

*Symposium on Iraq and the Challenges for Human Rights  
Friday 1 October 2004 , Melbourne, Australia*



# *Iraq and the Challenges for Human Rights*

Friday 1 October, 2004  
8.30 - 5.30 pm

ANZ Pavilion,  
8<sup>th</sup> floor, The Arts Centre  
100 St Kilda Road, Melbourne

Co-sponsored by  
AusAid, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Northern Migrant Resource  
Centre

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CENTRE FOR CITIZENSHIP AND HUMAN RIGHTS  
Deakin University

Symposium  
on  
***Iraq and the Challenges for Human Rights***

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The Iraqi people have endured more than three decades of large-scale violations of human rights that took the form of mass killings, torture, long-term imprisonment and ethnic cleansing. Following the collapse of the former regime, the scale of the atrocities became more evident by the uncovering of hundreds of mass gravesites throughout Iraq.

The Symposium, organized by the Australian Iraqi Forum (AIF) and the Centre for Citizenship and Human Rights at Deakin University, seeks to expose the atrocities committed against the Iraqi people by the former regime and human rights issues facing Iraq today. The Conference will explore the mechanisms needed to guarantee human rights in the building of the new Iraq. It also seeks, through a panel discussion, to explore the situation of Iraqi refugees in Australia, including the current legal issues facing many refugees. Prominent speakers from Iraq, UK and Australia will present detailed analyses of various human rights issues, including a historical perspective, constitutional human rights guarantees in the building of the new Iraq, women's empowerment and the treatment of refugees.



**Australian Government**  
**Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade**



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## ***Iraq and the Challenges for Human Rights Symposium***

### **Program**

- Session I*      *Session Chair, Dr Riadh Al-Mahaidi, AIF*
- 9:00      Introduction / welcome, Dr Riadh Al-Mahaidi, President of AIF
  - 9:10      Official opening, Professor Sally Walker, Vice-Chancellor of Deakin University
  - 9:15      The Hon Alexander Downer MP, Minister for Foreign Affairs
  - 9:40      Historical overview on human rights abuses and constitutional guarantees for human rights in the new Iraq, Professor Hussain Al-Shahristani, President, Iraqi Academy of Sciences
  - 10:15      Discussions
- 10:40 Break**
- Session II*      *Session Chair Dr Ian Weeks, Deakin University*
- 11:10      Human rights abuses in the Iraq over the last three decades.  
Speaker Dr Sahib Alhakim, President, Organisation of Human Rights in Iraq
  - 12:00      Implementation of human rights from an Islamic perspective.  
Speaker Dr Fethi Mansouri, Deakin University
  - 12:20      Discussions
- 12:40 Lunch, Exhibition and Video Documentaries**
- Session III*      *Session Chair Dr Leanne Piggott, University of Sydney*
- 14:00      Women's Empowerment in the Arab States with Particular Focus on Iraq. Speaker Dr Salma Al-Khudairi, AIF
  - 14:25      Australia's role in building human rights institutions in Iraq  
Dr Jamal Sankari, Deakin University
  - 14:50      Discussions
- 15:00 Break**
- Session IV*      *Session Chair Dr Bayan Alaaraji*
- 15:20      The tragedy of Iraqi refugees, Dr Sahib Al-Hakim, President, Organisation of Human Rights in Iraq
  - 15:50      Panel discussion on refugee policies, moderated by Peter Mares  
Panellists: Di Sisley, David Manne, Dr Mohammed Al-Salami, Dr Fethi Mansouri, Mueen Al-Briehi and Dr Khairy Majeed
  - 17:20      Closing remarks, Dr Khairy Majeed, AIF

***Australia: A Resolute Friend of Iraq***

A Speech by

**The Minister for Foreign Affairs**

**The Hon Alexander Downer MP**

to the

**Iraq and the Challenges for Human Rights Symposium**

**Introduction**

Ladies and gentlemen, It is a pleasure to be here at the Australian Iraqi Forum's symposium *Iraq and the Challenges for Human Rights*.

I want to congratulate Dr Riadh Al Mahaidi and the Australian Iraqi Forum for the excellent job they are doing to promote cooperation between Australia and Iraq.

I am particularly pleased to welcome keynote speaker Dr Hussein al-Shahristani to Australia. Dr Shahristani has long held a prominent place in Iraq's scientific and human rights fields as

- Chairman of the Association of Iraqi Political Prisoners
- founder of the Iraqi Refugee Aid Council
- and Chairman of the Iraqi National Academy of Science.

A former Chief Scientific Advisor at the Iraqi Atomic Energy Commission, he has been a leading commentator on Saddam Hussein's WMD aspirations and he has first-hand experience of the brutality of Saddam's regime having served time as a political prisoner.

I would also like to welcome officials from Iraq's new Ministry of Human Rights, who are undertaking a Government-sponsored study tour of Australia's human rights and legislative bodies and Australia's Ambassador designate to Iraq, Howard Brown.

**Resolve and determination**

Ladies and gentlemen, it is a great source of pride to me that Australia joined the international coalition that removed Saddam Hussein's barbarous regime.

That decision was not an easy one to make: there is no act more solemn than a decision to send Australians into harm's way.

But I remain firmly of the view that our actions were right; that our cause was overwhelmingly just and that our decision has been vindicated.

For all we have learnt before and since the war has shown that Saddam Hussein was a brutal and evil dictator, a threat to his own people and to international peace and security.

Saddam Hussein defied the international community's express demand that he disarm and comply with no fewer than 17 mandatory UN Security Council resolutions.

Even when confronted with the 'final opportunity to comply' presented in the unanimous UN Security Council Resolution 1441, he refused to do so.

And that is because he had no intention of ever complying with the reasonable demands of the international community.

The work of the Iraq Survey Group shows Saddam was in material breach of his international obligations and that his ambition for WMD remained undiminished.

Military action was the only way the international community could bring Saddam into compliance.

In removing Saddam we have ensured that he will never again use WMD – whether against his own people or his neighbours.

We have ended his support for terrorist groups and donations of US\$25,000 to the relatives of Palestinian suicide bombers.

But just as significantly for the people of Iraq, we have removed a regime that sustained its rule through rape, torture and murder.

Saddam's regime perpetrated some of the most egregious human rights abuses the world has seen.

Prime Minister Allawi has estimated the total number of missing from the Saddam era exceeds one million people.

