

## **Bericht von der Antikriegs-Versammlung beim Weltsozialforum, 30.1.05**

Anti-War Movement Calls for Massive Protests to End War in Iraq on March 19-20

Date: Sunday, January 30 @ 19:11:11

Topic Peace building and Human security Campaign

'Elections' dismissed as illegitimate'

PORTO ALEGRE, BRAZIL (January 30) -- o-n the day of the elections in Iraq, anti-war movements from around the world today called for a Global Day of Action against the war in Iraq this coming March 19-20.

The call was the resolution of an Anti-War Assembly held as part of the World Social Forum, an annual gathering of anti-globalization and anti-war activists that this year drew over 100,000 participants.

"There have been ups and downs since then but this assembly marks the revival of the anti-war movement," said Walden Bello, executive director of Focus o-n the Global South and o-ne of the main organizers of the assembly.

The assembly was attended by around 300 anti-war campaigners from over 33 countries, including Iraq. Most of the participants were from groups behind the massive worldwide demonstrations against the war o-n Iraq last February 15, 2003.

"We are determined to say that 2005 will be the year that we will end the occupation," said Medea Benjamin of the United for Peace and Justice, the largest anti-war coalition in the United States with over 1,000 member organizations.

"World public opinion is in our favor," pointed out Chris Nineham of the UK's Stop the War Coalition, the group that organized the massive o-ne-million strong march in London. "There is more opposition to the war now than even o-n February 15."

As of last count, demonstrations are being planned in 29 countries – including in Iraq. More are expected to follow as the call is circulated among anti-war networks in the coming weeks.

The anti-war activists also downplayed the impact of the elections in Iraq. "These stage-managed elections are illegitimate to the core," pointed out Bello. "The world will not fall for this ploy."

One participant who came all the way from Baghdad, Sheik Jawad Khalisi, a leader of a broad coalition of anti-occupation Iraqi political groups -- including both Sunnis and Shiites, Islamic and secular o-nes -- also dismissed the elections.

Khalisi is considered o-ne of the most influential leaders in Iraq today. A Shiite religious leader from Khadamiya district in Baghdad, he is the son of o-ne of the Iraqi heroes who led the resistance against the British occupation in the 1920s.

"George Bush had already determined the results of these elections even before the day of the voting," Khalisi said. "These elections are not elections for the Iraqi people, but for George Bush."

Khalisi claimed that – based o-n the information they have in Baghdad – a very significant percentage of Iraqis decided to boycott the elections. He noted that in five provinces, including Mosul, Diyala, and Ramadi, more than 90% of eligible voters decided to boycott the elections. In seven other provinces, the boycott rate was around 70%

Khalisi also pointed out that out of Iraq's 1,200,000 eligible voters, only 100,000 actually registered. Even less of them could have actually voted.

Khalisi believes that the violence will not end even with the elections. "The violence will stop only when Iraq is liberated from the occupying powers," he said.

"Violence will continue because the main instigators of the violence are the occupation forces," Bello added.

He pointed out that of the 100,000 Iraqis that have been killed in the war, most of them died at the hands of the coalition forces. "The more resistance they face, the more brutal they will get," Bello said.

This article comes from Focus on the Global South

<http://www.focusweb.org/main/html/>

The URL for this story is:

<http://www.focusweb.org/main/html/modules.php?op=modload&name=News&file=article&sid=583>