

Press release

Recommendations to improve Public Liberties and Social Justice jointly agreed by Civil Society and Iraqi Council of Representatives

Baghdad, 30 June 2011- A set of important recommendations were reached on public liberties and social justice, following today's culmination of months of discussions between civil society organizations, representatives from the Iraqi Council of Representatives, provincial councils, government officials, and academia in all governorates of Iraq.

The recommendations were finalized at a roundtable on constitutional issues hosted by the Human Rights Committee of the Iraqi Council of Representatives (CoR) in the Hall No.1 of the Iraqi parliament and organized by Al Amal Association in partnership with Women for Peace, Civil Center for Studies and Legal Reform, Dar Al. Center, MASARAT Institution for Cultural and Media Development, Salam Al. Rafidain Organization under a project funded by the European Union and implemented by the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) and the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI).

Participants included members of the CoR Civil Society Committee, representatives of other committees in the CoR and representatives of NGOs from several Iraqi governorates.

The agreement was reached at the successful conclusion of a series of seminars and roundtables held by Iraqi civil society and supported by the EU-UN project in all Iraqi governorates, creating dialogue on issues of social justice and public liberties between civil society and public authorities.

The consultation process included:

- 38 seminars in all governorates which witnessed the participation of 772 representatives from the Iraqi Council of Representatives, provincial councils, government officials, academia and civil society organizations.

- 10 roundtables of dialogue in 5 Iraqi regions.

- A national conference for two days that included the participation of more than 150 activists.

- A roundtable in the Constitutional Hall in the Council of Representatives building about

the relationship between civil society organizations and the Iraqi Council of Representatives.

The recommendations reached by the participants included:

Civil and Political Rights:

- 1 - Finalizing the legislations and laws that guarantee civil and political rights contained in the constitution and develop a national strategy to activate and strengthen these rights and liberties, amend and abolish laws that conflict with them.
- 2 - Activating the oversight role of the Council of Representatives and the civil society so as to ensure respect for human rights by State institutions, especially security ones.
- 3 - Establishing the High Commission of Human Rights in accordance with the principles of independency, competence and professionalism.
- 4 – Ensuring the representation of youth (especially young people under the age of 30 years) in the leadership positions of the Iraqi State.

Social and Economic Rights:

- 1 – The Iraqi Council of Representatives should focus on the priority of social security and the right of the Iraqi individual in life and decent living through the amendment of the Social Security law to meet the realistic demands and approving the Social Welfare law that guarantee benefits to the poor, underprivileged, widows, orphans, the disabled and people with special needs, homeless and jobless categories.
- 2 - Creating a comprehensive national plan for the advancement of Iraqi children status and legislating the Child Protection law.

Liberties:

- 1 – Accelerating the legislation of laws guaranteeing the rights and liberties in line with the commitment of the Iraqi State to work in accordance with the Constitution, and international agreements and treaties such as the Freedom of Expression law, Freedom of Access to Information law and the law of freedom of Assembly, Demonstration and Peaceful Protest.
- 2 - Abolishing or amending Article (41) in constitution relating to personal status that guarantees maintaining the principle of citizenship and equality before the law and according to a unified legislation for all Iraqis.

3 - Issuing the national declaration of human rights and public liberties, including the clear commitment of the Iraqi State institutions in the preservation and protection of rights and liberties contained in the Iraqi constitution and international conventions.