



CHILD VICTIMS OF WAR

"Whereas the child, by reason of his physical and mental immaturity, needs special safeguards and care..."

"Whereas mankind owes the child the best it has to give..."

- Declaration of the Rights of the Child, 1959.

Only two nations in the world have not ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child... one of them is Somalia and the other, unfortunately for the children of Iraq, is the USA.

It is recognised that in modern warfare about 90% of casualties are civilian non-combatants. Of these, a large proportion are children, especially in Iraq, which has a very young population. Civilians in war zones suffer psychological trauma as well as physical injury and children who experience psychological trauma may be affected well into adulthood, particularly if they do not receive counselling or therapy. At an age when kids in Wrexham are going to school, playing with their friends and growing up in safety, many kids in Iraq have lost friends and family to violent deaths: many children have witnessed these deaths first hand.

In many areas of Iraq children cannot play outside because of the danger from bombs, shooting and unexploded munitions. Cluster bomblets are an attractive bright yellow and resemble pop cans, and it is estimated that at least 10% do not explode on impact, but are left lying around for children to pick up. The evil of Depleted Uranium disproportionately affects the young as their fast-growing cells intensify the effects of radiation. Damage to the infrastructure of the country has resulted in malnutrition and sickness. According to the UN, childhood malnutrition in Iraq has doubled since 2003, yet before 1990 the major health problem for Iraqi children was obesity! Iraqi people value education very highly, but children's education has been seriously disrupted; even if it were safe to walk on the streets to get there, many schools have been destroyed.

Child Victims Of War (CVOW) is charity formed by people from the UK and Iraq to support the right of Iraqi children to a healthy and happy childhood. It aims to achieve this by working with local communities to monitor children's rights; researching the environmental effects of war; supporting advocacy campaigns, and helping to build and equip children's medical and rehabilitation centres. Wrexham Peace and Justice Forum intends to help CVOW by publicising their activities and raising funds to support their work.

One of the projects supported by CVOW is Childhood Voices, a project set up in Baghdad by Iraqi people. They have established a school (Seasons Art School) which supports and rehabilitates injured and traumatised children, using art and drama therapies. The school currently has 180 pupils and is free to parents as it is supported by donations, mostly from Europe.

CVOW is supporting a group of women in a poor area of Baghdad who are planning to make and sell clothes to support local poor children, and is also donating money towards an epidemiological study on the health effects of Depleted Uranium to be conducted by Dr Al-Ali, an oncologist and head of medicine at Basra teaching hospital.

Emad Hadi Abbas, Chairman of the Seasons Art School, has said: "Our Iraqi children wake up with a big burden of fear, and with no smile. They are afraid of everything and nothing, because their fear has become the tangible reality in which they live from day to day...Put simply, Iraqi children are afraid, from childhood, of annihilation." However, he continues, "We can safely say that our school, from its inception, has succeeded in its work and the children have found an environment conducive to peace, which protects them from the risks on the streets and also the negative thoughts in their minds... Educational and social activities of this kind are really considered the fundamental rights of every child."



Children at the Seasons Art School take part in a pottery session

Please follow the web links to find out more about Childhood Voices and CVOW:

www.childhoodvoices-iraq.org
www.childvictimsofwar.org

We will be collecting for CVOW at our film evening on Thursday November 10th at Trinity Church, Wrexham. More details opposite. Please come along and donate generously.

Alternatively, cheques can be made payable to 'Child Victims of War' and sent to:

Child Victims of War,
72 Heathcroft Avenue,
Sunbury-on-Thames
Middlesex, UK,
TW16 7TN.

Other ways of donating are on the CVOW web site.

WPJF REMEMBERS FALLUJAH

DAHR JAMAIL ON FALLUJAH

Independent journalist Dahr Jamail's report, *Fallujah Refugees Tell of Life and Death in the Kill Zone*, is featured in a book by *Project Censored*, an American media research group which annually compiles a list of 25 news stories of social significance that have been overlooked, under-reported or self-censored by the country's major national news media. Here is an extract from *Project Censored 2006*, including quotes from Jamail's report, which reminds us of the truth about Fallujah which the media ignored:

"Over the past two years, the United States has conducted two major sieges against Fallujah, a city in Iraq. The first attempted siege of Fallujah (a city of 300,000 people) resulted in a defeat for Coalition forces. As a result, the United States gave the citizens of Fallujah two choices prior to the second siege: leave the city or risk dying as enemy insurgents... The 50,000 citizens who either chose to remain in the city or who were unable to leave were trapped by Coalition forces and were cut off from food, water and medical supplies. The United States military claimed that there were a few thousand enemy insurgents remaining among those who stayed in the city and conducted the invasion as if all the people remaining were enemy combatants.

"Burhan Fasa'a, an Iraqi journalist, said... 'Americans did not have interpreters with them, so they entered houses and killed people because they didn't speak English. They entered the house where I was with 26 people, and shot people because [the people] didn't obey [the soldiers'] orders, even just because the people couldn't understand a word of English.' Abu Hammad, a resident of Fallujah, told the Inter Press Service that he saw people attempt to swim across the Euphrates to escape the siege. 'The Americans shot them with rifles from the shore. Even if some of them were holding a white flag or white clothes over their head to show they are not fighters, they were all shot... The Americans made announcements for people to come to one mosque if they wanted to leave Fallujah, and even the people who went there carrying white flags were killed.' Former residents of Fallujah recall other tragic methods of killing the wounded. 'I watched them [US Forces] roll over wounded people in the street with tanks... This happened so many times.' Preliminary estimates as of December of 2004 revealed that at least 6,000 Iraqi citizens in Fallujah had been killed, and one-third of the city had been destroyed...

"The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Louise Arbour voiced a deep concern for the civilians caught up in the fighting... Arbour emphasized that all those guilty of violations of international humanitarian and human rights laws must be brought to justice [and]... that all violations of these laws should be investigated, including 'the deliberate targeting of civilians, indiscriminate and disproportionate attacks, the killing of injured persons and the use of human shields.' "

<http://dahrijamailiraq.com>
www.projectcensored.org



PLEASE JOIN US.

WPJF FILM EVENING

Hamodi Jasim's

Testimonies from Fallujah

This 33 min. film contains photos and footage from last November's assault, as well as interviews with Iraqi survivors and refugees.

Jo Wilding and Julia Guest's

Letter to the Prime Minister

"It includes footage from our work documenting civilian casualties during the invasion, from the circus and Fallujah."

Thursday 10th November, 7pm.

Trinity Church Hall, King Street, Wrexham.

Free entry. A collection will be made for *Child Victims of War*.

WPJF VIGIL FOR FALLUJAH

**Monday 14th November
From 5pm.**

Plas Coch Roundabout, Mold Rd, Wxm.
Please bring night-lights, posters, banners.

**WE WILL ALSO BE HOLDING STALLS
IN WREXHAM DURING OCTOBER AND
NOVEMBER. CAN YOU HELP?**

Answers to the Asbo Quiz on p.8

Richard Storer, 60, has an ASBO forbidding him from sunbathing naked or nearly naked anywhere in Sussex apart from the nudist beach. Prince Harry, 21, doesn't have an ASBO in spite of a catalogue of anti-social behaviour including dressing up as a Nazi, attacking press photographers and being drunk and disorderly in a local pub. Alexander Muat, 87, faces jail if he shouts, swears or makes sarcastic remarks to his neighbours or their visitors. Joseph Headley, 20, got an ASBO which stops him from playing football in the street and from being in a group of more than 3 people in public. Breach of an ASBO may be punished by up to 5 years in jail.