



WHO/Iraq Communication Section

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Health

The Jordan Food and Drug Administration (JFDA) signed an agreement with the Iraqi government by which it would start monitoring, inspecting and lab-testing all food and medicine shipments going to Iraq from and through Jordan with the same criteria that applies to food and medicine shipments imported for the Jordanian local consumption.

The agreement also includes the exchange of expertise between the two countries in the areas of preventive health, medical treatment, health training and health laws. (**Al Rai, Jordan**)

Meanwhile, with a flight from Baghdad to Amman, Iraq's national airline (Iraqi Airways) resumed international flights on Saturday 18 September 2004, fourteen years after war and sanctions forced it to halt operations, according to **BBC**.

(With the new health cooperation agreement and the possible resumption of flights between Jordan and Iraq, it remains uncertain how positively would the agreement affect the services that WHO renders to the Iraqi MOH and accelerates the testing and delivery of medical stuff to Iraq, and how easy the shipping of medical stuff and equipment be implemented. *WHO PIO*).

UN

Iraqi interim Prime Minister Iyad Allawi asserted in London that elections will take place in January as scheduled, despite continuing violence in the country, **BBC** said. Allawi urged the United Nations to increase its support for Iraq to ensure the elections would be successful. In an interview with **Al-Hayat**, Iraq's Foreign Minister Hoshyar Zebari accused the United Nations of not offering Iraq enough assistance in preparing for the elections, saying the UN currently had only 30 international staff members in Baghdad.

The British **Independent** however, published an article by Iraqi Premier Iyad Allawi arguing that the "current media image of Iraq as a country unprepared for democracy is a false one." In his first visit to the United States as Iraq's leader, Allawi will seek to show Washington that he is a reliable and steadfast partner. He then will try to convince world leaders at the United Nations that he is independent of the

Americans, who were largely responsible for his having the job, as the **Los Angeles Times** put it.

The Arab press expressed a lot of reaction on the statement by the UN Secretary-general Kofi Annan when he described the war on Iraq as illegal. The Saudi daily **Al Watan** said "Had he not been sure the US-British decision was illegal, he would not have made such a statement." The Lebanese daily **Al Mustaqbal** argued that "By saying the war on Iraq was illegal, Annan may have been trying to indicate that the only option left for the UN is to take its hands out of the Iraq war, a step it can now take as Iraq seems to be facing a civil war." **The Jordan Times** concluded, "What motivated Annan to make the belated declaration that the war on Iraq is illegal could have been his determination to pull all UN activities out of Iraq."

Politics and Security

While the pan-Arab daily, **Al Hayat**, reported the killing or injuring of some 17,193 people during the past six months of violence in Iraq, the **NYT Sun** said US commanders in Iraq are preparing operations to open up rebel-held areas, especially Falluja, by year's end, before a January deadline for national elections.

The **Financial Times** quoted an expert from the center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington as saying, "Washington is rushing in funds for what amounts to the 'Vietnamisation' of operations in Iraq.

In another development, **AP** reported that the militant group led by al-Qaida ally Abu Musab al-Zarqawi posted a gruesome video on a Web site Monday showing the decapitation of a man identified as American civil engineer Eugene Armstrong and said a second hostage — either an American or a Briton — would be killed in 24 hours. It also reported that a militant group posted a video on the Internet purporting to show militants sawing off the heads of three Iraqi members of a Kurdish party for cooperating with US forces. **AFP**, quoting the Italian daily **La Stampa**, said an intelligence report points at the Italian medical personnel in Iraq as the new target of the Iraqi kidnappers.