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Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 40 of the Covenant

List of issues in relation to the fifth periodic report of Iraq

Addendum

Replies of Iraq to the list of issues*

[Date received: 17 August 2015]

Constitutional and legal framework within which the Covenant is implemented (art. 2)

1. Paragraph 1 of the list of issues: Under the Iraqi legal system, international treaties that have been ratified and published in the Iraqi Official Gazette constitute binding legislative enactments which can be invoked by public prosecutors and lawyers and applied by the courts whenever necessary.

2. Paragraph 2 of the list of issues: It is evident from Act No. 53 of 2008 that the Commission was established in response to the provisions of article 102 of the Iraqi Constitution of 2005 ("The High Commission for Human Rights, the Independent Electoral Commission and the Commission on Integrity are considered independent commissions which are subject to oversight by the Council of Representatives and the functions of which shall be regulated by law"). This is consistent with the need for institutional reform and the nature of the challenges and recent developments not only at the domestic but also at the regional and international levels. The Commission was formed in accordance with the Paris Principles, adopted at the eighty-fifth session (1993) of the General Assembly of the United Nations in resolution 48/134, which constitute a set of guidelines, rules and standards for the establishment of national human rights institutions and define the nature of their work. These principles can be summarized as independence, impartiality, a broad mandate, adequate resources and pluralism. In this regard, it is noteworthy that Act No. 53 of 2008, under the terms of which the Commission was established, is consistent and in conformity with those principles as can be seen from the following:

- Independence: The Commission was established in a manner that shows regard

* The present document is being issued without formal editing.



for this principle from two standpoints. Firstly, in accordance with its Statute (Act No. 53 of 2008), the Commission is independent of any other body or institution. Secondly, it reports directly to the Council of Representatives (art. 2, para. 1, of the Act) and thereby enjoys wide functional scope in addition to financial autonomy;

- **Broad mandate:** Far from being confined to a limited number of rights, the Commission's mandate extends to all civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, the environment, domestic harmony and sustainable development, regardless of whether such rights derive from the Iraqi Constitution (art. 3, para. 2, of the Act) or from international humanitarian or human rights law;
- **Adequate resources:** In order to fulfil its mandate, the Commission assumes the functions and employs the means that it deems appropriate, as provided for in part II, section 8, of the Act. This clearly illustrates the legislature's intention to grant the Commission broad scope to take the measures needed to carry out its duties;
- **Pluralism:** The legislature endeavoured to ensure pluralism through the method that it stipulated for the selection of commissioners and staff, including diversity in the composition of the Committee of Experts on which not only the legislative, judicial and executive authorities but also civil society institutions and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights are represented (art. 7 of the Act). The principle The Commission's functions include the receipt and investigation of complaints and a section of the Department of Public Prosecutions reporting directly to the Department's director has been established to receive complaints from the Commission.e of pluralism is further reinforced by the stipulation that fixed quotas must be allocated for women and minorities (art. 8, paras. 4 and 5);
- The fact that the High Commission for Human Rights submitted its commitments and credentials through the International Coordinating Committee in Geneva represents a considerable achievement and indicates the extent to which Act No. 53 of 2008 was in conformity with the Paris Principles in spite of the tremendous challenges that the Commission faced;
- The Commission's functions include the receipt and investigation of complaints and a section of the Department of Public Prosecutions reporting directly to the Department's director has been established to receive complaints from the Commission.

Refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced persons (arts. 2 and 12)

3. With regard to paragraph 3 of the list of issues, at the beginning of the onslaught in which terrorist groups seized control of some areas, the Council of Ministers issued Decision No. 328 of 2014 forming a higher committee to provide relief and accommodation for displaced families. Large amounts of money have been disbursed for this purpose and the committee, in coordination with the competent authorities and international organizations, is continuing to take measures to protect displaced persons and ensure that they enjoy basic services (water, food, health care and accommodation). The following tables show the number of displaced persons before and after 9 June 2015:

Statistics updated to 26 April 2014 on the number of families displaced after the events of 2006

| | <i>Governorate</i> | <i>Number of displaced families</i> | <i>Number of displaced persons</i> |
|--------------|--------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. | Dahuk | - | - |
| 2. | Ninawa | 25 772 | 150 460 |
| 3. | Sulaymaniyah | - | - |
| 4. | Kirkuk | 8 864 | 49 616 |
| 5. | Arbil | - | - |
| 6. | Diyala | 11 566 | 65 981 |
| 7. | Al-Anbar | 7 480 | 44 231 |
| 8. | Baghdad | 33 710 | 189 279 |
| 9. | Babil | 1 910 | 10 909 |
| 10. | Karbala | 1 519 | 8 744 |
| 11. | Wasit | 6 933 | 42 049 |
| 12. | Salah ad-Din | 6 621 | 39 940 |
| 13. | Najaf | 1 183 | 6 336 |
| 14. | Qadisiyah | 1 757 | 11 296 |
| 15. | Al-Muthanna | 261 | 1 691 |
| 16. | Dhi Qar | 2 954 | 20 532 |
| 17. | Maysan | 2 232 | 16 035 |
| 18. | Basra | 2 724 | 16 561 |
| Total | | 115 486 | 673 660 |