And since the end of the war the Coalition has received reports of some 275 mass graves containing the remains of some 300,000 slain men, women and children.

But this is only a portion of the victims of Saddam's rule.

Over one million people perished as a consequence of the brutal war he launched against Iran in 1980.

Some 5,000 people died during the chemical weapons attack on the Kurdish town of Halabja in March 1988. And of course many died during Saddam's invasion of Kuwait

and his subsequent suppression of the Kurd and Sh'ia uprisings that followed the 1991 conflict.

Murder and torture have become by-words for Saddam's regime.

Saddam's removal and forthcoming trial are thus a great victory for the Iraqi people and for the people of neighbouring countries and the international community. At last justice will be done.

### **Foundations of a new beginning**

Ladies and gentlemen, we must do more than simply bring Saddam and his cronies to justice.

We must help the Iraqi people lay the foundations for a modern, democratic and just nation.

I am very pleased that Iraq has already made significant progress on the path to this brighter future.

That Iraqis have achieved so much in a short time reflects their strong will to take charge of their future and make Iraq a better place.

Iraqis have embraced their new hard-won human rights such as freedoms of speech, assembly and association.

New political parties have emerged, while women and minorities are engaged and welcomed in political life.

Iraqis are conducting religious ceremonies and pilgrimages banned previously under Saddam's tyranny.

They have access to a flourishing media through some 170 newspapers, satellite television and the internet.

To safeguard these freedoms, the Interim Government has set up a Ministry of Human Rights.

But even greater protection of human rights is delivered in the Transitional Administrative Law.

The Law enshrines fundamental freedoms for the people of Iraq

- it protects the rights of minorities and regional groups
- and it establishes a framework for the creation of governmental and judicial structures to exercise temporary authority until Iraqi's elect a new government.

It is under this law that the Interim Iraqi Government assumed full control in June.

The Interim Government reflects the ethnic and religious diversity of the Iraqi people and includes six women.

Prime Minister Allawi has made a strong start in dealing with the threats to Iraq's transition and in preparations towards a fully representative, elected Iraqi government in 2005.

The smooth creation of the Interim National Council in August and its first meeting in early September were clear signs that overwhelming majority Iraqis want to move forward together.

Participants came together in a spirit of tolerance and inclusiveness and spoke freely and emotionally after decades of repression, in an atmosphere of respect.

Ladies and gentlemen, the next key step in Iraq's transition to democracy will be the national elections to be held next year.

I welcome Prime Minister Allawi's commitment to the elections and the January 2005 schedule.

His efforts are supported by Iraq's newly founded independent electoral commission which is making progress on the logistics of the election.

But it will need help: the UN must fulfil the role set out for it in Security Council Resolution 1546 to help Iraq complete arrangements for the elections on time.

The size of the UN's presence in Iraq must be commensurate with the importance and urgency of its task.

For its part, Australia was one of the first to commit assistance to the electoral process with a \$5 million contribution to UN support efforts.

And I welcome the planned visit of Iraqi electoral officials in Australia to observe our own forthcoming elections as part of their preparations.

### **Delivering Iraq from evil**

Ladies and gentlemen, it is a measure of Iraq's success in moving toward democracy that terrorists and insurgents have stepped up their evil campaign.

We all deplore the depraved attacks perpetrated by these terrorists – especially the deaths of more than 30 children in a vicious attack in Baghdad overnight.

The terrorists know that to defeat the rise of a democratic Iraq would be to secure a major strategic victory for their cause.

It is for this reason that terrorists have made Iraq the frontline in their global fight against moderate Islamic governments and the West.

And that is why it is naïve and irresponsible to argue that Iraq is somehow separate from the war against terrorism, that we can withdraw – in effect ‘cut and run’ – from Iraq yet still claim that Australia is tough on terrorists.

Terrorists would see a premature withdrawal from Iraq for what it is: provocative weakness that would spur them to greater evil, not to acquiescence and retreat.

The Coalition Government has been clear all along: we will not bow to terrorists’ demands.

We will listen to the Iraqi people and stand by them in their fight to build a better future free of tyranny.

To do anything else would be a betrayal of Australia’s fundamental national interests – and our values as a nation.

To really understand the folly of cutting and running you just have to cast your mind forward and imagine the consequences.

If in a few weeks’ time Australia announced it was pulling its troops out by Christmas, imagine the reaction in Iraq.

Terrorists would claim a great victory – the defeat of an original member of the Coalition of the Willing.

While terrorists celebrate wildly, the people of Iraq would be disappointed and – justifiably – feel let down.

In London and Washington, Australia’s reputation as a solid and reliable ally would be seriously damaged.

Our allies would feel they could no longer rely on us.

In other capitals, from Tokyo to Warsaw, Rome to Seoul, Australia would be seen to have left when the job was not done.

Countries standing with the Iraqi people would wonder why Australia, always strong and reliable in the past, was now cutting and running.

That is not the Australian way. That is not what others expect of us or, more importantly, what we expect of ourselves.

Irrespective of your view of the war, Australia and the international community must now remain firm in the face of terror.

Today Iraqi and coalition military forces are working hard to ensure security for Iraqis and the forthcoming elections

\Prime Minister Allawi says he now has nearly 100,000 fully trained armed forces and police and expects more than 125,000 by the end of the year and 200,000 by the end of next.

Brave Iraqis continue to enlist in the service of their country despite terrorists' deliberate targeting of them.

Some reports estimate more than 700 policemen and recruits murdered since mid 2003 and yet still Iraqis remain determined.

I am immensely proud of the role Australian defence personnel and police in training Iraq's brave new security forces.

Just last week I had the opportunity to welcome home to Australia ADF personnel based at Robertson Barracks who had been guarding the Australian embassy in Iraq.

I admire their courage and professional service, and was grateful for the opportunity to thank them personally for the job they did.

The ADF's work in Iraq is a practical expression of Australia's strong, resolute and determined friendship with the Iraqi people.

### **Australians and Iraqis delivering a better future**

Ladies and gentlemen, under the Coalition Government, Australia has committed over \$125 million in assistance to Iraq, including \$55 million for humanitarian needs in 2003.

Our efforts were critical in delivering some of the first food supplies to Iraq in the immediate aftermath of the war.

And since then, we have helped restore water and basic health care to Iraqi communities.

