



UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER
FOR HUMAN RIGHTS



Humanitarian situation in Iraq

Sub-Commission decision 1999/110

UNEDITED VERSION

At its 33rd meeting on 26 August 1999, the Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, recalling in particular its decision 1998/114 of 26 August 1998; wishing to reaffirm that measures such as embargoes should be limited in time, should in no way affect innocent civilian populations and, for obvious humanitarian reasons, should be lifted even if the legitimate objectives of the measures have not yet been attained; reaffirming the need to respect the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the relevant provisions of the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and the two Additional Protocols thereto which prohibit the starvation of civilian populations and the destruction of what is indispensable to their survival; noting with grave concern the intense suffering endured by the Iraqi people and by children in particular; taking note with concern of reliable reports from concerned specialized agencies, international non-governmental organizations and a delegation of French parliamentarians who travelled to Iraq on an information-gathering visit in January 1999, according to which the population's standard of living has declined considerably; malnutrition still remains a major problem because of the lack of financial resources and is endemic among young children, causing serious retardation of growth; the catastrophic health situation is leading to about 6,000 deaths a month among children under the age of five; all economic activities are affected by the deterioration of infrastructure in the areas of drinking water, electricity and agriculture, which is causing serious harm to the everyday living conditions of the population; the embargo is, according to UNESCO, causing a serious deterioration of educational facilities and university teaching, which is leading to a decline in school enrolment, a return to illiteracy and a serious lack of scientific and laboratory equipment, causing great intellectual isolation; unemployment, deficient training, and the lack of openings and prospects are affecting the future of a whole generation; also bearing in mind general comment No. 8 (1997) adopted by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; again considering any embargo that condemns an innocent people to hunger, disease, ignorance and even death to be a flagrant violation of the economic, social and cultural rights and the right to life of the people concerned and of international law, the Sub-Commission decided to appeal again to the international community, and to the Security Council in particular, for the embargo provisions affecting the humanitarian situation of the population of Iraq to be lifted. It also decided to urge the international community and all Governments, including that of Iraq, to alleviate the suffering of the Iraqi population, in particular by facilitating the delivery of food, medical supplies and the wherewithal to meet their basic needs.

[See chap. XIV]

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