Number of internally displaced persons up to 21 June 2015

Ministry of Migration statistics, updated to 21 June 2015, on the number of displaced families entitled to emergency grants, by governorate of origin and governorate of current residence

| Governorate of origin | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------|--------------|----------------|-------------------|--------------|--------------------|-------------------|------------|---------------|---------------------|-----------------|---------------|----------------|----------|----------------|
| Governorate | Arbil | Al-Anbar | Sulay- maniyah | Babil | Baghdad/ Rusafa | Baghdad/ Karkh | Dahuk | Diyala | Diyala/ Khaniqin | Salah ad-Din | Kirkuk | Ninawa | Wasit | Total |
| Arbil | 5 429 | 20 125 | 1 | 151 | 302 | 1 017 | 2 | 742 | 87 | 16 923 | 1 104 | 50 044 | | 95 927 |
| Al-Anbar | | 84 787 | | 1 074 | 61 | 1 903 | 1 | 26 | | 405 | 7 | 26 | 2 | 88 292 |
| Basra | | 398 | | 33 | 1 | 30 | | 157 | 16 | 780 | 294 | 784 | | 2 493 |
| Sulay- maniyah | | 12 017 | 5 | 1 889 | 653 | 3 216 | | 7 037 | 4 565 | 8 852 | 55 | 5 929 | 2 | 44 220 |
| Qadisiyah | | 496 | | 68 | 11 | 123 | | 42 | 32 | 213 | 521 | 1 812 | | 3 318 |
| Al-Muthanna | | 214 | | 4 | 3 | 56 | 1 | 14 | 6 | 101 | 22 | 645 | | 1 066 |
| Najaf | | 514 | | 24 | 13 | 143 | | 93 | 76 | 305 | 201 | 11 371 | | 12 740 |
| Babil | | 1 420 | | 2 655 | 9 | 518 | | 99 | 42 | 440 | 43 | 4 620 | | 9 846 |
| Baghdad/ Rusafa | | 3 137 | | 9 | | 48 | | 788 | 1 055 | 3 773 | 58 | 4 953 | | 13 821 |
| Baghdad/ Karkh | | 20 927 | | 896 | 1 | 13 274 | | 447 | 205 | 4 801 | 181 | 2 398 | | 43 130 |
| Dahuk | | 685 | 1 | 4 | 26 | 17 | 145 | 21 | 1 | 723 | 16 | 122 611 | | 124 250 |
| Diyala | | 230 | | 4 | 2 | 41 | | 8 292 | 5 377 | 1 520 | 71 | 183 | | 15 720 |
| Diyala/ Khaniqin | | 75 | | 8 | 6 | 130 | | 9 993 | 11 745 | 318 | 12 | 33 | | 22 320 |
| Dhi Qar | | 289 | | 60 | 1 | 80 | | 44 | 15 | 175 | 374 | 833 | | 1 871 |
| Salah ad-Din | | 97 | | | | 20 | | 4 | 1 | 11 022 | 7 | 19 | | 11 170 |
| Karbala | | 788 | 1 | 329 | 8 | 263 | 3 | 141 | 223 | 967 | 232 | 9 694 | | 12 649 |
| Kirkuk | | 8 009 | | 280 | 138 | 472 | | 5 018 | 1 104 | 35 151 | 7 779 | 4 968 | 2 | 62 921 |
| Maysan | | 70 | | 9 | 2 | 28 | | 20 | 18 | 125 | 156 | 702 | | 1 130 |
| Ninawa | | | | | | | | | | 1 | | 1 344 | | 1 345 |
| Wasit | | 368 | | 21 | 8 | 85 | | 175 | 45 | 356 | 240 | 4 243 | 1 | 5 542 |
| Total | 5 429 | 154 646 | 8 | 7 518 | 1 245 | 21 464 | 152 | 33 153 | 24 613 | 86 951 | 11 373 | 227 212 | 7 | 573 771 |

Governorate of current residence

Number of persons and families displaced (emergency situation) in 18 governorates up to 30 March 2015 and the proportion of displaced persons in relation to the total population of the governorate

| | <i>Governorates hosting the largest number of displaced persons</i> | <i>Number of displaced families</i> | <i>Number of displaced persons</i> | <i>Population estimates for 2015</i> | <i>Percentage of displaced persons</i> |
|--------------|---|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|
| 1 | Dahuk | 122 751 | 617 958 | 1 252 350 | 49.34 % |
| 2 | Arbil | 93 287 | 441 176 | 1 797 707 | 24.54 % |
| 3 | Al-Anbar | 77 633 | 425 161 | 1 715 144 | 24.79 % |
| 4 | Kirkuk | 60 010 | 313 326 | 1 548 213 | 20.24 % |
| 5 | Baghdad | 49 955 | 272 906 | 7 877 879 | 3.46 % |
| 6 | Sulaymaniyah | 41 643 | 213 225 | 2 095 851 | 10.17 % |
| 7 | Diyala | 35 165 | 178 851 | 1 584 949 | 11.26 % |
| 8 | Karbala | 12 590 | 62 982 | 1 180 539 | 5.34 % |
| 9 | Najaf | 12 584 | 61 730 | 1 425 718 | 4.33 % |
| 10 | Babil | 9 545 | 48 314 | 1 999 031 | 2.42 % |
| 11 | Salah ad-Din | 8 123 | 45 803 | 1 544 077 | 2.97 % |
| 12 | Wasit | 5 295 | 25 619 | 1 335 228 | 1.92 % |
| 13 | Qadisiyah | 3 093 | 15 196 | 1 250 169 | 1.22 % |
| 14 | Basra | 2 039 | 9 462 | 2 818 803 | 0.34 % |
| 15 | Dhi Qar | 1 748 | 8 504 | 2 029 342 | 0.42 % |
| 16 | Ninawa | 1 344 | 6 427 | 3 612 342 | 0.18 % |
| 17 | Maysan | 1 076 | 5 101 | 1 078 082 | 0.47 % |
| 18 | Al-Muthanna | 988 | 4 849 | 788 259 | 0.62 % |
| Total | | 538 869 | 2 756 590 | 36 933 684 | 7.46 % |

Details of the grants paid to families displaced after the events of 10 June 2014

| | <i>Details</i> | <i>Amount paid</i> |
|--------------|---|--------------------|
| 1. | Total amount of grants | 434 billion |
| 2. | Total cost of accommodation | 213 billion |
| 3. | Total cost of services (health, education and planning) | 28 billion |
| 4. | Total cost of relief | 103 billion |
| Total | | 778 billion |

4. With regard to paragraph 4 of the list of issues, we wish to provide the following information on refugees:

(a) Palestinian refugees

5. Iraq is hosting 8,000 Palestinian refugees for whom the Ministry of Migration and Displacement feels that it has a legal, humanitarian and moral responsibility which it is assuming in the following manner:

