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WEATHER: SHOWERS

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Giant quits to follow Saddam

A CIRCUS strong man walked out on the Edinburgh Festival last night to join Saddam Hussein's army.

Iraqi Zanoluk el Habib, 6ft 9in star of the French Archaios circus, told colleagues he was worried about his elderly mother and three sisters at home in Bagdad.

"He thought the reports in British papers were unfair to Iraq," said a circus spokesman. "He said he was going home to join up and fight if he was called on."

The walkout was not the first problem 23-year-old Habib has caused for the circus — which has taken Europe by storm since winning the Scottish Daily Express Fringe Award last year.

It was served a writ by Barcelona city council claiming he bent three lamp posts in half during a recent tour of Spain. Circus director Pierrot Bidon admitted it could have happened, but said he bent them straight again before leaving.

Now Habib's bosses are desperately searching Edinburgh for another iron-bar bending giant.

"He's left us with a problem finding a replacement," said the spokesman. "But he's so big nobody was going to argue with him."