

## ***Iraq war inquiry 'ignoring 100,000 civilian deaths'***

The official inquiry into the Iraq war has been accused of ignoring the deaths of the estimated 100,000 Iraqi civilians who have been killed since the 2003 invasion.

Iraq Body Count, a research group which has recorded between 97,000 and 106,000 civilian deaths since 2003, said the equivalent of an "Iraq war inquest" was needed because the Chilcot inquiry set up by Gordon Brown had failed to address this central issue.

The group has been pressing Sir John Chilcot, the inquiry chairman, to look into civilian casualties for a year but has now run out of patience. The amount of time devoted to Iraqi casualties has been "derisory" and the inquiry is "flawed", its report today said.

There has been no official attempt by the British Government to put a precise or approximate figure on Iraqi casualties. IBC said: "Throughout the inquiry most of the attention has remained firmly fixed, fixated even, upon the interplay between political and military actors here and in the USA, and the ramifications of the war as felt by them, while the subject that is of greatest concern to the greatest number of people, here as in Iraq, gets only brief mentions."

*Independent, 27/8/10*

## ***G4S secure after £15m Iraq mine deal***

G4S, which tags Britain's criminals and runs prisoner transfers to courts, said it was profiting from a slew of contracts to remove landmines in Iraq as oil and gas companies return to the country.

The security company described the 'de-mining' contracts as phase one of a project bonanza in the war-torn country after the government granted licenses to overseas companies to extract oil.

Phase two will see G4S and rival firms building secure compounds to house the geologists and researchers who will be sent over to prepare the ground for oil extraction, and for the protection of these employees.

G4S also said it hoped to benefit from UK public spending cuts, for example by operating more custodial cells for the police.

The firm has already won a £15m contract to de-mine a large oilfield in southern Iraq, and a deal to provide guards at Baghdad airport.

*Daily Mail, 27/8/10*

## ***UK military in Yemen & Pakistan***

Teams of British military personnel are now stationed in terrorist hotspots Yemen and Pakistan, official figures show.

About 20 members of the Royal Navy are based in Yemen, and a similar number of Navy personnel and Army officers are serving in Pakistan.

Last year, there were no members of UK forces stationed in the two countries, according to statistics released by the Defence Analytical Services Agency (Dasa).

The figures do not include troops deployed on operations and temporary assignments, so the real numbers could be higher. Yemen and Pakistan have frequently been accused of harbouring extremists and exporting terrorism around the world.

Two of the July 7 2005 London bombers trained in Pakistan, and the suspect in the failed Detroit airliner bombing on Christmas Day 2009, Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, is believed to have been radicalised by al Qaida in Yemen.

No members of the UK's regular Armed Forces were stationed in Yemen, Pakistan, Qatar or the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in October 2009, according to Dasa figures. But British troops were based in the countries from January this year, including about 20 in Qatar and 10 in the UAE.

The numbers are not precise because they are rounded to the nearest 10. The assistance British forces are giving to Pakistan is politically sensitive.

*Press Association, 26/8/10*

## ***U.S. Weighs Expanded Strikes in Yemen***

U.S. officials believe al Qaeda in Yemen is now collaborating more closely with allies in Pakistan and Somalia to plot attacks against the U.S., spurring the prospect that the administration will mount a more intense targeted killing program in Yemen.

Such a move would give the Central Intelligence Agency a far larger role in what has until now been mainly a secret U.S. military campaign against militant targets in Yemen and across the Horn of Africa. It would likely be modelled after the CIA's covert drone campaign in Pakistan.

The U.S. military's Special Operation Forces and the CIA have been positioning surveillance equipment, drones and personnel in Yemen, Djibouti, Kenya and Ethiopia to step up targeting of al Qaeda's Yemen affiliate, al Qaeda in the Arabian

Peninsula, known as AQAP, and Somalia's al Shabaab—Arabic for The Youth.