- Provision of the requisite letters of recommendation addressed, in particular, to the Standing Committee for Refugee Affairs and the Directorate of Residence, to facilitate the processing of official documents required by the Palestinian refugees registered with the Ministry;
- Implementation of the agreement concluded between the Ministry and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) concerning accommodation of the Palestinian families expelled from their homes after the fall of the former regime. Since 2004, the Ministry has played a major role in the process of renting apartments in a legally regulated manner in accordance with an annually renewed agreement with UNHCR which H.E. the Minister has delegated the Director General of the Department of Refugee Affairs to sign, administer and implement on his behalf as has been the custom during the last 10 years;
- Coordination and cooperation with the Standing Committee for Refugee Affairs in the Ministry of the Interior and also with other governmental ministries and institutions and international organizations with a view to overcoming and resolving, directly or indirectly, the problems that the Palestinians are facing;
- Direct contact with prominent Palestinian personalities in order to hear their views and discuss their problems, given the fact that the Ministry is the official authority responsible for monitoring the situation of the refugees and the various issues affecting them;
- Coordination with UNHCR in regard to payment of the costs of rehabilitating the residential complex for Palestinian refugees in the Baladiyat district of Baghdad, where the apartments have been in use for more than 45 years, in order to help Palestinian families to enjoy a decent life;
- An agreement has been reached with UNHCR on the establishment of a joint committee to assess the situation of Palestinian families so that UNHCR can provide financial assistance for disadvantaged and vulnerable families;
- The programmes that the Department of Refugee Affairs is implementing in collaboration with its partners include a programme, jointly funded by UNHCR and the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, to train unemployed young Palestinian refugees in order to help them to earn a living and become self-supporting;
- Displaced Palestinian families returning to their homes are entitled to same financial grants as those allocated for displaced Iraqi families;
- Palestinian families displaced as a result of the 2006-2008 events have the same entitlement as displaced Iraqi families to humanitarian assistance and financial grants, without any discrimination;
- Contact is maintained with representatives of the Palestinian Embassy in Baghdad with a view to ensuring a coordinated and concerted response to the problems faced by Palestinian families;
- The Ministry participates in coordination meetings with governmental ministries and institutions and international humanitarian organizations in order to monitor the situation of Palestinian families in the country.

(b) Syrian refugees

6. As of 28 February 2015, the number of Syrian refugees in Iraq amounted to 242,468, distributed as follows:

| <i>Governorate</i> | <i>Number of individuals</i> |
|--------------------|------------------------------|
| Dahuk | 100 592 |
| Arbil | 107 254 |
| Sulaymaniyah | 28 959 |
| Al-Anbar | 4 517 |
| Ninawa | 1 329 |
| Other locations | 994 |
| Kirkuk | 673 |
| Baghdad | 413 |

Services provided by the Ministry of Migration and Displacement for Syrian refugees:

7. In accordance with the decision taken by the Council of Ministers on 24 July 2013, Syrian refugees are permitted to enter Iraqi territory and the Ministry of Migration and Displacement has formed a national committee to supervise the entry of Iraqi returnees and Syrian refugees through the Al-Qa'im and Rabi'a border crossing points in the Al-Anbar governorate. An amount of 50 billion Iraqi dinars has been allocated to support those two categories of refugees.

8. The Ministry of Migration and Displacement, in collaboration with the Al-Anbar provincial council and the Al-Qa'im district administration, provided all the facilities needed to transport the refugees from the schools in which they had initially been accommodated to camps meeting UNHCR standards and specifications regarding water and electricity supply, sanitation, construction of a medical centre and a school and the daily provision of three high-quality meals, in conformity with the specified weekly quantity of meat and chicken and the specified daily quantity of rice for lunch and eggs and cheese at breakfast time, for all the camp's residents, together with infant formula and other requisites for women and expectant mothers. Within a period of only two weeks, a camp was built and all the refugees were transferred to it. On three occasions, the Iraqi Government has awarded all the refugees a grant of 400,000 dinars for each family and 150,000 dinars for each person who entered the country unaccompanied.

9. The grants disbursed by the Iraqi Government amount to a total of around 750 million Iraqi dinars. During the last distribution, 300,000 dinars were paid to each family and 150,000 dinars to each individual in Al-Qa'im camp and refugees living outside the camps in the governorate of Al-Anbar were also included in the distribution. In keeping with its humanitarian policy, the Ministry is coordinating with the various governmental institutions endeavouring to alleviate the refugees' ordeal and also with the health and education departments in Al-Qa'im in order to ensure the availability of medicines, vaccines and ambulances and support the educational process in the camps.

10. The Government has spent a total amount of more than 10 billion Iraqi dinars on the construction of camps and infrastructural facilities and the provision of food and grants in the district of Al-Qa'im which contains three refugee camps, two of which have been evacuated and all their residents transferred to the third, Al-Obaidi camp, in agreement with UNHCR. That camp, which was previously protected by units from the Iraqi army and the Ministry of the Interior, is currently under the control of an armed group and its management has been assigned to the Iraqi Salvation Humanitarian Organization (ISHO), which is receiving financial support from UNHCR.

(c) Kurdish refugees from Turkey

11. These refugees entered the Kurdistan Region as a result of the conflict between the Turkish Government and the Kurdistan Workers' Party. By the end of 2006, around 11,000 of them were living in the Makhmour camp and a further 5,000 in rural areas in the governorate of Dahuk. The Ministry and UNHCR, in coordination with the Kurdistan Regional Government, have endeavoured to improve the situation of these refugees and, in February 2007, UNHCR conducted a census of the camp's residents and, with the cooperation of the Regional Government, issued them with identity cards. During the census, the Ministry was represented by the Director of the Department of Refugee Affairs and the Director of the Department of Statistics.

