

Representatives of Civil Society Organizations Meet His Excellency Prime Minister of the Republic of Iraq

A delegation from Civil Society organization met His Excellency the Prime Minister of the Republic of Iraq, Noori Al-Maliki, on 24 February 2011. The delegation presented a petition on the present conditions in Iraq, focusing on the plight of the Iraqi people at a time of deteriorating living conditions, wide spread unemployment, grave economic, social, provision of services and educational crisis. This is coupled with the wide spread of economic and administrative corruption and the attack on the civil liberties, civil society organizations and the media. The delegation presented, during the discussion, the concern in the Iraqi street, stressing on the government responsibility for resolving them within a clear policy and a corrective action plan to bring the governance into the democratic direction.

The delegates also stressed the constitutional rights of expression and demonstration, and the duty of the government to protect the demonstrations.

Below is the note submitted to His Excellency:

Your Excellency Noori Al-Maliki, Prime Minister

Greetings,

There is no doubt that the fall of the dictatorship in April 2003 was a historic event for our people, as it opens the doors for hope of change towards freedom and social justice and civil modernization of the State. There were many important achievements in the past eight years of the transition to democracy, but still this new experience is threatened by factors of relapse and retrograde, and the main factor which constitutes grounds for this deterioration was adopting a quota system based on sectarian and ethnic lines in the management of governance, which provided and provides a favorable conditions for the environments of exclusion and marginalization of the social categories and competencies required in the process of reconstruction and development, and hits the very core of the national endeavor to build a civil State, also provides opportunities to the project a religious State, which began steps to reduce the freedoms and restrictions on civil and cultural rights.

The Civil Society organizations throughout Iraq have monitored indicators and serious practices that created concern in the course of governance, we see that our national duty that we deliver these facts to your Excellency within your responsibility to ensure compliance with the Constitution and the democratic process and respect for human rights, hoping for your interest in studying them, and to develop executable programs in order to draw the map, by correcting the path of governance towards building a Federal Democratic Civil State as stipulated in the current Constitution.

First: reduce the civil liberties for individuals, associations and civil society organizations, and the exercise of executive and administrative authorities some urgent measures to restrict freedom of expression, demonstrations and the withholding of information. Also, civil society activists were exposed to intimidation through the implementation of their activities of

assembly and peaceful protest (for example the latest directives issued by the Mayor of Baghdad on the permitting demonstrations, the attack on the demonstrators on the night of 21 February, and the storming of the office of Journalist Freedoms Watch followed by storming Ain Network office)

Second: to circumvent the law of non-governmental organizations No (12) for the year 2010 by issuing regulations by the Secretariat of the Council of Ministers intersect with the content of the law and the constitutional provision that guarantee the independence of civil society organizations.

Third: the continued weakness of the role of women to participate in governance, which has emerged clearly in the absence of women in the new government despite the assurances to correct this situation, as well as the increase of domestic and societal violence against women.

Fourth: increased cases of breach of the Constitution, by the three state authorities in Iraq, the latest was the decision of the Federal Supreme Court on 18/01/2011 that stipulated linking independent commissions under the control of CoR according to the Constitution, with the Council of Ministers.

Fifth: the increasing incidence of assassinations that targeted the components of the non-Muslim religions, and restricting their rights of cultural, economic and civil liberties, the assault on their worship and work locations, and the failure of the security services to protect them from abuse and threats, for example, the massacre of the Church of Lady of Salvation, and the raid that targeted Ashurbanipal Cultural and Social Development Association.

Sixth: the continuing threat to the security of citizens as a result of exposure to the criminal and terrorist operations, while not naming yet the Ministers of Interior, Defense and National Security in the new government, despite the elapse of more than two months on the announcement of this government, and the inability of the security forces to develop a national strategy to combat terrorism and violence, in addition to the continuous infiltration in the security services by the groups of terrorism.

Seventh: the increase financial and administrative corruption, the reduction in the powers of the Integrity Commission in the pursuit of corrupt officers, and high index of inequality in wages and salaries between the ruling political class and its circle and, the average wage for the categories of employees, pensioners and the salaried people, and the increase in the incidence of escaping punishment for corruption and forgery of certificates, some of whom assume high positions in the state as well as legalizing corruption through enacting special laws (special retirement laws for high officers and appointing ex ministers and ex members of the Council of Representatives as consultants to the government, etc)

Eighth: The state institutions lost their neutrality and credibility in representing all the people without discrimination or marginalization. On the contrary, the institutions are becoming fronts for political, sectarian or personal use. The right of equal opportunities in employment and upgrade have become beyond the reach for the majority of the people.

Ninth: the weakness of the prosecution of crimes of terrorism and organized crime, and the increasing cases of escape of dangerous criminals from prison, with serious concern on the situation of detainees and prisoners, and not to bring those who are involved in human rights violations to justice.

Tenth: deterioration of living conditions of the overwhelming majority of our people and the widespread of poverty and unemployment, with the worsening economic, social and service crisis, especially in corrosion the rational monthly package, which consists the foodstuff for poor people, the weakness energy and water supply, food, housing, and low levels of health care, therapeutic services, as well as the reluctance of the State in solving the problems of widows, orphans and disabled persons of war and terrorist operations, and displaced persons in Iraq and abroad.

Eleventh: defaulting to issue laws that regulate political, civil, economic and cultural life set by the Constitution, or required by the phase of stability of the democratic system in Iraq, particularly the laws of political parties, elections, oil and gas, and deficiencies in the application of the provisions of Article (140) of the Constitution, and continuing delay of carrying out the census as well as continued work with some laws that deprived the freedoms that were legislated during the dictatorship.

Twelfth: worsening the level of education dreadfully, lack of buildings and school supplies and the bad of the one that's already exist, absence of the education policy, especially through segregation of both sexes in schools, dissemination violence and sectarianism inside schools, institutes and universities. This reflected badly on the growth of the new generation, and on the healthiness of society from the chronic social diseases.

The organizations believe that these challenges are within the government's mandates and they can be achieved in short time, and they don't need additional amount of money. Therefore, resolving these challenges will be positive indicator to deal with the vision of civil society and open the way to rebuild the trust between the government and the society.

Finally, let us to assure you of the keenness Iraqi civil society organizations, to continue our activity and hard struggle to achieve stability, security, peace and democracy and ensuring human rights throughout the country.

With all respect and appreciation,

Baghdad January 24, 2011

Names of Organizations participated in the delegation

- Inmaa Center for Studies
- Civil Center for Studies & Legal Reform
- Tammuz Organization for Social Development
- Hammurabi Organization for Human Rights
- Iraqi Council for Peace & Solidarity
- Iraqi Association for Orphans & Poor People
- National Society for Defense Human Rights
- Civil Fi'al Network
- Iraq Dar Alsalam Center
- Salam AlRafedain Organization
- Ashur Panipal Society
- National Youth Forum
- Women for Peace
- Iraqi Al-Amal Association