their national day of action is 7 March 2008.)

Iraq Body Count - www.iraqbodycount.org and Iraq Coalition Casualty Count www.icasualties.org/oif - give details and names of civilians and military killed in Iraq.

Iraqi Christians in Need - www.icin.org.uk - a UK registered charity aimed at relief of hardship and sickness amongst Christians who live or formerly lived in Iraq.

Islamic Relief (IR) - www.islamic-relief.com - an international relief and development charity with projects in Iraq. Founded in the UK in 1984.

Justice Not Vengeance - www.j-n-v.org - an anti-war group set up to oppose the US-UK 'war on terrorism', and campaign for a peaceful resolution of international conflicts.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees - www.unhcr.org.

Voices for Creative Nonviolence - www.vcnv.org - has longstanding record of active nonviolent resistance to US war-making in Iraq.

Voices in the Wilderness UK - www.voicesuk.org - campaigns both here and in the US against US-UK policy towards Iraq.

Liturgy Resources here: http://peace.mennolink.org/iraq_a_prayers.html and also on FoR and Pax Christi websites

Fellowship of Reconciliation, England
01865 748796
office@for.org.uk
www.for.org.uk

Pax Christi British Section
020 8203 4884
info@paxchristi.org.uk
www.paxchristi.org.uk

Supported by: **Network of Christian Peace Organisations** - www.ncpo.org.uk
Anglican Pacifist Fellowship, Baptist Peace Fellowship, Clergy Against Nuclear Arms, Christian CND, CAAT Christian Network, Christian Peacemaker Teams, Church & Peace, Congregational Peace Fellowship, London Mennonite Centre, Methodist Peace Fellowship, Quaker Peace & Social Witness, United Reformed Church Peace Fellowship.



a call for
remembrance,
prayer and action
on
19 March 2008

We lament and mourn with the people of Iraq

Thus says the Lord: 'A voice is heard in Ramah, lamenting and weeping bitterly: it is Rachel weeping for her children, refusing to be comforted for her children, because they are no more.' Jr 31:15

We were hoping for peace - no good came of it! For the moment of cure - nothing but terror! Jr 14:19

20 March 2008 will be the 5th anniversary of the start of the war with Iraq. We invite you to mark the eve of this anniversary. Join with other Christians in the UK and the USA in **recalling** the suffering of the people of Iraq, in **repenting** for the role our nation has played, in **challenging** the silence of our Churches, in **praying** for forgiveness and healing and in **committing** ourselves to action for peace with justice for the people of Iraq and neighbouring countries.

This is Holy Week, when we remember Jesus' path to the Cross - the betrayal, the torture, the abandonment - and so too we remember the people of Iraq. Join us in London for an act of witness on **19 March**. Details from **Pax Christi** or **FoR**.

We remember

- 1.2 million Iraqi people have been killed directly and indirectly. As a result of the destruction of infrastructure tens of thousands experience malnutrition and disease.
- Since 2003 there has been a mass exodus of people fleeing from the ongoing violence and occupation. More than 4.4 million Iraqis have left their homes. Some 2.2 million are displaced internally and more than 2 million have fled to neighbouring countries, Syria, Jordan and Lebanon.
- The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees reports that one in five Iraqi refugees registered in Syria is a victim of violence. Many suffer from chronic illness which is exacerbated as their financial resources run out. Refugee children are falling behind in education, and one UNHCR survey in Syria found 10% of the children of refugee families are working for a living.

- Tens of thousands of Iraqis are detained, many without trial. A UN Human Rights report in June 2007 expressed concern about the Multinational Force's detention practices, and in particular the internment of suspects for prolonged periods without judicial review of their cases.
- The minority Christian community has suffered from targeted attacks on churches and religious leaders. By the end of June, the number of displaced Christian families from the Baghdad area reached 1,200. The Iraqi Christian community of 800,000 has been reduced to between 400,000 and 600,000.
- 174 British, 3,923 US, and 133 other military personnel have been killed in Iraq between March 2003 and 14 January 2008.
- According to The Ministry of Defence (MoD) the UK has spent £5 billion on the war in Iraq over and above the UK's defence budget.

We pray

*Loving God,
We pray for ourselves:
that we may be the body
of Christ, saying "No" to war
and "Yes" to peace;
that we may be followers of the
Prince of Peace,
learning to love our enemies;
that we may be faithful disciples,
bringing good news to the poor and
release to the captive;
that we may be united by Christ's
Cross, patient and passionate, tender
and tenacious.*

*We pray for others:
for the people of Iraq, whose lives
and dreams are broken daily;
for the victims of torture and abuse,
and their perpetrators, whose bodies,
hearts, minds and souls are being
scarred forever;
for soldiers and their families, torn
apart by war, sacrificing more than
many of us can understand;*

*for communities suffering from
poverty and violence, fear
and division;
may they each know that they are
held in your love and our prayers.*

*We pray for your world:
that nation shall not lift up sword
against nation,
that human shall not lift up spear
against human,
and that no one shall study war,
or give in to greed, or prejudice.*

*We pray for peace.
Make us your peacemakers,
that we may learn in our hearts and
words and actions, in our votes and
policies and halls of governance, to
overcome hatred with love, evil with
good, and violence with peace.
We pray for peace in the name of the
One who offers us the peace of
Christ, Amen*

(from Christian Peace Witness
for Iraq website)

An Interfaith Prayer for Peace

*O God, you are the source of life and peace.
Praised be your name forever.*

*We know it is you who turn our minds to
thoughts of peace.*

Hear our prayer in this time of crisis.

Your power changes hearts.

*Muslims, Christians and Jews remember,
and profoundly affirm,*

*that they are followers of the one God,
Children of Abraham, brothers and sisters.*

Enemies begin to speak to one another.

Those who were estranged join hands in friendship.

Nations seek the way of peace together.

*Strengthen our resolve to give witness
to these truths by the way we live.*

Give to us:

Understanding that puts an end to strife;

Mercy that quenches hatred, and

Forgiveness that overcomes vengeance.

Empower all people to live in your law of love

Amen

(Pax Christi)

We act

- **Share** the information in this leaflet with others in your community, and find out more from the websites listed below.
- **Arrange** a vigil or prayer service in your town centre on 19 March to remind people of the 5th anniversary of the war with Iraq. You could read out the names of some of those killed in the war as a part of your vigil. You will find helpful resources on the websites given below.
Let us know your plans so that we can share them with others.
- **Ensure** that your church, community, or family, pray during Holy Week for the people of Iraq and for a just peace. Fast on 19 March and offer the money you save to an organisation working for justice in Iraq.
- **Write** to your local MP - about the plight of Iraqi refugees, your concern for detainees, the situation of Christian minorities in Iraq. Ask what actions are being taken **now** by the UK Government to bring justice and sustained peace to the people of Iraq.
- **Write** to your church leaders - asking what they have done and said about the war with Iraq and its consequences, and urging that a special statement be made at this time.