

23 JUL 2004

Traveller-Iraq

IRAQI ON GLOBAL TOUR TO TELL PLIGHT OF COUNTRYMEN

By Rosyatimah Tukimin

KUALA LUMPUR, July 23 (Bernama) -- The United Nations (UN) imposed sanctions on Iraq in 1990 because of Saddam Hussein's unjust regime, according to an Iraqi traveller who is currently on a global mission to portray the plight of Iraqis.

The regime had brought the worst sufferings to Iraqi men, women and children, he said in an interview with Bernama here.

Abdul Sattar Jabbar Al Bahadli, a graduate in Political Science from Baghdad University said that he left his native land, Iraq, in 1992 to carry a message to the international community and reveal the sufferings of his fellow countrymen.

He said the dictatorial policies of Saddam Hussein and the Baath Party, Iraq's former ruling party, had put his country under siege for more than 12 years.

"Under Saddam's regime, fatal diseases spread, most families became poor and jobs were limited, even for graduates like myself," lamented Abdul Sattar.

Insisting that his worldwide tour was not funded nor fueled by any organisations or political bodies, the 35-year-old traveller said it was his genuine concern about the Iraqis and the country's future which had prompted him to embark in this endeavour.

"My main aim is to highlight the issues and problems faced by the Iraqis long before the recent war (led by the United States) as I could no longer bear seeing the sufferings of my own people. Leaders of the countries I had visited, especially from Arab countries, were supportive of my course and they sponsored my stay and my travel expenses within their countries.

"Even when I was touring France, the French Government sponsored my lodging and travel expenses," said Abdul Sattar who had so far

travelled to
35 countries."

He said that when he was in Morocco, his parents and six
siblings were
arrested by Saddam's forces.

"I was told that one of my brothers was brutally shot dead by
Saddam's
men, one sister died of cancer and the condition of the rest of my
family
members, Alhamdulillah (Praise be to God) is now getting better," he
said.

He said that with the capture of Saddam, his global mission was
now
being expanded to include conveying the appreciations of Iraqis to
those
who had continuously provided aid in whatever forms, including the
Malaysian
Government and all Malaysians.

"Iraqis are quite happy now, the smiles are back on their faces,
and
this help from outside the country really touched their hearts and
here I
would like to again convey their gratitude to you for all your
help."

"I would also like to thank your former Prime Minister the Right
Honourable Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad as it was his clear stance that
has
helped brought about a new spirit of life in many Iraqis," Abdul
Sattar
said.

Abdul Sattar, who arrived in Kuala Lumpur on July 12, said that
while
in Malaysia, he hoped to have the chance to meet Prime Minister
Datuk Seri
Abdullah Ahmad Badawi and Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid
Albar to
personally explain his message.

He also wished to thank the Kuwaiti Embassy here for currently
sponsoring his stay here.

Abdul Sattar, who hoped to leave Malaysia after one month was
also all
praise for the country, saying "Malaysia is well-known among Islamic
countries and Iraqis respect Malaysians a lot."

He hoped to proceed to Japan and China before heading back to
Iraq
within four to five months so that he could play his part in
contributing
towards rebuilding his own country.

Abdul Sattar also hoped that the Malaysian Government would re-
open the
Malaysian embassy in Baghdad soon to enable many Iraqi businessmen
to come

to this country either to seek investments or learn more about
Malaysia's
success story personally.

-- BERNAMA

RT MFJ AAM