(d) Kurdish refugees from Iran

12. Prior to the fall of the former regime, around 10,000 Kurdish refugees from Iran were living in Al-Tash camp in the governorate of Al-Anbar. These refugees had fled from their home regions in Iran as a result of the conflict between the Iranian Government and its Kurdish opponents during the 1980s and the regime in power at that time accommodated them in Al-Tash camp with support and backing from UNHCR. After the fall of the former regime, in view of the tense security situation in the governorate of Al Anbar, most of them moved to the Kurdistan Region and, in 2005, the Ministry and UNHCR helped to transfer the remaining refugees in Al-Tash camp to the Kurdistan Region, after which the camp was finally closed. The Regional Government accommodated these refugees in Kaveh camp which UNHCR had established for that purpose in the governorate of Arbil in November 2005. UNHCR bore the cost of renting 18 apartments to house some of these refugees in the Kurdistan Region in collaboration with the Ministry's Department of Refugee Affairs, which is paying the amount of their contracts in a fully transparent manner, and more than 4,000 of these refugees are living in the Khaniqin area. Most of the applications for the resettlement of Iranian Kurdish refugees have been rejected on grounds of security restrictions. There are differences between the data and figures recorded by UNHCR and those provided by the Standing Committee in the Ministry of the Interior. UNHCR estimates the population of Kaveh camp at 266 families (1,500 refugees) and that of Barika camp at 426 families (2,130 refugees). It should be borne in mind that these two camps consist of houses built, with assistance from UNHCR, by the refugees who numbered 9,700 in 2009.

(e) Ahwazi refugees from Iran

13. These refugees fled from the Khuzistan region of Iran during the 1980s as a result of the conflict in that region between the Iranian Government and its opponents. Prior to its fall, the former regime had accommodated around 2,600 of them in the southern areas of the country, and particularly in the governorate of Wasit. After the regime fell, some of them were granted Iraqi nationality in view of their tribal links in the central and southern governorates and the rest (around 153 refugees) were accommodated in Al-Waleed camp on the border. Some of these were subsequently resettled by UNHCR and the others (18 families) are being housed and cared for by the Ministry in coordination with UNHCR.

(f) Sudanese refugees

14. A small number of Sudanese from the Darfur region sought refuge in the country during the 1980s as a result of the conflict between the Sudanese Government and its opponents. Our Ministry has coordinated with UNHCR on this matter with a view to facilitating and expediting their registration and, according to UNHCR records, around 450 of them were registered in 2014. Although most of them are currently living in the

Bataween district of Baghdad where they are exercising liberal professions, UNHCR resettled 138 of them in the United States of America in 2007.

Non-discrimination and equality between men and women (arts. 2, 3 and 26)

15. With regard to paragraph 5 of the list of issues, the achievement of gender equality in all spheres is a multifaceted issue involving equality in regard to all the rights provided for in the two International Covenants and, in particular, those highlighted in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Consequently, the CEDAW Committee's observations concerning Iraq's last periodic report contain detailed recommendations for the implementation of measures to ensure that women are treated fairly and enjoy equality at the legislative, judicial and executive levels. In this connection, we suggest that it might be advisable to await the outcome of the implementation of the national plan, formulated by the joint committee established to follow up on those recommendations, which is designed to achieve positive results in this regard. The principal steps that have already been taken are illustrated by the following:

- Approval of the National Strategy to Combat Violence against Women (2013) and the National Strategy for the Advancement of Women (2014);
- Presentation of a bill of law on protection against domestic violence to the Iraqi Council of Representatives in which its first reading has been completed;
- Assignment of investigating judges to examine cases of domestic violence;
- Establishment of integrated domestic violence courts.

16. With regard to the provision of data on acts of violence against homosexuals and measures taken by the State in this connection, information was gathered on incidents involving such persons in the year 2011/12. Governmental monitoring and inquiries conducted by the Ministry of Human Rights showed that such incidents did not constitute a phenomenon since they were confined to isolated cases and all the alleged acts of homicide targeting such persons were criminally motivated. We wish to emphasize that no citizen may be punished unjustifiably by any incompetent body for committing an act assumed to be contrary to public policy or morality. In this connection, the Ministry of Human Rights is working with the departments concerned in the Ministry of Education with a view to highlighting the need for psychosocial researchers to play a more active role in student counselling. The Ministry is also working with the Community Police Directorate in the Ministry of the Interior to raise awareness of the need to investigate various cases and incidents which are usually covered with a veil of secrecy within the context of highly discreet personal relations.

17. A committee chaired by the Ministry of Human Rights and comprising representatives of the secretariat of the Council of Ministers, the Ministries of the Interior, Justice, Health, Education and Higher Education, civil society organizations, UNAMI and IMO has been formed to provide training assistance, study the situation of LGBT persons and submit recommendations to ensure that they enjoy greater protection from violence and discrimination based on their real or imagined sexual orientation. Although the teachings of all the religions observed in Iraq prohibit such practices, which they regard as contrary to social customs and traditions, the measures taken by the Government are consistent with the principles of human rights.

18. With regard to paragraph 6 of the list of issues, concerning legal provisions that discriminate against women, we wish to point out that action is being taken in this connection within the framework of the national plan to implement the CEDAW recommendations by, in particular, conducting a study of the legislation in question, proposing amendments thereto and organizing campaigns to support the introduction

of such amendments. Up to the present time, however, none of those legal provisions have been amended.

