

CASI

campaign against sanctions on Iraq

PRESS RELEASE

Foreign Office 'systematically distorts' humanitarian situation in Iraq, says anti-sanctions group

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For immediate release

The Cambridge-based Campaign Against Sanctions on Iraq (CASI) today released a briefing calling on the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office to stop denying its contribution to the humanitarian suffering in Iraq, and instead live up to its claim to be making "vigorous efforts...to maximise humanitarian relief" in the country.

The briefing, an analysis of an FCO press release of 24 November 2002, is available at www.casi.org.uk/briefing/021222fco.html. Examining Jack Straw's assertion that the UK government is "doing what we can to help the Iraqi people, with little cooperation from the regime", it concludes that "collectively, the FCO's claims add up to a systematically distorted analysis designed to assign blame and deny their share of responsibility for the problems of the Iraqi people."

Seb Wills from CASI, the author of the briefing, said:

"The FCO's comments do not amount to a serious discussion of the humanitarian problems facing the Iraqi people. The most central of these is a fundamental lack of income brought about by prohibitions on foreign investment, foreign exchange and exports other than oil. These are Security Council policies which continue to prevent the rehabilitation of Iraq's infrastructure and economy, and so continue to prevent a sustainable improvement of its humanitarian situation. The UK should be investing its efforts in urgently addressing these issues, rather than trying to deny responsibility and shift blame."

NOTES FOR JOURNALISTS

1. The Campaign Against Sanctions on Iraq (CASI) is a registered society at the University of Cambridge. It aims to raise awareness of the effects of sanctions on Iraq, and campaigns on humanitarian grounds for the lifting of non-military sanctions. CASI does not support or have ties to the Government of Iraq. CASI's website is at www.casi.org.uk and it can be contacted via info@casi.org.uk.
2. The briefing, 'Analysis of Foreign Office press release of 24 November 2002', is available at www.casi.org.uk/briefing/021222fco.html (HTML) and www.casi.org.uk/briefing/021222fco.pdf (PDF).
3. The FCO press release is available at: www.fco.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcclerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1007029391638&a=KArticle&aid=1037987757885.