Authorizing covert CIA operations would further consolidate control of future strikes in the hands of the White House, which has enthusiastically embraced the agency's covert drone program in Pakistan's tribal areas.

The military has carried out several strikes against al Qaeda militants in coordination with Yemen's government. One in May killed a deputy governor, angering Yemeni president Ali Abdullah Saleh.

*Wall Street Journal, 25/8/10*

### **British jets linked to attacks in Yemen**

Tornado fighter-bombers supplied by the UK to Saudi Arabia are "extremely likely" to have been used in attacks on civilians in Yemen, human rights campaigners said today.

Amnesty International UK called for the government to suspend all arms supplies to Saudi Arabia pending a full investigation.

Amnesty's report, Yemen: Cracking Down Under Pressure, found it was "extremely likely that the Saudi air force deployed UK-supplied Tornado fighter-bombers in the strikes" over northern Yemen in early November 2009.

Oliver Sprague, Amnesty's arms programme director, said:

"Our report points to the Saudis using UK-supplied and UK-maintained arms in secret attacks that have left scores of Yemeni civilians dead.

Its report said: "Foreign governments, especially the UK and US governments, have supplied jet fighter aircraft associated weaponry, upgrades and related technical assistance to Saudi Arabia.

"These governments will now be aware of the allegations that Saudi Arabian aircraft carried out indiscriminate attacks and other violations of international humanitarian law that resulted in deaths of Yemeni civilians."

Amnesty said "months of attacks saw heavy aerial bombardments, including from Saudi Arabian forces" last year as the Yemeni authorities, under pressure to confront threats from al-Qaida and Huthi Shia rebels, targeted Sa'dah in the north of the country last year.

"Amnesty has gained information pointing to hundreds – possibly thousands – of civilians being killed in the bombing," the charity said.

*Guardian, 25/8/10*

### **Deadly battles continue in Somalia**

Heavy fighting in Mogadishu, the Somali capital, has flared for the third consecutive day, leaving six people dead. Battles between government forces,

backed by African Union troops, and al-Shabab fighters continued on several fronts in the capital.

The latest clashes follow Tuesday's deadly attack on a hotel in Mogadishu in which 38 people, including eight members of parliament, died.

Al-Shabab said that its special forces carried out the attack. The assault came after the group declared a "decisive" war against African Union peacekeepers from Uganda and Burundi deployed in the city.

Hundreds of new troops, mostly Ugandan, have arrived in recent days to help the government in its battle against al-Shabab.

The AU force has so far been able to do little more than guard the airport and port and shield Sharif Ahmed, the president.

Al-Shabab, which has been fighting Somalia's government since 2007, recently claimed responsibility for a twin bombing attack in Uganda, which killed more than 70 people who were watching the football World Cup.

Somalia has not had an effective central government for nearly 20 years and al-Shabab controls significant portions of the country's south.

More than 21,000 Somalis have been killed in fighting since the start of the uprising, 1.5 million have been uprooted from their homes and nearly half a million are sheltering in other countries in the region.

*Al Jazeera, 25/8/10*

### **US threatens to end arms sales to Turkey**

Under the government of Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Turkey is carving out a greater role for itself in Middle Eastern affairs. Since 2008, Turkey has sought the role of Middle East intermediary in trying to broker a peace agreement between Israel and Syria and to resolve the Iranian nuclear crisis.

This more independent and assertive foreign policy has put Turkey increasingly at odds with two of its long-standing allies, Israel and the United States.

A crucial ally for the US in its war on Iraq, Turkey now refuses to comply with US policy on Iran. The Turkish government also has become more outspoken against Israeli violations of Palestinian rights in the West Bank and Gaza, placing it on a diplomatic collision course with Israel.

Three months after the Israeli assault on a Gaza-bound Turkish aid vessel, the Obama administration is reportedly warning Turkey that if its relations with Israel do not improve, and if Turkey does not temper its opposition to US policy on Iran, Congress may halt arms sales to Turkey

*Middle East Report, 21/8/10*