

Final conference statement:

“The Iraqi Women Call: Stop the Humanitarian Crisis”

The Iraqi women movement concluded a two days conference that took place over the 26th – 27th of January 2008 in Baghdad, which was organized by Iraqi Al-Amal Association (IAA), in partnership with the United Nations Development Funds for Women (UNIFEM) under the slogan “Iraqi women call: stop the humanitarian Crisis”. The event hosted an outstanding and interactive attendance of 300 participants of national and international stakeholders and decision makers from Iraqi House of Representatives and Kurdistan Parliament (members and consultants), special representatives from the Republic of Iraq President’s office and the Prime Minister, cabinet Ministers and deputies of ministers, chiefs of police and “Law Enforcement-Surge(Military and civilian speakers)”, President of the supreme court and Integrity Commission, in addition to attendance of representatives from UN Assisting Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), UN specialized agencies, diplomatic missions in Baghdad, representatives of many civil society organizations in different governorates, and mass media.

In his speech addressing the conference, Dr. M. AlMashhadany, the House of Representatives Speaker, expressed his support to the Iraqi women movement, its role and initiatives, quoting him “Seekers for their rights should scream loudly with their demands, raise your voice loudly, and we will scream with you, and for you, for you and us are one”

Mr. Guy Siri Deputy Chief of the UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, representative of UN Assisting Mission to Iraq (UNAMI), in his intervention “We acknowledge the active and relentless role of Iraqi women movement to preserve stability and Peace in Iraq, a role that reminds us of an unforgettable role that Irish women had played twenty years ago, when they marched for peace, of which without, peace would never have prevailed in Ireland”,

At the conference commence, Ms. Hanaa Edwar, the Secretary of IAA referred in her opening speech to the reasons behind holding the conference, “We come to this forum to discuss in dialogue, our worries as women and as devastated people, with state officials, and all concerned international stakeholders, to help us tackling accumulated crises that have exhausted the people throughout the previous 5 years, in joint and willing efforts draw up a comprehensive national strategy for rebuilding and development a democratic Iraq, saving Iraqis dignity, resources, and unity of its territories and independence”.

The program of the conference addressed six critical topics: Displacement, Crimes of violence against women, Women trafficking and prostitution of others, Juvenile detainees sufferings and their families, Plight of street children, drug victims and child labour, Failure of public services including health and education.

The conference agenda included unprecedented multimedia presentations, with many documented live witnesses, from displaced women and other categories of women

who have been coerced violently along with their families, along with theatrical and musical presentations, documentaries, and photos, field reports and voice recorded witnesses, all presentations formed a ripple effect of cries of pain and sufferings of millions of Iraqis, especially women and children, living under utter absence of security, spread of terrorism and violence and unemployment, no social protection, deterioration of public services including water sanitation, electricity network, fuel, food ration, deteriorating performance of medical, educational, social and rehabilitation institutions, which has been more of a reason behind the increasing desperations and frustration amongst Iraqis, from the failure of the Iraqi state's institutions and international community to address practical solutions to the original crises which have led to new crises threatening to jeopardize any possible solutions, brining Iraq to a dead end.

The presentations included **examples of challenge and the struggle** from widows, children, youth, civil society and women organizations, in addition to different multi activities institutions and research studies centers, advocacy and awareness campaigns, defying the tragic plight, with the spirit of Iraqi citizenship, transcending sectarianism, narrow political parties' visions, and exclusion, keen on relying on dialogue, tolerance and negotiation to address peaceful resolution for the conflicts and contradictions threatening Iraqi people's fate and the coming generations.

The conference' **hot topics created controversial and thorough discussions**, on Iraqi decision makers fiefs struggling over government's posts and gains, entrenching of sectarian and political parties' quotas at all state's institutions, with corruption spreading all over the state's parts, failure in addressing economical and social crises, many suggestions and recommendations have been given to accelerate the upgrading of living, health, education, and social conditions of Iraqis especially the vulnerable and directly affected categories of the displaced, victims of violence, widows, homeless children, detained juvenile and poor families.

An emphasis upon the concept of **partnership between the state and civil society organizations** to be taken into consideration to enhance citizenship principles, efficiency, integrity, transparency in governing means and building confidence between the citizens and the government to fight corruption, terrorism, and protecting the higher interests and welfare of the country.

Iraqi Al-Amal Association, youth group concluded the conference two days events by dedicating an exclusive/promising hope song:

**Let's build our home together
Let's push aside the pain
To bring happiness to its eyes
This home is wounded and needs a hand
For our home is honor and duty
We should keep it safe and sound**

Baghdad,
February 2008