

# HEALTH CARE IN IRAQ: THE LEGACY OF 15 YEARS OF ECONOMIC & MILITARY WARFARE

“In the 1980’s, Iraq was widely considered to have one of the region’s best health care systems, with advanced, technological specialist care, and an extensive net of primary health care. However, after years of war and sanctions, this situation has changed completely.

“Among the current major problems are lack of health personnel, lack of medicines, non-functioning medical equipment and destroyed hospitals and health centers. The health services are also heavily affected by infrastructure problems, including degraded or disrupted electricity supply, sanitation and communications.”

- ***Iraq Living Conditions Survey 2004***, United Nations Development Programme. (available at [www.iq.undp.org/ILCS](http://www.iq.undp.org/ILCS)).

## IMPACT OF ECONOMIC SANCTIONS

From 1990 to 2003, the U.S. and U.N. imposed the most comprehensive economic sanctions regime ever imposed against a country. The impact upon Iraq’s health care system was devastating. Some examples:

- Maternal Mortality increased six fold between 1990 and 1999 (WHO)
- Under-five mortality increased more than four times, from 30.2 per thousand live births in 1989 to 130.6 per thousand in 1999 (UNICEF)
- Reported cases of under-five mortality from diarrhea leapt from 1.6 per thousand in 1990 to 19.3 in 1998 (WHO)
- Acute malnutrition among children under five rose from 4% in 2002 to 7.7% in 2004 (UNDP).

## COST OF RECONSTRUCTION

- In October 2003, the United Nations and World Bank estimated that it would cost \$1.6 billion from 2004 to 2007 to rebuild Iraq’s health care system. This is in addition to funds budgeted by the Iraqi government.
- In January 2006 Iraq’s Minister of Health estimated that \$8 billion over a four year period would be required to rebuild Iraq’s health care system.
- The United States has allocated only \$786 million for rebuilding of Iraq’s health care system.

## VOICES FOR CREATIVE NONVIOLENCE

1249 W Argyle St #2; Chicago, IL 60640

Phone: 773-878-3815

Email: [info@vcnc.org](mailto:info@vcnc.org)

Web: [www.vcnv.org](http://www.vcnv.org)