



Women in Black
London

**NO TO WAR AGAINST IRAQ
YES TO GLOBAL DISARMAMENT
BY PEACEFUL MEANS**

The USA is poised to invade Iraq in pursuit of its own interests. The British Government has committed British troops, defying public opposition to war. Why? An unprovoked attack on Iraq, and the USA's continued support for Israeli aggression against Palestinians, will increase distress and anger around the world, fuelling support for further violence. As women we say: this attack is wrong -- with or without a UN mandate.

The Iraqi people suffer...They have long suffered under the oppressive rule of Saddam Hussein. They suffered in the Gulf War, and under frequent bombing raids since. Twelve years of international sanctions have reduced their once-prosperous society to poverty. Women have been disproportionately affected by the resulting malnutrition and disease. They experience increased risk in pregnancy, and more birth defects in their children. They struggle to feed their families in a situation of shortage and inflation. Under pressure of sanctions, Iraqi society has become more conservative, restricting women's freedoms and setting back their achievements.

War against women... Now Iraqis face the prospect of another all-out war and invasion. Women and children are most affected during war. They are 80% of those forced to flee their homes. Women's burden of care for family members escalates dramatically. They are more at risk of sexual violence.

Hypocrisy... Our government is so ready to go to war, but so unwilling to accept the consequences. It is taking an increasingly brutal line against refugees and asylum seekers, in many cases uprooted by wars it waged. Meanwhile it's policies at home are fuelling racism, especially against Muslims, and in the name of security curtailing civil liberties for all of us.

This is "security"?... Women in Black have a different view of security. The security women need and seek is freedom from violence; certainty of basic resources – water, food, shelter, health care; access to education and being sure of a livelihood. Militarism is the very opposite of security. We will support soldiers refusing to serve in this war.

We call on the British government to radically rethink its foreign policy, and:

- *Not to go to war on Iraq, and to put pressure on the USA to desist from war*
- *Support the UN in a thorough programme of weapons inspection*
- *Work with European leaders in finding alternatives to war*
- *Support the Iraqi people in making their own choice of leaders*
- *Take an initiative to bring justice to Palestine and peace to Israelis*
- *Stop licensing British arms manufacturers' exports that fuel war*
- *Address global inequalities through economic justice*
- *Strengthen mechanisms of international law*
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We invite you to sign and send this leaflet as a letter to: The Prime Minister, Rt.Hon. Tony Blair, 10 Downing Street, London SW1. Copy it, and ask others to do the same.

Signed.....Name.....

Address.....