19. With regard to updating of the information concerning the representation of women in political and public life and measures taken to increase and improve such representation, the following should be noted:

- In the elections held in 2014, women obtained 83 of the 328 seats in the Council of Representatives and, consequently, constitute 25 per cent of the total number of members of the Iraqi Parliament. This shows that the political elites are becoming increasingly receptive to the idea of participation by politically independent women with academic and managerial qualifications;
- The Government formed in 2014 consisted of 23 ministries in which only two women held ministerial portfolios;
- In the Kurdistan Regional Government, although women hold the posts of Minister of Labour and Social Affairs and Minister for Women's Affairs, it is noteworthy that they have not been assigned any of the principal portfolios. However, the progress that has been made in this regard is indicative of the positive measures that the State is taking to ensure that women are involved in public policymaking;
- A total of 343 women hold decision-making posts in the governmental sector where some of them have been appointed at the grade of director general. Two thirds of them are serving as experts, assistant directors general and advisers, although only 2 cent of them hold the grade of undersecretary;
- The Syndicate of Iraqi Pharmacists has 4,488 female members (around 44 per cent of its total membership), one or two of whom are elected to its governing body every year. The Iraqi Bar Association, which was established in 1933, has 13,882 female members of whom only two have been elected to its board. The Iraqi Dental Association has a total membership of 8,910, including 4,968 women three of whom were elected to its 8-member board during the period 1998-2008 although, at the present time, only one woman is serving thereon;
- With regard to the number of women holding senior posts in the judiciary, the following information has been provided by the Supreme Judicial Council:
 1. The total number of judges amounts to 1,447 of whom 86 are women and 1,361 are men;
 2. There is no legal impediment that would prevent a woman from serving as presiding judge in a criminal or appellate court. At the present time, a female chief justice at the Baghdad/Karkh Court of Appeal is presiding over the juvenile court and there are female prosecutors representing the Department of Public Prosecutions before the criminal and juvenile courts;
 3. There is nothing in the Statute of the Federal Supreme Court, nor in the bill of law pertaining thereto, to prevent a woman from becoming a member of that court;
 4. The judicial authority has provided both male and female judges with whatever official vehicles are available, depending on whether they are serving in a criminal or civil court, and they are all assigned judicial bodyguards and police escorts;
 5. To date, 56 judges have been killed.

20. It should also be noted that the Central Statistical Organization in the Ministry of Planning has published a report on the gender perspective in ministries and

governmental institutions which shows that there is a considerable degree of gender inequality in regard to appointments, training and senior posts in most of the ministries, as a result of which:

- Courses have been held to raise awareness of the need to apply a gender perspective in all sectors;
- A comprehensive national framework has been established for the development of gender-based indicators with a view to the achievement of gender equality;
- The gender-related aspect of statistical operations has been included in the project for the development of the statistical system in Iraq;
- A database of gender-related indicators has been compiled using the DEVINFO system;
- A handbook has been prepared on the concepts and definitions of gender-related indicators.

Violence against women, including domestic violence (arts. 2, 3, 6, 7 and 26)

21. With regard to paragraph 7 of the list of issues, the bill of law on protection against domestic violence was submitted by the secretariat of the Council of Ministers, in accordance with the latter's decision No. 27 of 2015, to the Council of Representatives for legislative approval.

22. In response to the question as to whether the said bill of law and the Kurdistan Regional Act No. 8 of 2011 on domestic violence apply to all forms of violence against women, including violence within the family and marital rape, it is noteworthy that the Central Government's bill of law on protection against domestic violence, which is in the process of being adopted, does not classify criminal acts of violence against women. However, campaigns in support of such classification have been conducted by civil society organizations within the framework of the plan for the implementation of the CEDAW recommendations with a view to persuading the competent committees in the Council of Representatives to amend the bill.

23. With regard to female genital mutilation, this phenomenon has been reported on many occasions in the past in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, especially in rural and remote areas, due to lack of awareness of the dangers inherent in such a practice and its adverse effects on the mental and physical health of women. According to the fourth multiple indicator cluster survey (MICS4) conducted in 2011, the prevalence of this practice in the Region amounted to around 43 per cent. However, the public awareness-raising campaigns that have been conducted through the information media, symposiums and workshops in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq to highlight the fact that this reprehensible phenomenon is unbefitting in civilized societies have helped to reduce its prevalence. The Kurdistan Regional Government has also taken numerous measures and promulgated legislative enactments to eradicate this phenomenon which has been designated as a criminal offence punishable under the provisions of article 412 of the Criminal Code, concerning assault with intent to cause bodily harm or injury, which stipulates as follows:

“(a) Any person who wilfully assaults another by wounding or beating him, exercising force, administering a harmful substance or committing any unlawful act with intent to cause permanent disability shall be liable to a penalty of up to 15 years' imprisonment;

“(b) The penalty shall be a term of up to 7 years' imprisonment, or a lesser period of detention, if the offence results in permanent disability which the offender did not intend to cause.”

24. The Kurdistan Regional Parliament recently passed a bill of law on the prevention of domestic violence under the provisions of which “female circumcision” was prohibited, thereby taking an important step towards the eradication of this phenomenon.

25. As a result of all the above-mentioned educative, awareness-raising and deterrent legislative and legal measures, a considerable decline has been observed in the prevalence of this phenomenon and the authorities concerned are continuing their active endeavours to ensure its total eradication.

26. With regard to paragraph 8 of the list of issues, the number of cases of domestic violence against women amounted to 1,675 up to 1 May 2015. The Ministry of the Interior’s directorate responsible for the protection of families and children against domestic violence has introduced a hotline service (landline number 139, mobile number 01139) to receive complaints, reports and enquiries from male and female victims of violence in order to ensure that the rights and obligations of both men and women are respected in accordance with:

- The regulations concerning the protection of families and children from domestic violence;
- The Iraqi Personal Status Act No. 188 of 1959, as amended;
- The Juvenile Welfare Act No. 76 of 1983;
- The Iraqi Criminal Code (Act No. 111 of 1969), as amended.

27. The above-mentioned directorate holds training courses on gender-based violence and techniques to prevent domestic violence, as well as courses on the compilation and analysis of databases and courses in which effective management skills and techniques are taught in accordance with international standards.