Iraq is a nation recovering from decades of deliberately poor governance and economic mismanagement.

Our assistance – notably on agriculture, donor coordination and economic governance – is making a real difference in these areas.

Our efforts in the agricultural sector enabled the early rehabilitation of the Agricultural Ministry and early planting of crops.

Our economic advisors have helped deliver Iraq's first effective government payments system and credible budget for decades.

I am particularly pleased by the contribution of Australian officials towards human rights capacity building in Iraq.

Australian legal officials attached to the former Coalition Provisional Authority contributed to drafting of the Transitional Administrative Law

Specific Australian contributions to the Law include the right to freedom of assembly – a first in the history of Iraq – thereby allowing over 1800 non-government organisations to flourish.

Australian officials are working closely with the Interim Iraqi Government to promote a culture of human rights.

The presence of the Ministry of Human Rights delegation here today is an example of Australia's assistance in action.

We are also developing a training program with the Ministry of Human Rights and I am confident that further capacity-building training opportunities will be identified.

## **Conclusion**

Ladies and gentlemen, Iraq is undergoing a transition from dictatorship to a better future under a representative government that respects and upholds fundamental human rights.

There is no doubt that this transition will be difficult with twists and turns. And some will seek to subvert it.

But there is a clear path ahead for the future of Iraq – and Iraqis are firmly taking the lead.

The task for us all is to work with the Iraqi people; to help them realise their long-held wish to live in a nation free from tyranny and injustice.

The Coalition Government has always been committed to helping the Iraqi people achieve their goal.

Right from the outset, when we resolved to enforce UN Security Council resolutions and oust Saddam, we have been looking forward.

We continue to look forward through our commitment to training Iraq security forces, our efforts to rebuild Iraq's agriculture sector, and in our help to Iraqis as they build a new respect and understanding of human rights in their country.

Now is not the time to cut and run from Iraq; to flee from the terrorists; to abandon the Iraqi people.

We must stand firm and resolute, and help Iraqis realise their dreams.

To do anything less would be an appalling reflection on the courage and values of our nation.

Thank you.

## **Historical overview on human rights abuses and constitutional guarantees for human rights in the new Iraq**

Dr Hussain Al-Shahristani  
President, Iraqi Academy of Sciences

Mr. Chairman and honourable participants

I am here to bring to your attention the human rights abuses that have taken place in Iraq. I was a first-hand witness to violations of these human rights.

I was the chief scientific advisor at the Iraqi Atomic Energy Organisation until December 1979, working on peaceful applications of atomic energy. When Saddam appointed himself a president of the Republic of Iraq that year, he wanted to redirect our research activities from peaceful to military applications. Refusing to participate in that programme, I was arrested, tortured and put in solitary confinement for more than 11 years.

However, I was more fortunate than many of my fellow political prisoners:

- I did not have holes drilled into my bones, as happened to Asim who was tortured in the next room,
- My eyes were not gouged out,
- My three children were brought in to torture chambers, but they were not tortured to death in front of me, to force me to make confessions,
- Women of my family were not brought in and raped in front of me,
- Torturers did not dissolve my hands and feet in concentrated sulphuric acid,
- They did not use an electric saw to cut off my limbs,
- I was not among the hundreds of political prisoners that were taken to inhalation chambers to be guinea pigs in the testing of chemical and biological warfare agents.

They only tortured me for 22 days and nights continuously by hanging me from my hands tied at the back to the ceiling, using high voltage probes on the sensitive parts of my body, and beating me mercilessly. They were careful not to leave permanent marks on my body, hoping that they could crush my will and that I would agree go back to the Nuclear Research Centre to work on their military programme.

In a way, I was lucky to spend more than 11 years at Abu Ghraib prison, ten years of which was in solitary confinement. I did not have to see what was going on in that larger prison, the country of Iraq, in which 20 million persons were held captives.

- I did not have to witness ceremonies in which mothers were ordered to watch, and to rejoice, at the public execution of their sons, and then were asked to pay for the bullets used in the executions;
- I did not have to watch people's tongues pulled out and cut off because they dared to criticize Saddam or one of his family members;
- I did not see young men's foreheads branded, or their ears cut, because they were a few days late reporting to their military duties;
- I did not see victims of chemical weapons who survived the nerve gas attack on Halabja, and did not see Kurdish women and children of the Anfal campaign paraded through Baghdad streets,
- I did not see the beautiful southern Iraqi marshes drained, the reeds burned and the Marsh Arabs massacred, and their old way of life destroyed,
- I did not witness the beheading of any of the 130 women, who were beheaded in public squares in Iraq by the hooded Fedayeen Saddam, for allegedly being immoral.

In many ways, I was fortunate to have survived it all to tell the stories of hundreds of thousands of Iraqis who are not here to tell their own stories.

I would like to spend a few minutes discussing three most serious human rights violations in Iraq. In fact, three genocide campaigns that continue to exert heavy pain on the surviving victims and their families, and burdens the national conscience.

### **The Anfal Campaign**

In the 1980s, the Iraqi regime carried out a genocide campaign against the Kurdish population in the north. In this campaign it killed about 180,000 civilians and destroyed over 3,000 villages. Even animals and trees were not spared and water wells were cemented to deprive the population of their means of livelihood.

During the Anfal campaign of 1987-88, Saddam subjected the Kurdish people in northern Iraq to the biggest attack of chemical weapons ever used against a civilian population. The Iraqi military attacked a number of towns and villages with Sarin and Tabun nerve gases in addition to mustard gas. In the town of Halabja alone, an estimated 5,000 civilians were killed, mostly women and children, and more than 10,000 were injured.

Survivors of these chemical attacks still suffer lingering incurable pains and many who were born to parents exposed to these gases show genetic deformations.

### **Destruction of the Southern Iraqi Marshes**

Another genocide campaign was against the Marsh Arabs between 1992-5. The Southern Iraqi Marshes, where the Marsh Arabs lived, is one of the cradles of human civilisation. It is here where first alphabets were inscribed on clay platelets. Biblical scholars have argued about whether they stand on the area known as the Garden of Eden in the Book of Genesis.

Saddam's campaign of genocide against the Marsh Arabs included burning complete villages with their inhabitants, arresting and executing male members of entire tribes and forcibly relocating hundreds of thousands of civilians.

