

By The Brussels Tribunal

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Today the Spanish Senate, acting to confirm a decision already taken under pressure from powerful governments accused of grave crimes, will limit Spain's laws of universal jurisdiction. Yesterday, ahead of the change of law, a legal case was filed at the Audiencia Nacional against four United States presidents and four United Kingdom prime ministers for commissioning, condoning and/or perpetuating multiple war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide in Iraq.

This case, naming George H W Bush, William J Clinton, George W Bush, Barack H Obama, Margaret Thatcher, John Major, Anthony Blair and Gordon Brown, is brought by Iraqis and others who stand in solidarity with the Iraqi people and in defence of their rights and international law.

Iraq: 19 years of intended destruction

The intended destruction — or genocide — of Iraq as a state and nation has been ongoing for 19 years, combining the imposition of the most draconian sanctions regime ever designed and that led to 1.5 million Iraqi deaths, including 500,000 children, with a war of aggression that led to the violent deaths of over one million more.

- Destroying Iraq included the purposeful targeting of its water and sanitation system, attacking the health of the civilian population. Since 1990, thousands of tons of depleted uranium have been dropped on Iraq, leading in some places to a 600 per cent rise in cancer and leukaemia cases, especially among children. In both the first Gulf War and "Shock and Awe" in 2003, an air campaign that openly threatened "total destruction", waves of disproportionate bombing made no distinction between military and civilian targets, with schools, hospitals, mosques, churches, shelters, residential areas, and historical sites all destroyed.

- Destroying Iraq included promoting, funding and organizing sectarian and ethnic groups bent on dividing Iraq into three or more sectarian or ethnic entities, backed by armed militias that would terrorize the Iraqi people. Since 2003, some 4.7 million Iraqis — one fifth of the population — have been forcibly displaced. Under occupation, kidnappings, killings, extortion

and mutilation became endemic, targeting men, women and even children and the elderly.

- Destroying Iraq included purposefully dismantling the state by refusing to stop or stem or by instigating mass looting, and by engaging in ideological persecution, entailing “manhunting”, extrajudicial assassinations, mass imprisonment and torture, of Baathists, the entire educated class of the state apparatus, religious and linguistic minorities and Arab Sunnis, resulting in the total collapse of all public services and other economic functions and promoting civil strife and systematic corruption.

- In parallel, Iraq’s rich heritage and unique cultural and archaeological patrimony has been wantonly destroyed.

In order to render Iraq dependent on US and UK strategic designs, successive US and UK governments have attempted to partition Iraq and to establish by military force a pro-occupation Iraqi government and political system. They have promoted and engaged in the massive plunder of Iraqi natural resources, attempting to privatize this property and wealth of the Iraqi nation.

Humanity at stake

This is but the barest summary of the horrors Iraq has endured, based on lies that nobody but cowed governments and complicit media believed. In 2003, millions worldwide were mobilized in opposition to US/UK plans. In going ahead, the US and UK launched an illegal war of aggression. Accountability has not been established.

The persons named in this case have each played a key role in Iraq’s intended destruction. They instigated, supported, condoned, rationalized, executed and/or perpetuated or excused this destruction based on lies and narrow strategic and economic interests, and against the will of their own people. Allowing those responsible to escape accountability means such actions could be repeated elsewhere.

It is imperative now to establish accountability for US and UK war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide in Iraq because:

Every Iraqi victim deserves justice.

Everyone responsible should be accountable.

We are before immoral and unlawful acts, contrary to the basis on which the international order of state sovereignty and peace and security rests. Whereas the official international justice system is closed before the suffering of those that imperialism makes a target, through this case we try to open a channel whereby the conscience of humanity can express its solidarity with justice for victims of imperial crimes.