

The Dirty War against Iraq from 1991 Onwards

Professor Mona Khammas' Speech at the Roundtable Conference (30th July 1999)

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The U.S and allies claim that the war they launched against Iraq was a clean war and that they used nothing but conventional weapons in their attack. I would like to deal with extremely important issue, that is to see how clean was that war, and the impact of weapons used against Iraq on human health and the environment which were both considered to be essential human rights.

Facts and Figures:

- 1) The Allies used 141,921 tones of explosives against Iraq.
- 2) This is equal to 7 atomic bombs similar to that dropped on Hiroshima.
- 3) 5000-6000 bombs were fired by tank s.
- 4) 10,000 bombs were released from aircraft.
- 5) Napalm, cluster and air fuel bombs had been used by the Allies.
- 6) Depleted Uranium (DU) was used by the Allies in the war for the first time in the history of mankind.
- 7) More than 300 tons of DU were used by the Allies and still left behind in the region polluting the environment and threatening human health by both its radioactivity and high chemical toxicity.
- 8) All of the above were not only used against the Iraqi armed forces but much of them were used against civilians, shelters and other civilian instructors well away from the battlefield.
- 9) The threatening to civilians did not end by the cease-fire. The U.S kept threatening the people in Iraq by sending their missile and releasing warrants without any reasonable justification.

The Use of Depleted Uranium Weapons:

- 1) For the first time in the history of international conflicts the U.S and the U.K used radiological weapons against Iraq armed forces during the period 17\1\1991 and 1-3\ 3\ 1991, i.e. after declaring cease-fire.
- 2) Pentagon documents revealed that 300 tons of Depleted Uranium were used against the Iraqi armed forces in Basra and Kuwait. While the American Green Peace Group and the Dutch Larka Research Foundation say about 700-800 tons were used on the south of Iraq and Kuwait during the same period.
- 3) The use of these weapons is prohibited by the first Hague Agreement 1899, the second Hague Agreement 1907, the first Geneva Agreement 1925, the second Geneva Agreement in 1949, the Nuremberg Charter in 1945 and the Special War Crimes Tribunal on the former Yugoslavia, as well as the principles of International Law: Use of weapons or tactics, which cause unnecessary or aggravated devastation or suffering. Use of weapons or tactics, which cause indiscriminate harm i.e. to non-combatants. Use of weapons or tactics, which cause indiscriminate or long term and severe damage to the environment.
- 4) In Um Al-Maarik the U.S and U.K used planes and tanks of all kinds to attack the Iraqi armed forces.
- 5) This huge quantity of Depleted Uranium and its byproduct of radioactive aerosols and poisonous gasses are seven hundred thousand times more than the amount of radioactive aerosols released from the national lead plant near colony, near New York (where DU bullets are manufactured), which the American government to close it immediately.
- 6) CPIAB took up the task of investigating the damages and long term effects of this crime on man and environment in Iraq. The committee in close cooperation with the Ministry of Defence and the Republican guard Central took the following actions: Define the areas most affected by DU weapons in the southern part of

Iraq, Clear those areas from minefields and unexploded bombs, Mark the contaminated areas to prevent people from getting close to, for fear of radioactive contamination. Survey the Iraqi part of the Arabian Gulf in search of sunken or damaged targets by DU. The CPIAB cooperated with specialized authorities to carry out the sampling analysis, research and studies of different environment and medical cases to access the extent of damages sustained by the use of these weapons. The results showed the following:

Environmental Research and Studies:

Five areas in Basra Province were chosen ; Zubir, Safwan, Jabal Sanam , North and South Rumaila. Heavy use of DU took place in these areas. 70 out of 124 measurements recorded more than the background (about ten times more, where the natural background in these areas were normally 7 uRh and some readings were up to 184 uRh) . samples from surface and ground water and sediments in water canals close to the bombard tanks and military vehicles were collected and tested. 58 of these samples showed increase in radioactive nucleoids and the sediments in mount Sanam and North Rumaila areas. 61 out of 124 soil samples recorded several times more than the natural background. Some of the samples gave reading of (995-36205 Bq \kg) compared to the natural reading of 70 Bq\km. About 1718 km of the above mentioned areas are contaminated (Radioactive Contamination). 154 samples (plants and animals) were tested, 36% of them showed radioactive contamination. The environmental damage was not confined to the bombard areas but was spread to the whole region and neighbouring countries and the elements of the environment; soil, water, air, plants and animals. This widespread pollution has both short and long serious adverse impact on human health, animal and plants. The International Community is also required to provide support to relieve the suffering of the Iraqi people from the most serious deterioration of environmental quality caused by the war and the unjust continuation of the sanctions imposed on Iraq.

Medical Research and Studies:

Medical studies for military personnel who were in the battlefield, both in the South of Iraq and Kuwait, during the same period in 1991 showed a high rise in cancer cases of all kinds. The following table illustrates the data for different types of cancer (1425 persons). The chemical toxicity of DU was also studied. Graduate studies and research carried out at different Iraqi Universities and institutions showed a correlation between DU chemical toxicity and cancer cases. Congenital anomalies are 3.1 in Basra compared to 1.8 in Iraq as a whole. Substantial changes in the types of cancer were

recorded. High rises in leukaemia, lymphoma, bone cancer were recorded while the average age of cancer patients is lower than before, i.e., cases at an early age were recorded contrary to the international standards. Incidence of some types of cancer which were not known or familiar in Iraq previously such as brain and liver cancers had been recorded in increasing numbers. Cellular and physiological changes in some patients were recorded in a large number, which is an indication of being exposed to DU byproducts (causes-effects-relationship). There has been a high rise in hereditary disease resulting from chromosomal changes such as eye disease 2.5; Mongoloid children 6.6; change in number and shape of some organs 1.3; shrinkage in the head (or its disappearance) twice the number. Growth retardation for children of 6 years of age by about (14 months) compared to the normal. The above mentioned facts are well documented and presented to the international organizations showing the crime of the century against the Iraqi people and their environment.