

# Women Say 'Yes' to Disarmament by Peaceful Means

47<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission on the Status of Women  
(New York, 5 March 2003)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

*Co-signed by 216 women during the 47th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women*

The NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security and women assembled for the 47th session of the Commission on the Status of Women undersigned below, commend the Security Council on its efforts to give "a real chance to peaceful settlement of the current crisis." (Memorandum 24 Feb 2003) between the United States and Iraq.

We share the grave concern that any pre-emptive violence will serve to generate further violent retaliation and abuse of human rights. We support non-violent solutions through dialogue, broad consultation and diplomatic negotiation, which in accordance with UNSC Resolution 1325, includes engagement with representative women as negotiators for a peaceful solution to the current crisis.

We note that despite the request made to the UN Security Council at the Arria Formula meeting on 23rd October 2002, there has been no consultation by the UNSC with women in the region, though we commend the efforts of some European parliamentarians who talked with local women on their recent mission to Baghdad.

## **Illegality of Military Intervention into Iraq**

1. Any vote in the Security Council by any number in support of military intervention in Iraq will be a vote of the coalition of the coerced. Any vote to permit a military attack on Iraq to take place would be in violation of Article 1 of the UN Charter which is the highest authority of the United Nations. Any measure taken to disarm Iraq must conform to Justice and International Law.

## **UNSC Disarmament by Peaceful Means**

We call upon the UN Security Council:

2. To support the continued robust and unhindered weapons inspection regime in the disarmament process in Iraq. Organize direct high-level diplomatic talks with regard to negotiations for disarmament.
3. To hold in-depth talks with representative members of Iraqi civil society to discuss viable options for conflict prevention and transformation. In accordance with Resolution 1325 and the October 2002 report of the Secretary General on Women Peace & Security, this process must 'ensure consultation with women's groups and networks'.

## **Safe-Guarding Peace & International Democracy**

1. We reiterate the request that the UN Security Council respond to the civilians it represents internationally by taking into account the opinion of millions of individuals who have expressed their opposition to pre-emptive attacks and war during peace demonstrations in the month of February alone.
2. We request that the UN support the Democratic Iraq Initiative, which has been welcomed by leading Arab intellectuals and Iraqis. We recognize that the Iraqi people and in particular women as caring providers in times of crisis, suffer under the oppressive regime of Hussein and have suffered during the Gulf War.