

WHAT DO IRAQIS THINK? BY THE NUMBERS:

On the occupation and its effects:

- In March 2007, 69 percent of Iraqis thought the US presence was creating more violence than it was preventing. A year later, 61 percent said the US presence was still “making security worse” with another 11 percent saying it was “having no effect.”
- By August 2007, 57 percent—including 93 percent of Sunnis—approved of attacks on US forces.
- As of March 2008, 65 percent of Iraqis wanted the US to leave “immediately or as soon as possible.” Another 13 percent wanted the US to leave “within six months.”

But didn't the “surge” make things better?

- In August 2007, 70 percent of Iraqis “believe[d] security has deteriorated in the area covered by the US military ‘surge.’” 67-70 percent also “believe[d] the surge has hampered conditions for political dialogue, reconstruction and economic development.”
- In March 2008, around half of Iraqis said that the increased US presence had made security worse; between 10 and 21 percent said it had “had no effect.”

What will happen when the US withdraws?

- In early 2006, around two-thirds of respondents agreed that “day to day security for ordinary Iraqis’ would increase,” that “violent attacks would decrease,” and that “the amount of interethnic violence will decrease” if the US withdrew by summer 2006. The figures have remained similar in more recent polls.
- Iraqis favor national unity, a secular state, and national control over oil. The prospects for achieving these goals will greatly increase once the US leaves.

Polls, interviews, and other sources used in this pamphlet:

Sara Burke, et al., “We are the Hope: Voices from the Secular Resistance Movement in Iraq,” *Peacework*, 20 Dec. 2006; Wesleyan University’s Students for Ending the War in Iraq (SEWI), *No Reason to Stay: The Case for Immediate Withdrawal from Iraq* (May 2007), www.wesleyan.edu/wsa/sewi/ourposition.html; Dahr Jamail and Ali Al-Fadhily, “No Safety for Women in Iraq,” *Alternet*, 15 Dec. 2006; Bill Weinberg, *Iraq’s Civil Resistance Speaks: Interviews with the Secular Left Opposition*, Pamphlet #26 (Ithaca, NY: Autumn Leaves, 2005); Dahr Jamail, *Beyond the Green Zone: Dispatches from an Unembedded Journalist in Occupied Iraq* (Haymarket, 2007); “Iraq Poll September 2007” (poll commissioned by ABC, BBC, and NHK news agencies); “Iraq Poll March 2008,” (ABC/ARD/BBC/NHK); Opinion Research Business, “Public Attitudes in Iraq: Four Year Anniversary of Invasion,” Mar. 2007, and Mar. 2008 version; “Iraq: Where Things Stand” (ABC/ARD/BBC/USA Today), 19 Mar. 2007; Program on International Policy Attitudes, “What the Iraqi Public Wants,” 31 Jan. 2006. [Most of the above can be found online; URLs have been omitted to conserve space.] This pamphlet was compiled in September 2008.

SIMPLE WAYS TO HELP SUPPORT PEACE AND DEMOCRACY IN IRAQ (and here at home):

- *Write to your local newspaper and elected representatives, telling them to support the three-point platform of Iraq Veterans Against the War: 1) a full, immediate US withdrawal from Iraq, 2) full benefits for all military veterans, and 3) material reparations for the people of Iraq. While you’re at it, tell them why the federal budget must be overhauled to spend less on the military and more on people’s needs—health care, education, jobs, etc.*
- *Organize an educational forum on Iraq in your town, school, church, or union.*
- *Boycott corporations that profit from the war such as oil giants ExxonMobil, Shell, BP, and Chevron.*
- *Encourage young people to pursue alternatives to military enlistment. For links to resources, visit www.projectyano.org, www.famedetroit.org, or www.militaryfreeschools.org.*
- *Get involved in (or start) a community group that opposes war and militarism. Groups active in the NYC area include:*
 - Brooklyn For Peace, www.brooklynpeace.org
 - Campus Antiwar Network, www.campusantiwar.net
 - Code Pink, www.codepink4peace.org
 - Consumers For Peace, consumersforpeace.org
 - Iraq Veterans Against the War, www.ivaw.org
 - Students for a Democratic Society, <http://studentsforademocraticsociety.org>
 - US Labor Against the War, www.uslaboragainstwar.org
 - War Resisters League, <http://warresisters.org>
- *Raise money for humanitarian and secular political organizations working in Iraq:*
 - Iraqi Red Crescent, www.iraqredcrescent.org
 - Muslim Peacemakers Team, www.leftspot.com/jess
 - Organization of Women’s Freedom in Iraq, www.equalityiniraq.com
 - Iraq Freedom Congress, www.ifcongress.org
 - Union of the Unemployed in Iraq, www.uuiraq.org
- *Read, support, and promote independent media outlets like electroniciraq.net, linktv.org/mosaic, zmag.org, counterpunch.org, juancole.com, democracynow.org, dahrjamailiraq.com, alternet.org, and tomdispatch.com.*
- *For more ideas and resources, visit www.sbusja.com.*