The entire region was strangled by cutting off its water supply and draining fresh water from the marshes into the Gulf, causing grave damage to a unique environment. Before their drainage, large amounts of toxic chemicals and poisons have been dumped into the marshes to kill the fish, which is the main part of people's diet. Systematic napalm bombing was employed to burn large areas of reed beds and vegetation.

This unique culture and way of life that had continued almost unchanged since Sumerian times for over 5,000 years was destroyed. In addition to the humanitarian and cultural dimensions, the southern Iraqi Marshes were of global environmental importance:

- They are one of the most important wintering grounds for wildfowl in southwest Asia. They are also important stopping point on the migration routes of birds between Siberia and Central Asia to Africa.
- 81 species of waterfowl, which are rare or endemic inhabited these marshes.
- They support almost the entire world population of two species: the Basra Reed Warbler and Iraq Babbler;

Restoration of these marshes is a human, cultural and environmental concern, not only for the Iraqi people but for humanity at large.

The United Nations and the international community remained silent when this environmental crime and genocide against the Marsh Arabs was perpetrated. It was not until 1995, when the drainage of the marshes was complete, that the European Parliament officially designated the Marsh Arabs a "persecuted minority" and called the Iraqi government's actions "genocide." That year the U.N. passed a resolution calling for an end to the draining of the marshlands and Iraqi military operations in that area.

### **Mass Graves**

A third genocide was carried out after crushing the popular uprising in 1991. It is estimated that between 300,000 and 400,000 Shia Iraqis from central and southern Iraq were massacred and buried in mass graves. Entire towns were encircled by the elite republican guards and the male youth were taken to concentration camps where most of them were executed.

Some of the mass graves where these victims were dumped were uncovered after the fall of the regime.

These atrocities were going on for over 3 decades in Iraq, while the international community have either silently witnessed it, or at times covered it up. Saddam was not a run-of-the-mill dictator. He was exceptional. While the West was looking for

Saddam's weapons of mass destruction, for the Iraqi people Saddam himself was the biggest weapon of mass destruction as he was killing them *en masse*.

The nature and magnitude of the crimes committed by Saddam Hussein and his regime demand that all efforts be made to hold those individuals accountable for their crimes. Saddam Hussein and key members of his regime should be brought to justice for their crimes against humanity and war crimes. When crimes are committed on the scale that Saddam Hussein has committed them, justice should be done not just in the name of the victims, but in the name of all humanity.

However, no account of the human rights abuses in Iraq would be complete without discussing the abuses of the detainees at Abu Ghraib prison by the occupation forces after the fall of Saddam's regime.

### **Abu Ghraib Abuses**

The International Committee of Red Cross had repeatedly alerted the US over a year that during their visits to Iraq's US-run prisons they found systematic torture, degrading and inhuman treatment which violated international humanitarian law and these transgressions had been documented in an ICRC report.

The document describes how detainees were frequently subjected to hooding, which made their breathing difficult. They were paraded in front of other prisoners naked, exposed to loud noise and music, handcuffed to cell bars for several hours in humiliating or uncomfortable positions. Prisoners were also stripped naked and held in solitary confinement for days in an empty and completely dark cell that included a latrine, according to the report.

Of the 59 interrogators at Abu Ghraib prison, 49 were not U.S. military but contractors from two US firms, CACI International and Titan International. Two of these workers were cited in Maj.-Gen. Anthony Taguba's report as "sadistic, blatant and wanton". Unlike the seven reservist guards facing criminal trials and military intelligence officers under investigation, these interrogators face no accountability, let alone punishment. Being civilians, they are neither subject to military law nor to the Geneva Convention. Local prosecution could have been an option but last year, U.S. administrator in Iraq issued an order protecting contractors from precisely that.

All we can expect that these men will be fired. That's all that happened in 1999 in Bosnia after several employees of another firm, DynCorp, were accused of statutory rape and running a child-prostitution ring.

These abuses reminded Iraqis of what was going on in this notorious prison for three decades and they have hoped that it would not be repeated again.

## **What lessons Iraqis have learnt and what guarantees do they have that this would not happen again?**

I returned to Iraq on 7 April 2003, two days before the fall of Saddam's regime, on a humanitarian mission. On our humanitarian mission, I visited many towns and villages and talked to common people about their hopes, expectations and dreams. Despite the diversity of Iraqi society one common theme was repeated to us.

An Iraqi woman told us: "These three decades (under Saddam's rule) were very hard. The first decade melted away our fat. The second ate the flesh. The third crushed the bones. But we are determined to keep our heads up."

An Iraqi man said: "Saddam tried to destroy the goodness of the Iraqi people. We must prove that he has failed."

A common commitment was: "Never again another dictator".

We discussed with the community leaders, religious leaders and intellectuals about the current situation and what the Iraqi people aspire. It soon became very clear that Iraqis consider a democratic and accountable government is their only guarantee against repetition of such human rights abuses.

Iraqis want constitutional guarantees for their human rights. Until a permanent constitution can be adopted by an elected National Assembly and put to a referendum, the country has to live with an interim constitution that was passed by the Interim Governing Council and the Coalition Administrative Authority. This Interim Constitution does however recognize some basic rights of the population including, the right:

- to freedom of thought, conscience, and religious belief and practice;
- to free peaceable assembly and to join associations, as well to form and join unions and political parties;
- to free movement in Iraq and to travel abroad and return;
- to justice; to a fair, speedy, and open trial and to the presumption of innocence;
- to stand for election and cast ballot secretly in free, open, fair, competitive, and periodic elections;
- to demonstrate and strike peaceably;
- to develop the institutions of civil society, whether in cooperation with international civil society organizations or otherwise;
- to file grievances against officials when these rights have been violated.

The Interim Constitution further stipulates that:

- No one may be unlawfully arrested or detained, and no one may be detained by reason of political or religious beliefs;

- Police, investigators, or other governmental authorities may not violate the sanctity of private residences unless a judge or investigating magistrate has issued a search warrant;
- Torture in all its forms, physical or mental, shall be prohibited under all circumstances, as shall be cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment. No confession made under compulsion, torture, or threat thereof shall be relied upon or admitted into evidence for any reason in any proceeding, whether criminal or otherwise;

However, despite all these guarantees in the interim constitutional there are very disturbing reports that are coming in and are being compiled and investigated by international human rights organisations that the newly formed Iraqi police and security departments are committing serious human rights violations against detainees, including physical and psychological torture, severe beating, sexual assaults and arrests without proper judicial warrants. Most notably these violations were committed in Najaf, Kufa and Kut, and among the detainees were many children under 18 years of age.

