



NEWSHOUR

A NewsHour with Jim Lehrer special for students

EXTRA

STATEMENT FROM SADDAM HUSSEIN CALLS FOR JIHAD

April 1, 2003

Iraqi president Saddam Hussein calls for a holy war against coalition forces in a statement read on Tuesday.

In a statement read on Iraqi state television, president Saddam Hussein called on the Iraqi people to commit themselves to a **holy war** against U.S. and British forces seeking his ouster.

Information Minister Mohammed Saeed al-Sahhaf delivered the proclamation in a short address at 8 p.m. local time (noon EST).

The statement accused the coalition forces of waging a war against **Islam** in addition to Saddam's regime.

A call to jihad

"The aggression that the aggressors are carrying out against the stronghold of faith is an aggression on the religion, the wealth, the honor and the soul and an aggression on the land of Islam," Mohammed Saeed al-Sahhaf said.

"Therefore, **jihad** is a duty in confronting them... Those who are **martyred** will be rewarded in heaven. Seize the opportunity, my brothers," he added.

As U.S.-led forces continued to push north towards the outskirts of the capital, the Iraqi government called on its people to attack the coalition wherever and whenever they could.

"Strike at them, fight them," the statement said. "They are aggressors, evil, accursed by God. You shall be victorious and they shall be **vanquished**."

"Fight them everywhere the way you are fighting them today," it continued. "And don't give them a chance to catch their breath until they declare it and withdraw from the lands of the **Muslims**, defeated and cursed in this life and the afterlife."

Previous statements by Saddam Hussein

Saddam Hussein has delivered two previous statements since the war began nearly two weeks ago. In those statements, Saddam appeared on camera, but analysts in the U.S. have indicated those statements may have been taped prior to the beginning of the conflict.

Tuesday's statement came at the end of a day of heavy bombing by American and British warplanes on targets in southern Baghdad, where Iraqi Republican Guard units have dug in to defend the city.

Vocabulary

holy war – (n.) a war waged by religious [supporters] to [extend] or defend their faith (Merriam-Webster)

Islam – (n.) the religious faith of Muslims including belief in Allah as the sole deity and in Muhammad as his prophet (Merriam-Webster)

jihad – (n.) a holy war waged on behalf of Islam as a religious duty (Merriam-Webster)

martyr - (n.) a person who sacrifices something of great value and especially life itself for the sake of principle (Merriam-Webster)

vanquished - (transitive verb) to overcome in battle, subdue completely (Merriam-Webster)

Muslim – (n.) a [follower] of Islam (Merriam-Webster)