VOICES RARELY HEARD: Iraqi Civilians and Activists on the US Occupation



Compiled by the

**Social Justice Alliance
Stony Brook University
www.sbusja.com**

“This little boy and girl, their father was shot by the Americans. Who will take care of this family? Who will watch over these children? Who will feed them now? Who? Why did they kill my brother? What is the reason? Nobody told me. He was a truck driver. What is his crime? Why did they shoot him? They shot him with 150 bullets! Did they kill him just because they wanted to shoot a man? That’s it? This is the reason? Why didn’t anyone talk to me and tell me why they have killed my brother? Is killing people a normal thing now, happening every day? This is our future? This is the future that the United States promised Iraq?”

—Anonymous man from Samarra, 2003



Over 1.2 million Iraqis have died since the US invaded in 2003, with countless more injured or maimed

“[The US and Europe] are not here to bring anything like democracy or freedom...it has all been lies. The Americans don’t give a damn about democracy or human rights. They are worse than even Saddam.”



—Maki al-Nazal, manager of health clinic in Fallujah, 2004

“Although the dictatorship of Saddam Hussein was bloody tyranny, women were better off than now, much better off.”

—Yanar Mohammed, women’s rights activist, 2004

US-led sanctions on Iraq killed at least 500,000 Iraqi children in the 1990s according to the UN. In addition to violence, starvation and disease are constant threats under the US occupation: a recent report by Save the Children estimated that 122,000 Iraqi children died in the year 2005 alone.

“I was taken by Americans for three days recently. They told me they would rape me if I didn’t tell them where my husband was, but I really didn’t know...[When my husband was arrested], they told him they would rape me right in front of him if he did not confess he was a terrorist. They forced me to watch them beat him hard until he told them what they wanted to hear.”

—Um Ahmed, Iraqi woman from Baghdad, 2006

“Women in Iraq used to go to work, participate in social activities and even take part in politics. Iraqi women studied and worked side by side with men, and they formed at least 35 percent of the national working power in various fields of work until the U.S. occupation came. The occupation has brought nothing but suffering, death or kidnapping to women here now.”

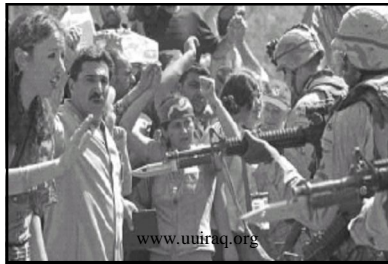
—Iraqi sociologist Shatha al-Dulaimy, 2006

“This occupation brought all the forces of political Islam back. They opened the door for all the kinds of political Islam, from Saudi Arabia, from Pakistan, from Iran—they are sending weapons and money. If the occupation forces leave, the people of Iraq can decide what they want to do. But right now they have no choice, the choice is in the US forces’ hands.”

—Samir Noory, workers’ rights activist, 2004

“I will stop fighting when the last American soldier leaves Iraq.”

—“Ahmed,” Iraqi resistance fighter, 2004



Iraq’s 2005 Constitution lists Islamic Sharia law as “a fundamental source” of legislation, and explicitly restricts women’s ability to inherit money and to file for divorce as well as other basic rights. “Honor killings” of women have also skyrocketed under the US occupation, with their perpetrators enjoying complete impunity in most cases.

“Five years of invasion, war and occupation have brought nothing but death, destruction, misery and suffering to our people.

In the name of our ‘liberation,’ the invaders have destroyed our nation’s infrastructure, bombed our neighborhoods, broken into our homes, traumatized our children, assaulted and arrested many of our family members and neighbors, permitted the looting of our national treasures, and turned nearly twenty percent of our people into refugees. The invaders helped to foment and then exploit sectarian divisions and terror attacks where there had been none. Our union offices have been raided. Union property has been seized and destroyed. Our bank accounts have been frozen. Our leaders have been beaten, arrested, abducted and assassinated. Our rights as workers have been routinely violated. The Ba’athist legislation of 1987, which banned trade unions in the public sector and public enterprises (80% of all workers), is still in effect, enforced by Paul Bremer’s post-invasion Occupation Authority and then by all subsequent Iraqi administrations.

We demand an immediate withdrawal of all foreign troops from our country, and utterly reject the agreement being negotiated with the USA for long-term bases and a military presence. The continued occupation fuels the violence in Iraq rather than alleviating it. Iraq must be returned to full sovereignty.”

—from the **“May Day 2008 Statement from the Iraqi Labor Movement To the Workers and All Peace Loving People of the World”** (full text available at www.basraoilunion.org)



Most Iraqi workers are still prohibited from unionizing by a Saddam-era law that the occupation forces have kept in place.