Indeed these accusations are very serious and should be thoroughly investigated, the results of the investigation must be made public, and if proved, the perpetrators must be brought to justice immediately. Otherwise, by tolerating any human right abuses for whatever reason, the ground would be paved for yet another police state.

The Iraqi people have suffered long enough and expect that all the rights that befit a free people possessed of their human dignity, not only to be incorporated in the permanent constitution but also

strictly adhered to. Iraqis, more than any time before, need the help of groups like you and the watchful eyes of international human rights organisations to make sure that their basic human rights are respected.

## **Women's Empowerment in Arab States With Particular Focus on Iraq**

**Dr Salma Al-Khudairi  
Australian Iraqi Forum**

### **Preamble**

In the Fourth World Conference for Women in Beijing in 1995, most Arab Governments committed themselves “to enhancing further the advancement and empowerment of women in their States”, they recognized that women’s empowerment is fundamental for the achievement of development and peace.

In this paper I shall focus on the following aspects of women’s empowerment in Arab States; these are as follows:

1. Women’s economic participation.
2. Women’s education.
3. Women’s health.
4. Women’s political participation/decision making.
5. What needs to be done to re-empower women in Iraq.

In discussing the above aspects of empowerment, it is useful to understand the diversity among Arab States politically, socially, and economically. Therefore no generalization can be made. In this paper I shall focus on Iraq.

### **Overview**

In the Arab States (1), achievements over many areas of women’s well-being compare favorably with those of other regions. Indicators such as female education, fertility, life expectancy, and per capita income show that progress in Arab States over the last decades has been substantial. A general trend seems to be that women are increasingly able to overcome barriers to building their capabilities. The oil boom of the 1970’s fueled an expansion of women’s educational opportunities, and from 1970 to 1990, primary school enrollment for girls nearly doubled, secondary school enrollment more than doubled, and tertiary school enrollment more than tripled. Despite the progress in some areas, women have been considerably less successful in overcoming the barriers –particularly cultural ones –to using their capacities in the economic and political arenas. As stated in the Arab Women Development Report (2001),

women account for only 25% of the labor force. In most of the Arab States, the proportion of women in administrative and managerial work is less than 10%. By the

end of the millennium, the number of women cabinet ministers was a scant 11 out of a total 600 ministers (2).

## **2. Women's Economic Participation**

In the Arab States, over the last three decades there has been progress in women's economic participation and their activities. Despite the progress made, the latest data reveals that women account for only 25% of the labour force as compared with for example Australia 56.4% and United Kingdom 53.2% (3). This rate is lower than would be expected on the basis of the fertility rates, educational levels, and the age structure of the female population in Arab States.

The low rate in official statistics does not mean that few women work, or even that few earn money. The statistics in most Arab countries rarely reflect the real number of economically active men and women. Official statistics tend to define work as labour for wages. This excludes a large number of working women from the figures. When we look at Yemen for example, the World Development Report (1998) estimated that female participation in the labour force was around 26% in the late 1990s. In reality it is much higher, anyone who takes a walk through the villages can see so many women engaging in different agricultural activities. In Jordan, the situation is similar but the figures in the 2004 Human

Development Report reveals that only 27.6% of Jordanian women are participation in the labour force. In fact, this involves the formal sector only and this percentage does not reflect the reality that more than 80% of women in rural and semi-rural areas are engaged in subsistence family production and seasonal farm labour and work 10-12 hours a day(4).

Nevertheless the work of these women is invisible to data collectors and the importance of their contributions to the nation's economy is unrecognized.

Most studies focus on the impact of social values and culture restricting women's participation in the formal labour force. We have to be careful, when we discuss the concept of culture, not to utilize or apply it simplistically.

I believe that the socio-cultural factors are not the main determinates of low women participation rates in Arab States. The situation differs with changing economic needs and opportunities. For example, labour migration in the Arab States is one of the factors that have created a need and an opportunity for the involvement of women in the wage labour force. In some cases, like Jordan, Egypt, and Yemen in 1970's, women have been encouraged to join the labour force as replacement for males who had moved to the oil-rich Arab States for better paying jobs. This created a need for women to participate more in the labour force and governments made conscious decisions to resort to "womanpower". Education and training programs were increased for women.(5)

War and conflict are other factors which have created the need for women to participate more in the labour force. Iraq in the 1980s is an example where Iraqi women had to join the labour force out of economic necessity and as replacement for Iraqi men who went

to war. Several protective measures and incentives were used to encourage Iraqi women to join the labour force in 1980s. However, in the 1990s the Iraqi government reversed this trend and initiated measures to reduce the participation of women in the labour force.

The other issue which needs to be addressed here is globalization and its economic benefits, which appear to have largely by-passed these states. During the 1980s and 1990s, the average rate of growth in gross domestic product (GDP) in Arab States more or less stagnated. Exports fell in value and as a share of world exports. Both the industrial growth rate and the rate of foreign direct investment flow to level non-oil sectors remained modest (6). As a result, job creation was limited and demand for labour was less. A view had emerged during the 1980s that men should receive preference for the shrinking supply of jobs, because they had families to support. Several Arab countries took explicit actions against women's participation in the labour force, and the media emphasized the importance of women's domestic roles and contributions as mothers. The situation started to change in the 1990s, the profile of gender-debate in most Arab States has given a new impetus to resolving women's economic participation.

Public –sector employment remains the preferred option of the women labour force. This preference reflects conditions of service, supported by legislation where job security and benefits for women are better.

In the private sector labour force, the share of women is increasing in some Arab States (i.e. Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Morocco, and Tunisia). This sector is generally insecure, low status and low-paying. There are exceptions, however, including Morocco and Tunisia, which have been able to expand manufacturing exports, notably in textiles and garments manufacturing, and have had some success in increasing women's participation in the paid private sector.(7)

In the Arab States, there has been a trend towards the feminization of unemployment. Unemployment rates among women indicate that the supply of job-seeking women is growing. At the same time, Women are encountering barriers to employment that are both structural (economic restructuring, recession, also conflicts and wars) as well as ideological (male bread winner-female homemaker stereotypes). This ignores the economic reality that in most Arab States, many women need to seek paid employment to supplement declining household budgets.

