



Iraqi Women Network Conference:

“ Commemorating Pioneer Women and present challenges for the Iraqi women march ”

Iraqi women network held a conference in 17th Nov. 2007 in Baghdad, under the slogan `` Pioneering and continuity for Iraqi women March``. 200 participants gathered in the activity, including ministers, members and advisors from the House of Representatives, and Kurdistan Parliament, ministries members and other governmental organizations, Baghdad national police and law preservation field commanders, in addition to representatives from 86 women organizations and other NGOs from different governorates and media.

At the commencement, a memorial ceremony was arranged in the anniversary of the two pioneers at the women movement of Iraq, departed (Dr. Nazeeha Al-Dulaimy and poet Naziq Al-Malai'eka) who played a vital role for more than half a century in developing Iraqi women participation in political and cultural activities, as a poet and a minister, and in establishing an active women movement to defend Iraqi women rights.

As the global anniversary of opposing violence against women concurred with the conference, martyr (Amal Al-Ma'alamchy) were eulogized in her 3rd martyrdom anniversary, and all other women who had sacrificed their lives for dignity and equality to prevail in a democratic, peace building, and secure Iraq.

The papers submitted in the conference brought up questions and inquiries by women and their organizations to decision makers and government officials to confirm the importance of bringing on particular solutions for the public crises that devitalized people in the past years, by establishing state of law and justice, equality, and accomplishing people interests without exceptions, taking into consideration women participation and role in society and state achieving peace and security according to security council Resolution 1325 and other security council resolutions relevant to Iraq situation specific.

Papers also aimed at holding dialogues with many political and governmental personalities that attended the conference, while others apologized being engaged elsewhere.

First paper submitted by Dr. Bushra Al-Obaidy, specialist of international law and human rights tackled the deterioration of political conditions in Iraq , discussing publicly the retreat of political process , through the continuity of loosing confidence among political parties, and the impact of sectarianism and financial corruption in governmental organizations, besides the governmental disability to improve sector of basic public services to citizens despite the huge budget allocation by Iraqi government for fiscal year 2007, as it's still distant from finding solutions to reduce poverty, deprivation, unemployment and homelessness. Papers also characterized the retreat of women role in the political process, and reasons behind preventing women from participating as decision makers in negotiations finding resolutions for political crises, and whether they will be part of the new ministry formation or excluded.

Members of Parliament Ms. Maisoun Al-Damaloujy and Ms. Sofia Al-Suhail, mentioned the challenges facing the political process, confirming at the same time on the importance of eliminating sectarian quota in state organizations structure, and the need to increase women participation in different decision making positions. Kurdistan Parliament member, Ms. Bakhshan Abdullah Zangana, chief of women human rights defense committee in Kurdistan Parliament discussed the women organization experience in the region to halt fighting among Kurdish parties during the mid nineties, and the Parliament endeavor to issue new legislations to support women rights, their legal and social position.

The second paper submitted by lawyer Azhar Al-Sha'arabaf, regarding the constitutional committee on article #140, she inquired about the justifications and basis for the mentioned committee in their action, how to handle issues of departing and arriving population to the governorate, and the reflection of Turkish threats on Kirkuk.

Ms. Narmeen Ottoman Minister of environment, being a member of the committee to article # 140 along with Dr. Muhammad Ihsan minister of external affairs in Kurdistan clarified the aforementioned subjects, by explaining the chain of measures considered/taken in applying article # 140 of constitution, horizons of its work in achieving common interests for Iraqi people in security, stability, and peace.

In her paper, Dr. Erada Zaidan ,submitted the country security situation, she expressed women anxiety and fear of many problems in these respects, such as militias and tribes rule/control enhancement on the account of State security organizations, corruption among security institutions/forces being penetrated by terrorists and organized crime gangs, retreat of security

situation and human rights abuse in Nineveh ,Basra, and some other southern governorates, and displaced citizens fear of return to their original neighborhoods and houses that have been recently cleansed from terrorists , the risk of wasting lives of innocent citizens by private security companies, besides the increase of domestic violence against women, and in the streets and at work , the increase in unresolved women murder cases without serious pursuit by official security investigations , trafficking gangs working between Iraq and neighboring countries.

General Kadim Hameed, Representative of The Minister of Interior and the chief of Baghdad police, with staff officers: General Abdull Kareem Abdull Al-Rahman, the national police 1st division leader and deputy of Risafa operations leader, Brigadier Abdullah Abdull Kareem, Risafa district commander, were the on the panel for security issue to answer questions raised by Dr. Irada's paper, where they have explained the sincere commitment and will of security forces in accomplishing law enforcement plan, the "Surge", with community cooperation and NGOs.

Mr. Jamal Al-Jawahiry , a civil society activist, paper on NGOs problems with the governmental organizations, starting from the registration of the NGO where obstacles and ineffective impossible conditions are placed , suspicions in NGOs credibility and accusing them in supporting terror or financial corruption, besides denying NGOs access to information relative to their activities, restricting activities and organizational independence, trying to dominate their activities and programmes, or limiting marginalizing their role in the political process and economical and social transformation. Not forgetting to mention that although it's been quite some time since the NGOs law was drafted, it's still reserved in drawers.

Member of Parliament, Ms. Ala Al-Talabany, heading civil society committee in the parliament, as a panelist on Iraqi civil society raised concerns over new laws and regulations, her contribution was on dedicating dialogue to step on procedures to issue the new NGOs law convenient with the constitutional text in granting organizations' independence and freedom.

Lawyer Ta'ameem Al- Azawy, presented her paper on constitutional amendments suggested, and constitutional review committee in the parliament. She briefed on all activities of Iraqi women movement towards Constitutional amendments, characterizing the importance of ridding constitution from sectarian indications in all its articles, phrases, or framing, in its text or prelude, including Article 41 to avoid dedication of sectarianism, in addition to the necessity of constitutional commitment in the international human rights conventions ratified by Iraq. The paper also determined suggestions directed to constitutional review committee to host a delegation on behalf of the Iraqi women movement to attend the committee's meetings as an observer to communicate with members and achieve necessary interaction

between civil society organizations and the constitutional Review committee. The paper also included the suggested replacement phrase for the article 41 of constitution, matching with other texts mentioned in freedom and rights section, which states that

`` The State guarantees to organize Iraqi personal status in a legislation``

Dr. Saleem Abdullah Al-Juboury, Member of Parliament, and member of the Constitutional revision committee, was to attend the Constitutional amendments panel, apologized due to his engaging in a concurring parliament meeting.

The conference concluded its activities after the participants' confirmation to the importance of continuing dialogue and coordinating efforts among different women organizations to push state officials and political leaders and all other parties interested in Iraq's well-being, to ensure a positive atmosphere for peace, security and stability through negotiation, on basis of the country's interests, citizenship, rule of law, sustaining campaigns to develop women status, and her active participation in national unity, democracy process in Iraq and standing against illiteracy and backward forces which never acknowledge women full citizenship, competency and rights.



