

SAFETY: CITY RELIEF BOSS WON'T BE GOING BACK TO IRAQ

My horror at kidnap of friend Margaret

by **CAROLINE WRIGHT**

Chief Reporter

The head of a Bradford relief charity today said he would not be returning to Iraq after the kidnap of his close friend and colleague Margaret Hassan.

Dr Nabeel Al-Ramadhani was in Dubai on a fundraising tour when he heard about Mrs Hassan's capture by a gang who later paraded her on a video.

She has been working in Iraq for the past 30 years and is head of the giant Care International, organising medical supplies for hospitals and connecting water to homes.

Dr Al-Ramadhani, founder of the Human Relief Charity in Great Horton, said he will now stay in Dubai until after the American elections next month as he fears he too will be a kidnap target.

Speaking from Dubai, he told the Telegraph & Argus: "If Mrs Hassan can be kidnapped they will take anyone. The situation is becoming ridiculous."

"I hope they just hold her, then release her. When I heard the news I felt angry and disappointed because she has been working so hard to rebuild Iraq."

He worked with her on water-supply projects in Jordan and Iraq and



described her as a "serious and sincere" charity worker.

He added: "She is very decisive and is a good charity worker. She knew the city and would have played it very safely. I cannot believe they have taken her in this way."

He said the problem was made worse by the fact there were so many kidnapers in the city and their motives all varied.

"Some want money, others are anti-Bush. We do not know what they want in this particular situation with regards to Mrs Hassan."

He said all the charity's workers were Iraqis in Baghdad but said he feared he would now be a target as he



VICTIM: Margaret Hassan, above, the kidnapped aid chief. Left, Dr Nabeel Al-Ramadhani pictured in happier times, before setting off with hospital bedding on a recent aid mission to Iraq

holds a British passport. "I am now a target," he said. "I shan't be going back for a while. The kidnapers are making chaos ahead of the elections. But we don't know if they are anti-Bush and a Kerry win will change things."

"We have to wait and see. I shan't return until after the elections now."

The Human Relief Foundation charity is based in Great Horton and has been sending regular supplies to Iraq including a recent delivery of NHS unwanted sheeting and pillowcases from Bradford to be used in hospitals out there.

The charity is currently working to equip a maternity unit in the west of Iraq and involved in helping to build a new 100-bed public hospital in Baghdad. Set up in 1991 after the first Gulf War, it has raised more than £2 million for Iraq.

e-mail: caroline.wright@bradford.newsquest.co.uk