## **2. Women's Education:**

Most Arab States (except in the case of Iraq which will be discussed later) have dedicated significant resources to women's education. Over the past decade they spent an average of 5.3% of GDP on education, the highest in the world according to the World Bank Report 2004. Women's average years of schooling increased from 0.5 in 1960 to 4.5 in 1999, and their average literacy rate rose from 16.6 % in 1970 to 52.5% in 2000. By 2000, in primary schools across Arab States, 9 girls were enrolled

for every 10 boys, and at the secondary level the enrollment gap is even smaller: 74% of girls and 77 % of boys are enrolled( 8 ).One female out of every four enrolls now in tertiary education, and women outnumber men in colleges and universities in several Arab States.

In Iraq, the situation is different. Before the 1980s, the Iraqi education system was regarded as one of the best in the Middle East. The country had made great progress at all levels of education and had achieved nearly universal primary enrollment by 1980. Iraqi women have been enrolled at universities for more than sixty years. They had contributed effectively in the socio-economic development of Iraq. There have been lawyers (since 1941), doctors, professors, pharmacologists, social workers, etc.

The system of education since the 1980s went into a steady decline for the following reasons:(i) lack of resources, as public funds were directed to military expenditures and depleted by corruption; ;and ( ii) the politicization of the education system, which influenced everything from curricula, to teaching staff, to admissions policies.(9)

Very few accurate reports have been published evaluating the Iraqi education system. Among them a report by the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) was published in 2003. In this report, a comparison has been made of the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in Jordan and Iraq for 1990/91 and 1999/2000 in secondary education. According to the data published, in 1990/91, Jordan had a GER of 45.4% for females in secondary education to Iraq's 36.4%. However, within ten years Jordan nearly doubled its GER for secondary education for girls to 89% while the ratio for Iraq declined to 29.1%. The war since the 1980s, and the sanctions as exploited by the Baa'th regime in the 1990s, deprived the younger generations (male and female) of quality education and opportunities. After 1991, adult female literacy rates and girl enrollment rates decreased. In 2000, it was estimated that 31% of girls were not attending school, nearly twice the number of boys who were not in school. Officials attribute this decrease mainly to poverty and inadequate infrastructure rather than attitudes opposing education for girls, although these attitudes still persist.

### **3. Women's Health:**

In this section, I shall address women's health as an important aspect for women empowerment as well as a basic human right. The right to health as discussed in the constitution of the World Health Organization (WHO)(1948) means not just the right to be free of disease but the right to physical, emotional and mental well-being. Conceptions such as these have not yet been adopted in most Arab States; the realities of health for the majority are still dominated by physical illness.

Over the past decade Arab governments spent an average of 2.9% of their GDP on health care (10).There has been an improvement in women's health in most Arab States. Women are living longer. Since 1980 their life expectancy has increased by some 10 years, mainly because of improved health care and reduced maternal mortality. There has been a decline in the fertility rate—from 6.2 to 3.3 since 1980. Women's

education is one main reason for the drop. Government population policies in the Arab States have also played a vital role.

Despite the improvement in health status for the last decade, health services have not been equally accessible to all . Health care is often expensive and difficult to access especially by low income women and rural women who often use ‘home –made’ traditional remedies. Finances are primarily directed to the construction in the capital cities of hospitals with sophisticated technology. The direction of funding for health services has been dominated by the “medical approach” to health, focusing on the use of curative medicine and requiring the use of high technology.

Having worked with rural women and women in low income communities in Jordan, Yemen, and Saudi Arabia, I would like to add that improvements to women’s health in rural areas and low income communities have been very limited due to lack of access to safe water, sanitation and sewerage systems and to inadequate nutrition.

In Iraq, women’s health has been affected badly for more than thirty years of oppression. As Rend al-Rahim , the Executive Director of the Iraq Foundation explained “ A particular issue for women coming out of the Saddam era is their mental health – the whole Iraqi nation suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder, but women bear the brunt of the impact of wars and repression.” United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) has released a report in late 2003 stating that women’s health in Iraq has been so undermined by sanctions and conflict, that it is in a dangerous situation. Already 370 mothers die for every 100,000 live births –compared with 21maternal deaths in developed countries. More than one in 10 babies will not survive beyond five years, and 130 will die for every 1000 live births. There are an increased numbers of stillbirths and complicated deliveries, and the psychological impact of the war on women’s health is still unknown. Anecdotal evidence suggested high levels of miscarriages, birth defects, and cancer. Between 50% and 70% of pregnant women are estimated to be anemic, and roughly 23% of infants are born with low birth weights. On average each woman bears five children. Only 14% of Iraqi women use contraceptives, although according to UNFPA, there is a high demand for family planning services.

The Health status in Iraq pre 1991was different. During the 1970s, and early 1980s, Iraq experienced improvements in several health outcomes. Infant mortality rates decreased from 80 per 1,000 live births in 1979 to 40 in 1989.In the same period, under –five mortality rates fell from 120 to 60. However, during the previous regime, government program priorities and budget allocations tended to favor specific political groups. During this period, per capita spending on health was extremely low; current analysis by the Ministry of Health suggests that during the 1990’s the funds available for health were reduced by 90%(11). At the same time, many health professionals left the country. The health care system became increasingly politicized and poorly suited to respond to changing population health needs. The result was that health indications,i.e infant mortality and maternal mortality rates were more than doubled from 1990 to 1996.

While discussing women's health in Iraq, it is important to address the environmental factors which have considerably affected women's health. These are: lack of access to safe water, inadequate sanitation and sewerage systems.

Until the 1991 Gulf War, the water and sanitation sector in Iraq was reportedly operating efficiently. According to UN reports, safe water was accessible by over 95% of urban and 75% of rural population. Sanitation service coverage was at 75% for urban communities (25% connected to centralized sewerage systems, including treatment facilities). Coverage of rural areas, however, was low (40%). Over the last thirteen years, much of this infrastructure has been damaged (12 ).

Water services in urban areas declined to 92% in 2000, while in rural areas coverage dropped to 46%, with the daily per capita water supply dropping by more than half in many locations. Diseases related to unsafe water and poor sanitation reached very high rates, with humanitarian organizations reporting that one –third of all children in the south and central governorates were suffering from malnutrition, and mortality rates more than doubled in the last decade.

