

Wednesday, January 14, 1998

Telegraph & Argus

NEWS

BRADFORD: Charity worker set for Iraq where thousands of youngsters have died

Suffer little children

by **SIMON ASHBERRY**

T&A Reporter

Charity worker Nafees Nazir is heading for Iraq to help children suffering in the aftermath of the Gulf War.

He is part of a two-man delegation being sent by the Bradford-based Human Relief Foundation (HRF), set up in 1991 to address the humanitarian tragedy which has unfolded in Iraq since the war.

Mr Nazir, who has been working as development officer for the charity for the past six months, and Jamal Al-ani, its regional co-ordinator in Scotland, will distribute £10,000 worth of medicine during their ten-day fact-finding mission.

"A thousand children under the age of five die of malnutrition and preventable disease every week in what has been called an 'artificial famine'," said Mr Nazir, who until recently worked as a community development health worker for Bradford Health Authority. "People don't realise that there are now a million orphans in Iraq."

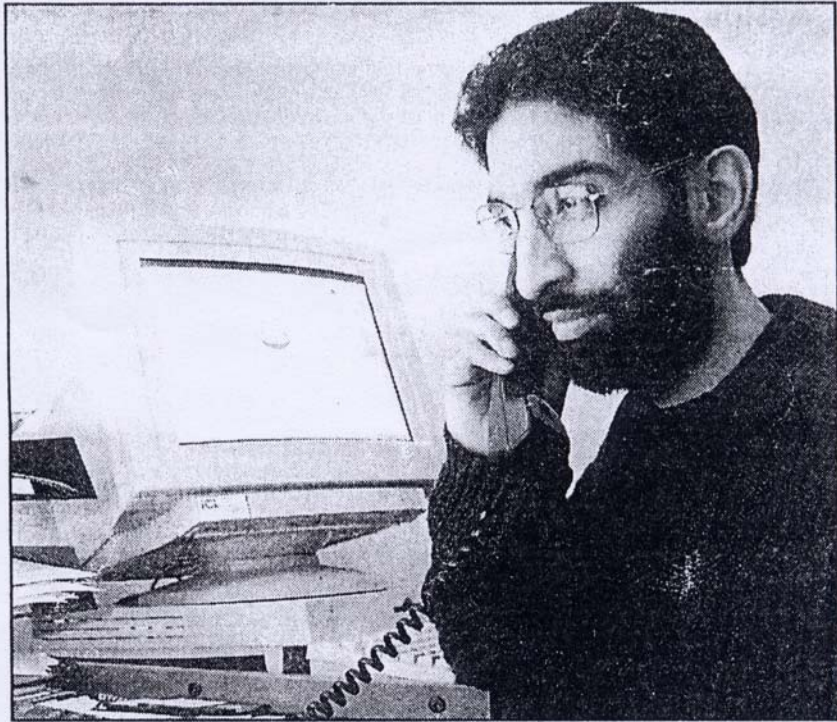
Mr Nazir said medicines were scarce in Iraq and many hospitals had completely run out of supplies.

There was no electricity and clean water in most hospitals and it was common practice for mother to deliver babies by caesarean section without anaesthetic.

"The work we are doing is a drop in the ocean but action is desperately needed. It has been estimated that if the sanctions were lifted today, it would take Iraq 30 years to return to some semblance of normality," said Mr Nazir.

He added that the UN's own Food and Agricultural Organisation (UNFAO) said more than 4,500 children aged under five had died of hunger and disease every month in 1996 as a direct result of sanctions.

"There is a growing movement in the United



TAKING COMFORT:

Nafees Nazir prepares to visit Iraq to distribute medicine. Many thousands of children have died of hunger and disease as a result of UN sanctions

States against sanctions that is being backed by high-ranking employees of the UN," said Mr Nazir.

HRF was originally founded in 1991 but three years later moved to Bradford, where it is currently based in Claremont. The charity relies on donations, many of which come from the British

Muslim community as well as abroad. Sixty per cent of money goes towards humanitarian aid in Iraq, but projects in other countries have also been set up.

For more details of how to help HRF, ring (01274) 392727.