28. Since its establishment, the Ministry of Women’s Affairs has sought to combat violence against women. During the last two years, it has made exceptional efforts and has formulated a plan for coordination and consultation with the relevant governmental and non-governmental bodies. The drafting of the National Strategy to Combat Violence against Women formed the subject of numerous negotiations, consultations and meetings in Baghdad, Arbil and some neighbouring States and assistance was sought from a team of national experts as well as UN Women, the United Nations Population Fund, Arab institutions (the Jordan River Foundation and the Arab Women’s Training and Research Centre (CAWTAR)) and local civil society organizations. When the draft was finalized, it was submitted to the Council of Ministers and adopted in Decision No. 96 of 2013. The strategy, which is designed to promote the rights of Iraqi women of all ages and protect them against all forms of negative discrimination and violence and the consequences thereof, covers the four principal aspects of prevention, care, protection and policies to be implemented. It is largely based on an international legal framework, consisting in the treaties and conventions concerning women and Iraq’s international obligations, as a member of the United Nations, under the provisions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the human rights instruments that Iraq has ratified, and a national legal framework consisting in the Constitution which contains numerous provisions concerning gender equality and equality before the law. Its other sources can be found in norm-setting national documents such as the Five-Year Plan, the Poverty Reduction Strategy, the National Human Rights Action Plan and the Integrated Social and Health Survey of Iraqi Women. However, the strategy is motivated primarily by the Iraqi Government’s desire to help Iraqi society to recover from the deplorable circumstances resulting from former policies and the unstable security situation which

have fostered extremist ideological tendencies that, in turn, have had an impact on the situation of women in Iraq.

29. Since all the governmental agencies concerned have a responsibility to implement the National Strategy to Combat Violence against Women, the Ministry of Health, in partnership with the relevant ministries and authorities, has taken steps to raise public awareness of the need to condemn violence in general and violence against women in particular since they constitute an important and fundamental section of society. From the gender perspective, the Ministry has designated female circumcision as an act of violence against girls and women in the same way as other acts identified in the Integrated Social and Health Survey of Iraqi Women and, in coordination with the Central Statistical Organization in the Ministry of Planning, is endeavouring to determine the extent of the problem in order to devise appropriate ways to resolve it. The Ministry of Health has also opened mental health units in about 80 health-care centres and is implementing a project to provide integrated mental health services for women who have been subjected to acts of violence. For its part, the Ministry of Women's Affairs has organized three motivational training courses to develop the capacities of members of the family protection police units in collaboration with the Ministry of the Interior, the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Development Programme. These courses focused on the skills needed to deal with female victims of violence who seek refuge in the police stations to which those units are attached.

30. The Family Protection Committee, formed by Presidential Order No. 80 of 2009 and chaired by the Minister of State for Women's Affairs, established the family protection units the overall objective of which is to assist families by creating an environment in which the confessional communities of the Iraqi people can have confidence in the judicial system and its ability to promote and protect family values and human rights in the manner required by the Iraqi Constitution, the laws in force and Iraq's international obligations. These units are also promoting the concept of harmonious families in which men, women and children are treated with respect and humanity and, in this way, the Family Protection Directorate is helping to nurture a peaceful and non-violent society.

31. The Ministry of Women's Affairs, in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Human Rights, the Supreme Judicial Council and representatives of civil society and UN Women, drafted a bill of law on protection against domestic violence which has been submitted to the Council of Representatives. Pending promulgation of a Protection against Domestic Violence Act, cases of domestic violence are being treated in accordance with the Criminal Code (Act No. 111 of 1969), as amended.

32. The following steps have been taken to help to put an end to domestic violence:

- The problem of domestic violence has been included among the family education subjects in academic curricula;
- Training courses have been held for female officers and other ranks of the family protection police units;
- Human rights and domestic violence have been incorporated in the Police Academy curricula;
- A strategy to combat violence against women was adopted in the Kurdistan Region in 2012;
- A legislative enactment to protect women against violence was promulgated in the Kurdistan Region in 2012.

Counter-terrorism measures and respect for Covenant guarantees (arts. 2, 7, 9, 10 and 14)

33. Paragraph 9 of the list of issues:

(a) Since the fall of the dictatorial regime in 2003, Iraq has been subjected to vicious terrorist attacks by the *Al-Qaida* and *Da'ish* [ISIL] organizations and other terrorist groups as a result of which hundreds of thousands of innocent civilians have been killed and considerable damage has been caused in all economic and social sectors. The Iraqi Government, being committed to protect the security of the country and its citizens, promulgated the Counter-Terrorism Act No. 13 of 2005. It is noteworthy that the authorities responsible for the enforcement of the Act made several observations thereon and a large number of governmental and non-governmental institutions conducted studies of the positive and negative consequences and implications of its application. These studies played a major role in the proposal of a new bill of law regulating endeavours to combat crime and terrorism which is currently being considered by the national legislature. The question of secret informants, which had been raised by numerous civil society organizations and political parties, has been addressed and the law enforcement and investigative authorities have taken urgent measures to verify the reliability of reports received from such informants, ensure that they are corroborated by other factual and presumptive evidence, and punish the sources of such reports if they are found to be false;

(b) With regard to the reported presence of a large number of juveniles and children in detention centres, the statistics on the number of persons held in the detention centres run by the Ministries of Defence, the Interior, Justice and Labour are presented below. It should be borne in mind that the Constitution and the relevant legislation prohibit detention or deprivation of liberty without an order issued by a competent judge and, when arrests are made during police raids or military operations in accordance with Presidential Order No. 208 of 2009, the detainee must be brought before a judge within 24 hours so that the accusations against him can be examined. It should also be noted that the Counter-Terrorism Act and all the penal legislation specify the penalties to which juveniles are liable and prohibit their subjection to capital punishment even if they have committed any of the acts punishable by the death penalty;

(c) Statistics on cases of torture in all the detention centres and other prison facilities operated by the Ministries of Justice, the Interior, Defence and Labour have already been provided. Such cases, which are of a purely individual and unsystematic nature, are examples of the legacy of improper conduct inherited from the modes of behaviour practised by members of agencies of the former dictatorial regime during their interrogations and acts of repression. The perpetrators of such acts are investigated and punished and the Ministry of Human Rights carefully monitors all stages of the investigation of accusations of torture;

(d) There are no recorded cases of female relatives of persons suspected of terrorism being detained or subjected to torture or sexual harassment by reason of their kinship with such persons.