The sewerage collection and treatment system serves mainly the city of Baghdad, where it reaches approximately 80% of the population. Only 9% of the urban population outside Baghdad is served by sewerage systems. While the rural areas and the north of Iraq do not have piped sewerage systems. The sanitation system is becoming a serious environmental and health problem. According to a current report by The World Bank and UN, none of the sewage treatment plants are operational, and raw sewage is being discharged into rivers and waterways. Also contributing to the problem is the illegal discharge of septic sewage collected from houses and dumped into rivers or on open land.

#### **4. Women's political participation /decision making:**

In most Arab States, women's political participation is quite low. According to UNDP Report 2004, female political participation (seats in parliament held by women) is 11.5% in Tunisia, 8% in Iraq, 7.9% in Jordan compared for example to Sweden 45% and Australia 26.5%.

Only in two Arab States, Egypt and Iraq, women's advocacy groups had endeavored to participate in political life since the 1920s.

Egypt was an Arab pioneer in women's rights. The first Arab feminist manifesto, "The Liberation of Women", was published in Cairo in 1899. By the 1920s, society women were dropping their veils and by the 1960s; the country had more female doctors than many in the West.

Tunisia is another example where women were granted full equality since the 1950s, with their rights to vote, divorce, and work in any profession.

Other Arab States like Jordan, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen have made good progress in women's political participation in the last two decades. The constitutions of these countries provide for the principle of equality between men and women. Various laws have also been consistent with the provisions of constitutions. For example Labour Laws have adopted the principle of equality among workers in rights and obligations without distinction as to gender. They have also included special provisions to protect the rights of the working women, guarantee her welfare and take into consideration the social circumstances under which she lives. There are also provisions which cater for the welfare of mothers, i.e. maternity leave, maternity allowance, time off for feeding the baby and nursery facilities.

Electoral and Civil Service Laws also have granted women rights which are equal to those of men, i.e. the right of women to candidature election to parliament, in salary, promotion and leave entitlement of civil servants.

Regarding the Personal Status Codes, in these States, as in most Arab States, the Codes are drawn from the Sharia ( Islamic law).Issues relating to marriage, divorce, custody of children and inheritance are among the most important issues and also the most difficult, that face legislators in these States. The articles of personal Status Codes generally conflict with those of the constitution in most Arab States. Constitutions guarantee equal rights for all citizens. Under Personal Status Codes, men and women, have "equivalent" rather than equal rights.

As regards to Iraqi women's political participation, historically, Iraqi women and girls have enjoyed relatively more rights than many of their counterparts in Arab States. Before 1950s the Iraqi constitution formally guaranteed equal rights to women and other laws specifically ensured their right to vote, attend school, run for political office, and own property. Iraqi women played an active role in the political and socio-economic development of their country as early as the 1920s. Many women's non government organizations were established including the Women's Renaissance Society (Jamiat Alnahda Alnisaeya )in 1924, Kurdish Women's Federation (KWF) in 1928, and Iraqi Women's League(IWL) in 1951 (13) (14). These organisations established schools for girls, women's centres and women's publications and advocated for the rights of women and children; they also offered literacy programs, job –training, health education and other social programs for women in different parts of Iraq. A study by United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) in 2003 reveals that Iraqi women attended universities since the 1920s, and in 1941 the first Iraqi female lawyer started to practice law. In 1959, two Iraqi women were appointed to key positions: one as Minister of Municipal Affairs and the other as Judge.

Female doctors were practising, since the 1940s, in government hospitals and private clinics.

In fact the critical period for the advancement of Iraqi women took place between the 1920s and 1960s, significantly before the Ba'ath regime came to power in 1968.

By the time the Ba'ath party took complete control of Iraq in 1968, women had been already organized, obtaining university degrees and active in the labour force. The Ba'ath party inherited a society in which women already played a vital prominent role, it did not create it.

Although the Ba'athist Constitution of 1970 granted women and men equal rights, and the regime passed new laws that expanded the rights of women, these protections on paper were meaningless in a police state which ruled through terror, and resorted to tribal and sectarian discrimination.

Laws in favor of women were never enforced, or were cancelled. Moreover, Saddam's regime issued decrees that hurt women, such as Decree No 111, dated February 28<sup>th</sup> , 1990, which legalised so-called "honor killings". "No person shall be liable to penal persecution if he kills or commits the premeditated killing of his mother; daughter, sister, and niece to wash out dishonor."

Women's organizations such as the General Federations of Iraqi Women (GFIW), created to "ensure that regulations regarding women were complemented by capacity-building and literacy programs" were in fact geared towards a single goal: to squash opposition and consolidate the Ba'ath party's power. GFIW members were forced to enroll in the Ba'ath party and were spied on by the regime. GFIW was established by direct order from Saddam to be the voice of Ba'ath ideology, and did not reflect or represent the struggle of millions of oppressed Iraqi women (15).

The status of Iraqi women deteriorated more with the 1991 Gulf War and subsequent sanctions. More restrictions on women's movements were introduced. Several legislations were introduced which had negative impact on women's legal status in the labour code, criminal justice system, personal status laws, and freedom to travel outside Iraq.

Furthermore, as the economy constricted, in an effort to ensure employment for men the government pushed women out of the labour force and into more traditional roles in the home. In 1998, the government reportedly dismissed all females working as secretaries in governmental agencies. In June 2000, it also reportedly enacted a law requiring all state ministries to put restrictions on women working outside the home (16).

**Table (1): Women’s Empowerment in Selected Arab States:  
General indicators (in percentages)**

<b>Country</b>	<b>Female economic participation (age 15 and above)</b>	<b>Female literacy rate (age 15 and above)</b>	<b>Female political participation (seats in parliament held by women)</b>
Bahrain	34.2	84.2	7.5
Egypt	35.7	43.6	3.6
Iraq	20	42.9	8
Jordan	27.6	85.9	7.9
Tunisia	37.5	63.1	11.5

**Sources:**

1. Data about Iraq is not available in the UNDP Report (2004). The figures used for Iraq were obtained from Socio-economic Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) Report (2003) “Iraqi Women and Wars”, Beirut: ESCWA Publications, p.9
2. United Nations Development Program (UNDP) Report (2004) “Cultural Liverty in today’s Diverse World”, Oxford :Oxford University Press, PP. 221-222, 226-227, 230-231

**5. What needs to be done to re-empower women in Iraq?**

After the end of three and half decades of oppression, discrimination, wars, and sanctions the way to transform Iraq into a democracy is real and achievable but needs to be gradual. A democratic Iraq will give Iraqis equal access to opportunity and security, ensure the respect for individual rights, re-establish the rule of law, and empower all Iraqis to be equal regardless of race, creed, or gender.

