

Aid campaign plea to avoid cholera crisis

by **CAROLINE WRIGHT**
Chief Reporter

An aid-to-Iraq campaigner from Bradford is calling for more cash and medical donations amid fears the country is on the verge of a cholera epidemic.

Dr Nabeel Al-Ramadhani, managing director of the Human Relief Foundation (HRF) charity in Great Horton, is expected to return from Iraq next week.

He says conditions are very poor. "In many areas doorsteps have become rubbish dumps and clean water is a luxury for the minority," he said.

"Many Basra residents have started drinking from the Shatt al-Arab river and irregular waste collections and ineffective sewage disposal facilities have contributed to the outbreak of disease."

He said in large parts of Southern Iraq, where water sanitation facilities have been affected for weeks, doctors have

reported a significant rise in the number of cases of diarrhoea, gastro-enteritis and dehydration.

"Such conditions are easily treated under normal circumstances but in light of Iraq's failing medical infrastructure, the most minor infection can become life threatening," he said.

The HRF has responded to the immediate crisis by distributing food bags amongst the poorer communities.

But Dr Al-Ramadhani said more funding is needed.

As reported, HRF are currently sustaining three hospitals and five schools in the region, including 'Al-Yarmook' hospital in Baghdad, the second biggest public health facility in Iraq.

With 1,000 beds, it caters for over four million Baghdad residents.

Facilities are stretched at best and continual funding is needed in order that the hospital may remain operational.

Further consignments of food and medical aid are currently being delivered to Iraq from the

HRF office in Damascus. The HRF appeal has raised more than £250,000 for Iraq in the six weeks since it started.

"Lives are being saved every day," said Dr Al-Ramadhani, "This is a genuine tribute to the commitment and kindness of everyone that has made a donation to HRF. However, more funding is urgently needed."

As well as appealing for donations, the HRF is appealing to pharmacies and medical suppliers to donate first aid kits, medication and equipment to the people of Iraq via the HRF office in Bradford.

● Please make your donations payable to Human Relief Foundation and send them to: HRF, FREEPOST BD 3125, P.O. Box 194, Bradford, BD7 1YW. UK or Call 08700 117 112 or e-mail: donate@hrf.co.uk or visit www.hrf.co.uk You can also donate to the Human Relief Foundation at Barclays Bank. A/C: 70 55 40 22 Sort Code 20-11-81.

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