



# Students in Iraq

In a climate of sectarian atrocities, a continuing US/UK occupation and daily attacks against women and LGBT people, there is a growing voice of opposition in Iraq. The trade union movement offers hope for an independent, secular, democratic Iraq – and students there are taking a role in this movement.

The first student committees in Iraq were set up in December 2004, working hard under extremely dangerous conditions to organize students and create a progressive student organization to defend the rights and freedoms of young people in Iraq.

The student movement is supported by the **Federation of Workers' Councils and Unions** in Iraq (for more info, contact Houzan at 07956 883001 or houzan73@yahoo.co.uk)

The biggest student protests since the invasion came in March 2005, when students at Basra and Shatt al-Arab, along with hundreds of secondary school pupils, went on strike in protest at an attack carried out by thugs from Moqtada al-Sadr's "Army of the Mahdi" and the Iranian security services, which left a number of students injured and one dead. The attack was carried out because the students, from the university's engineering faculty, were enjoying an outing in a Basra park, where students of both sexes and different backgrounds and religions mix freely.

The attackers deliberately targeted female students for beatings, singling out a young Christian woman, ripping her clothes and then shooting dead a young man who attempted to come to her aid. In response, the students' union went on strike, raising the demand of a public trial of the attackers, secularism, freedom of speech and an end to harrassment by Islamist gangs. The city governor offered no help, and Islamist "elders" threatened to bombard Basra University.

In the wake of this upsurge in struggle, June 15th 2005 saw a congress of student activists from across Iraq, held in order to found a national student organization. But with high costs, including the need for security, Iraqi students badly need foreign financial support and solidarity.

**Iraq Union Solidarity** is a grassroots UK campaign of trade unionists and activists set up to support, fundraise and co-ordinate efforts to solidarize with the Iraqi workers' and students' movement – building links between unions, arranging speakers and meetings, spreading information and raising money for hard-pressed organisations in Iraq. Students across the world have already solidarized by protesting against the US/UK invasion – but more solidarity is needed.

**Contact us - Convenor: David Broder. Email: [iraqunionsolidarity@yahoo.com](mailto:iraqunionsolidarity@yahoo.com). Phone: 07798 754927. Postal address: c/o Unison, 14A Willoughby Road, London N8 0HR.**

## Affiliate your student union to Iraq Union Solidarity!

Student Union.....

I would like a speaker from IUS for my student union

I would like more info on how my student union can affiliate

I would like to join IUS and enclose the £5 affiliation fee for individual members

Contact name:.....

Email..... Phone.....

[www.iraqunionsolidarity.org](http://www.iraqunionsolidarity.org)