The following are suggested procedures for re-empowering women in Iraq:

1. The new Iraqi constitution should be based on equal rights and opportunities for all citizens, without any “gender” discrimination. This has been stated clearly in the Law of Administration for the State of Iraq for the transitional period (8March 2004) (Articles 1B), Article (12), and Article (20A, B).
2. Legal reform and protection of women’s rights: The new laws and regulations should eliminate all forms of discrimination against women on the basis of gender. Existing laws should also be revised and suitably amended.

Following are examples of legal reforms which need to be introduced for the protection of women’s rights:

- Women should receive equal pay and advancement as men for the same work;
  - Women should enjoy the same privileges and opportunities as men, including scholarships abroad, employee benefits, and medical leaves;
  - The minimum allowable age for a woman to marry should be 18 years;
  - A woman's right to grant her nationality to her children if she is not married to an Iraqi citizen;
  - Protection against all forms of oppression of women in the home as well as the workplace, such as beating, harassing, murder threats, and so called "honor – killing";
  - Reform the welfare system so that it will accommodate women's needs ,
  - Compulsory education for girls and boys should be re-instituted by law in the primary level as a minimum;
  - Abolition of the legal requirement for women to have a male travel companion or guardian, "muhram".
3. Establish institutions to monitor national and local governments and ensure that woman's rights are protected, including:
- A higher council for women within the new Iraqi government to handle women's issues at all levels of Iraqi society;
  - Special committees in all government centres and ministries to track the status of women and ensure that women's rights are respected;
4. Increase women's political participation: There should be quotas for the representation of women in parliament and municipal councils at a percentage rate of no less than 30%.
5. Promote the re-establishment of women's organizations to carry their role in re-building the new Iraq.
6. Provide training programs and capacity building to women working in government and non governmental organizations to regain the knowledge and know- how required for these organizations.
7. Allocate adequate funds to women's non-government organizations to provide programs for job skills training, women's rights and democracy, education.
8. A Gender Based Needs Assessment should be undertaken to identify the needs of Iraqi women in different parts of Iraq. It will help to provide information to support decision makers in formulating gender-sensitive policies and strategies without which sustainable development is not attainable.
9. Provide economic security to women through the provision of job opportunities, economic rights, and effective participation in economic life. Education, training, access to loans and financial resources are means for enhancing women's economic security.
10. Better accessibility to day care centres and kindergartens near places of employment to assist working mothers.
11. Provide health services and information to women especially rural women who have been neglected for decades, either through television or town and village forums, focusing on contagious diseases, chronic disorders, sexual health, family planning, and the danger of early marriage, motherhood, as well as lectures about child rearing.
12. The inclusion of human rights and civic education in the curricula for most levels of schooling.

13. Promoting the use of the media for education programs, i.e. family rearing and parenting.

14. Provide better accessibility to safe water, sanitation, adequate nutrition, appropriate health services.

15. Provide a better transportation system (road and public transport) to ease accessibility to basic amenities and services.

### **Conclusion:**

Women's empowerment in Arab States is not isolated from the rest of society. Society in Arab States is still going through vast changes and transitions. And it is during periods of transition that so many severe contradictions occur.

The factors usually utilized to assess the power of women in Arab States need to be reassessed: participation in the formal labour force, access to parliaments, or high rate of literacy are measures of power. However, Gender Based Needs Assessment should be conducted to identify women's needs and to detail actual experiences of women especially in rural communities. Access to basic amenities and services (education, health, shelter, clean water and sanitation....etc.) are as important as women's participation in the labour force. Low representation in parliaments does not mean that women have no power in their community. Low participation in the formal wage-labour force does not always mean that women have no money or no control over household income.

More research is needed on women's status and power in rural and tribal communities, which will help to delineate the complexity of factors that determine the position and the power of women in these communities.

The empowerment of women, a crucial objective emanating from the 1995 Beijing Platform of Action, requires a holistic approach that addresses three interlinked dimensions:

1. The need to tackle dominant gender ideologies entrenching social, cultural, economic, and political manifestations of gender inequality;
2. Equal access to productive resources and assets as well as to quality services, and
3. The possibility and ability of women in Arab States to access paid employment and, equally crucial, to control the use of their earnings.

Improving the quality of life for women will also have a broader implication for the enhancement of the well-being of the society as a whole, in these countries.

### **Notes:**

(1) In the context of this paper, "Arab States" encompasses the countries and territories that are members of the League of Arab States. The countries included are: Algeria, Bahrain, Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Mauritania,

Morocco, Libya, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen.

(2) See The Centre for Arab Women's Training and Research (CAWTAR) Support Document, 2002.

(3) UNDP, Human Development Report 2004, pp.221-222.

(4) For more details see Salma AL-Khudairi in "Rural Women Development in Jordan."

(5) For more information on women and development in the Middle East and North Africa, see Salma Al-Khudairi, " Development: Middle East and Arab Region," An entry in Routledge International Encyclopedia of Women, Global Women's Issues and knowledge, London:Routledge,pp.346-354.

(6) The Centre for Arab women's Training and Research (CAWTAR), Report on "Globalizations and Gender: Economic Participation of Arab Women", (2001), pp.3,6

(7) Ibid.

(8) For more detail see The World Bank "Gender and Development in the Middle East and North Africa: Women and the Public Sphere" (2004), pp.3,4.

(9) See United Nations /World Bank (2003) "Joint Iraq Needs Assessment,"pp.14,16.

(10) World Bank Report 2004, p.4

(11) See United Nations/World Bank Report (2003), p. 16.

(12) Ibid.

(13)For more detail see The Iraq Foundation Web site: [www.iraqfoundation.org](http://www.iraqfoundation.org).

(14) Also Women for a Free Iraq Web site: [www.womenforiraq.org](http://www.womenforiraq.org).

(15) Ibid.

(16) For information on the current situation in Iraq and issues related to women, see the Human Rights Watch report " Climate of Fear" (July 2003) available at <http://hrw.org/reports/2003/iraq0703/>.

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