States of emergency (art. 4)

34. With regard to paragraph 10 of the list of issues: The National Security Act No. 1 of 2004 was promulgated in view of the dangerous security situation and the grave repercussions that it was still having on Iraq at that time, the need to take a resolute stand against terrorists and lawbreakers, and the Government's obligation to protect the right of citizens to live in freedom and dignity, safeguard their political and civil

rights, uphold the rule of law and bolster judicial independence, efficacy and oversight.

35. Notwithstanding the dangerous security situation and the powers vested in it under the provisions of that Act, the Iraqi Government did not proclaim a state of emergency, which can be imposed only with the approval of the Council of Representatives.

36. From the legislative standpoint, states of emergency are regulated by the provisions of the Iraqi Constitution in which the principle of force majeure is applied under the designation "state of emergency". Article 61, paragraph 9 (a), of the Constitution stipulates that: proclamation of a state of war or emergency must be approved by a two-thirds majority in the Council of Representatives on the basis of a joint request from the President of the Republic and the Prime Minister; a state of emergency may be proclaimed for a period of 30 days and may be extended for further periods subject to the Council's approval of each extension; throughout the duration of the war or state of emergency, the Prime Minister shall be vested with the powers needed to enable him to manage the country's affairs; the said powers shall be regulated by law in a manner consistent with the Constitution and the Prime Minister shall inform the Council of Representatives of the measures taken and the results thereof within 15 days from the date of termination of the war or state of emergency.

37. The measures taken by the Government in this connection include the formation, pursuant to Presidential Order No. 10 of 2015, of a committee chaired by the Minister for Human Rights to raise awareness of the principles of international humanitarian law, particularly in regard to the protection of civilians and their movable and immovable property during periods of armed conflict, as guidelines to be followed by all Iraqi governmental agencies and institutions, which have an obligation to apply the provisions of international humanitarian and human rights law at the national level.

Right to life and prohibition of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment (arts. 6 and 7)

38. Paragraph 11 of the list of issues: After 2003, the following transitional justice institutions were established:

(a) The Supreme Criminal Tribunal before which the symbolic personalities of the former regime who had been involved in violations and crimes against the Iraqi people were prosecuted;

(b) The Property Claims Commission, which returned the property that the former regime had confiscated from citizens for political reasons;

(c) The Political Prisoners' Foundation, which awarded previously incarcerated opponents of the former regime, as well as their families, financial and other forms of reparation and a number of privileges to facilitate their social reintegration;

(d) The Martyrs' Foundation, which awarded the families of martyred opponents of the former regime financial and other forms of reparation and a number of privileges to facilitate their social reintegration.

39. Victims of acts of terrorism were also compensated under the provisions of Act No. 20 of 2009.

40. The Supreme Criminal Tribunal empowered to try senior members of the former dictatorial regime accused of committing crimes against the Iraqi people, including the crime of enforced disappearance, convicted and sentenced them for crimes against humanity in five cases in accordance with the provisions of article 12, paragraph 1 (i),

of Act No. 10 of 2005 under which the tribunal was established. These cases concerned:

- Crimes committed during the *Anfal* operations;
- The attack on the town of Halabja;
- The events that occurred during the 1991 uprising;
- Crimes committed against secular parties;
- The liquidation of religious confessional parties.

41. Paragraph 12 of the list of issues: Since the beginning of the terrorist attacks by *Da'ish* [ISIL] groups, the Iraqi Government has diligently taken the measures needed to protect civilians in combat zones. The Prime Minister, when deciding to halt the aerial bombardment of towns in which the *Da'ish* terrorist organization had gained a foothold, declared that the Iraqi Government did not want to be responsible for the death or injury of more innocent victims, whom those terrorist groups were using as human shields. Mr. Nikolai Mladenov, the former Special Representative of the Secretary General of the United Nations for Iraq, welcomed the Iraqi Prime Minister's decision to halt the bombardment of civilian areas. We also wish to draw attention to the fact that, in order to avoid casualties among civilians, and especially women and children, the Iraqi Army evacuated the families living in the Jurf al-Nasr area of the governorate of Babil before liberating that area from *Da'ish* terrorist groups and clearing all the landmines and booby traps that they had placed. These measures constitute a faithful application of the principle of distinction and proportionality to which reference is made in the provisions of the 1977 Protocols Additional to the Geneva Conventions, and particularly article 48 of Protocol I.

42. During battles fought against terrorist groups, the military units deployed by the Ministry of Defence take strict precautionary measures to protect civilians against any violations to which they might be subjected, particularly in view of the fact that the country's armed forces are engaged in urban warfare. In the event of any violations being committed, legal action is taken against the perpetrators regardless of whether they are military personnel or civilians.

43. Paragraph 13 of the list of issues: Under the Iraqi criminal legislation currently in force, the following offences are punishable by the death penalty:

1. Offences prejudicial to the internal security of the State (arts. 190; 191, para. 3; 192; 193; 194; 195; 196; and 197, paras 1 and 2, of the Criminal Code promulgated in Act No. 111 of 1969, as amended);
2. Offences posing a danger to the public or involving the use of bacteriological agents (arts. 349 and 351, para. 1, of the Criminal Code);
3. Offences prejudicial to the safety of transport and means of communication (arts. 354 and 355 of the Criminal Code);
4. Offences of wilful homicide (art. 406 of the Criminal Code);
5. Offences involving the abduction of persons (arts. 421, 422 and 423 of the Criminal Code);
6. Drug offences, as specified in article 14, paragraphs 1 (b), (c) and (d), of the Narcotic Drugs Act No. 68 of 1965, involving trafficking and dealing in narcotic drugs for the purpose of funding, aiding and abetting in the acts and activities specified in article 190 of the Criminal Code;
7. Offences of terrorism (art. 4 of the Counter-Terrorism Act No. 13 of 2005).

