Iraq: war, law and humanitarian protection
updated 28 May, 2003

The conflict in Iraq and its aftermath have presented humanitarian agencies with profound and complex challenges. How does international law apply, and what difference does the law make? What do aid agencies need to know about it? What are the roles, duties and responsibilities of the various international, state and non-state actors involved? Is principled humanitarian action possible when closely associated with political and military intervention?

This ODI Humanitarian Policy Group resource guide presents a collection of important resources relating to the conflict and the developments that have followed.

Humanitarian situation in Iraq

Note: the following documents and links to other Internet sites are provided for the convenience of users. ODI is not responsible for the availability or content of the external sites, nor does it endorse or guarantee the information offered at other Internet sites.

HPG Briefing Note, April 2003: Humanitarian Principles and the Conflict in Iraq

ReliefWeb

The Internally Displaced People of Iraq, October 2002

International Crisis Group report, 'War in Iraq: Managing Humanitarian Relief', 27 March 2003

HIC (Humanitarian Information Center) for Iraq - a data and information resource initiated by OCHA to support humanitarian response and coordination.

The UN Office of the Iraq Programme manages and coordinates UN humanitarian activities in Iraq, involving nine agencies and programmes: WFP, FAO, UNESCO, WHO, ITU, UNICEF, UNDP, UNOPS, UN-Habitat.

UNICEF report, 'Results of the 1999 Iraq Child and Maternal Mortality Surveys'

HRW World Report 2003, Iraq section

Medact report, 'Collateral Damage: the health and environmental costs of war on Iraq', Nov 2002

UN report, 'Likely Humanitarian Scenarios', Dec 2002

SC-UK parliamentary briefing, 'Iraq: the Humanitarian Consequences of Military Action against Iraq', Jan 2003

International Study Team report, 'Our Common Responsibility: the Impact of a New War on Iraqi Children' (Jan 2003)

Oxford Research Group briefing paper, 'Iraq: Consequences of War', Oct 2002

Merlin and the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine report, 'Hope for the best, prepare for the worst: how humanitarian organisations can organise to respond to weapons of mass destruction', Jan 2003

US Library of Congress, 'Iraq: a country study', Helen Chapin Metz ed., 1990

Law

A report by Amnesty International on the responsibilities of the Occupying Powers

An *aide memoire* on International Humanitarian Law (IHL)

The Geneva Conventions and Additional Protocols

The Refugee Convention

The Convention on the Rights of the Child

The International Bill of Human Rights

HPN Network Paper, 'Human Rights and International Legal Standards: what relief workers needs to know', James Darcy, 1997

HPG report, 'The Principles of Humanitarian Action in International Humanitarian Law', Kate Mackintosh, 2000

International Humanitarian Law Research Portal - a searchable database of links to current research, reference materials and news on IHL This includes a special portal on Monitoring IHL in Iraq (http://www.ihlresearch.org/iraq/)

The Crimes of War Project - a collaboration to promote understanding of international humanitarian law and its application to situations of conflict.

Aid, politics and principles

ODI Briefing Paper, 'International Humanitarian Action: a review of policy trends', Joanna Macrae, 2002

HPG Report, 'The Politics of Principle: Principles of Humanitarian Action in Practice', Nicholas Leader, 2000

HPG Briefing, 'The Politics of Coherence: Humanitarianism and Foreign Policy in the Post-Cold War Era', Joanna Macrae and Nicholas Leader, 2000

HPG Briefing, 'The Changing Role of Official Donors in Humanitarian Action: a review of trends and issues', Joanna Macrae, 2002

HPN Network Paper, 'Protection in Practice: Field Level Strategies for Protecting Civilians from Deliberate Harm', Diane Paul, 1999

HPN Network Paper, 'A Bridge Too Far: Aid Agencies and the Military in Humanitarian Response, Jane Barry, 2002