

## **Open Letter from Abdullah Muhsin, Foreign Representative of the Iraqi Federation of Trade Unions, to trade union delegates at the Labour Party Conference**

Dear Comrade,

I am delighted to be here at Labour Party conference and glad that the conference is going to debate Iraq later this week.

The IFTU is a free trade union movement very different from the state controlled "yellow unions" established by Saddam Hussein.

We are immensely grateful for the solidarity and support we have been given by British trade unions. This solidarity is essential for our trade union movement to grow and thrive.

All my life I have fought for political and social freedom in Iraq, and for the first time, we have a chance to achieve it. I know some of you were against the war in Iraq but be in no doubt - the fall of Saddam has given my country a chance of freedom and progress.

**There are grave security problems in Iraq, but those causing them are not, as some have wrongly said, "the Iraqi resistance". They are nothing like the French maquis who bravely resisted the Nazis during the second world war. Instead they are a mixture of those who had a stake in the oppressive Baathist regime and foreign fighters who have, for the first time in Iraq's history, imported the terrible weapon of the suicide bomb.**

Most of those being killed are ordinary Iraqis, going about their daily lives. Many of them are our members. For example, on 26th July, 5 women cleaners in Basra were murdered at a bus stop on their way to work. The people who did this are the so-called 'Resistance'.

Today, Iraq is a battleground. Those in Britain who love human rights and freedoms have two options. Either they can add petrol to the flames and fuel the violence which will almost certainly lead to the end of Iraq's territorial integrity. Alternatively, British progressives can offer solidarity and support to Iraqi democrats, socialists and trade unionists and isolate the forces of reaction and violence.

You have two options before you this week.

**One would give hope to all those in Iraq who want to see free trade unions and political organisation grow and thrive. In line with UN Security Council resolution 1546 it says that the multinational force is there to help our democracy.**

**The alternative asks for an early date for the unilateral withdrawal of troops which would be bad for my country, bad for the emerging progressive forces, a terrible blow for free trade unionism, and would play into the hands of extremists and terrorists.**

Yours In solidarity,

**Abduilah MuhsIn Foreign Representative, Iraqi Federation of Trade Unions**