44. Application of the death penalty prescribed for other offences under the decrees and enactments of the (dissolved) Revolutionary Command Council was suspended and replaced by life imprisonment or a lesser penalty under the terms of Coalition Provisional Authority Order No. 7 of 2003.

45. The position of the Iraqi judiciary in regard to the application of this penalty has been supportive of the right of the accused to appoint defence counsel in addition to his legally guaranteed right of appeal. In its ruling No. 181/Plenary/2006 handed down on 30 May 2007, the Federal Court of Cassation set aside a judgement of a central criminal court, which imposed the death penalty on one of the defendants in a case involving acts of terrorism, in spite of his alleged confessions and other evidence. The Court of Cassation did not regard the defendant's appearance before the criminal court in the presence of an attorney appointed by himself or by the court as sufficient to guarantee his constitutional right to have his statements before the investigating judge recorded in the presence of a lawyer appointed by himself or, if he was unable to do so, on his behalf. The Court of Cassation declared all his previously recorded statements null and void and ordered him to be questioned again. This principle subsequently became standard judicial practice and the investigating judge's decision to record a suspect's statements in the absence of legal counsel to advise him was characterized as a gross error. The Federal Court of Cassation has upheld judgements of central criminal courts ordering the release of defendants on the ground that their statements before the investigating judges had not been recorded in the presence of appointed legal counsel.

46. Paragraph 14 of the list of issues: The Management of Detention and Prison Facilities Act, which remains in force, contains a set of provisions to regulate the operation of correctional facilities and protect the human dignity and fundamental freedoms of persons of both sexes and all ages who have been deprived of their liberty. Article 37, paragraph 1 (c), of chapter II (Freedoms) of the current Iraqi Constitution stipulates that: "All forms of psychological and physical torture and inhuman treatment shall be prohibited. No account shall be taken of any confession extracted under duress, threat or torture and the victim shall have the right to claim compensation, in accordance with the law, in respect of the physical and mental harm suffered." There are a number of rehabilitation centres for victims of torture in Iraq, most of which are operated by civil society organizations.

47. Paragraph 15 of the list of issues: The number of complaints and allegations concerning torture and ill-treatment of prisoners documented by the Ministry of Human Rights during the past five years is as follows:

1. In 2015, there were 33 complaints up to 7 June of which four were investigated by the competent authorities;
2. In 2014, there were 120 complaints which 32 were investigated by the competent authorities;
3. In 2013, there were 653 complaints of which 16 were investigated by the competent authorities;
4. In 2012, there were 593 complaints of which 30 were investigated by the competent authorities;
5. In 2011, there were 467 complaints of which eight were investigated by the competent authorities.

Elimination of slavery and servitude (art. 8)

48. With regard to paragraph 16 of the list of issues, the following table shows the statistics concerning trafficking in persons:

| | <i>Year</i> | <i>Number of offences</i> | <i>Percentage</i> |
|----|-------------|---------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. | 2010 | 9 | 12 % |
| 2. | 2011 | 2 | 3 % |
| 3. | 2012 | 12 | 16 % |
| 4. | 2013 | 9 | 12 % |
| 5. | 2014 | 24 | 33 % |
| 6. | 2015 | 21 | 23 % |

49. Following the promulgation of the Trafficking in Persons Act No. 28 of 2012, a central committee was formed to implement its provisions, subcommittees were formed in the governorates and a directorate to combat human trafficking was established in the Ministry of the Interior with enforcement units in the provincial police directorates. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs opened a shelter to accommodate victims and the Training Directorate in the Ministry of the Interior, in collaboration with the International Organization for Migration, held a number of training courses in this field. The National Centre for Human Rights in the Ministry of Human Rights has also organized a large number of training courses in this field and the Judicial Training Centre run by the judiciary has held several courses, in collaboration with the European Union, for investigating judges and judges serving on the bench.

Right to liberty and security of person, right to a fair trial and independence of the judiciary (arts. 9 and 14)

50. Paragraph 17 of the list of issues: With regard to arrests carried out by security forces, the Ministry of Defence has issued clear and explicit instructions to the effect that arrests can be made only in accordance with a warrant issued by a competent judge, except in cases of flagrante delicto when they can be made by its military units currently deployed in urban areas and undertaking police functions due to the security situation in the country. However, after the arrest warrant has been executed, the suspects must be brought within 24 hours before the judge who issued it and must not be held in custody for a longer period. In the event of non-compliance with these instructions, legal action can be taken against the persons responsible for the breach thereof.

51. The Iraqi judiciary, which has an obligation to ensure that all citizens without exception are subject to the provisions of the law, hands down judgements in favour of all categories of plaintiffs in the light of the evidence supporting their claims in cases heard by ordinary or constitutional judicial bodies. It likewise convicts any persons without exception who fail to comply with the provisions of the law, such as the Code of Criminal Procedure under which no one may be arrested except in accordance with a judicial warrant (art. 92); no one may be remanded in custody except by decision of an investigating judge (art. 109); and the investigating judge must question the suspect within 24 hours after the latter is arrested or taken into custody (art. 123). Under the provisions of the Criminal Code, legal action may be taken against any person who issues or executes a detention order without being so instructed by an investigating judge or fails to release a detainee who has been discharged or acquitted by a judicial authority or has served his sentence (arts. 322 and 323). The judgements that the Iraqi judiciary has handed down against officials who failed to release detainees in accordance with court orders are illustrated by Federal Court of Cassation ruling No. 164/expanded civil bench/2009 of 16 March 2010. In its capacity as the highest judicial authority, the Supreme Council of the Judiciary has emphasized the need to

observe the laws in force and particularly the provisions of article 123 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, under which an investigating judge or criminal court is required to appoint legal counsel for any accused person who is unable to afford the cost of such counsel to safeguard his rights at all stages of his investigation and trial, in accordance with (dissolved) Coalition Provisional Authority Order No. 3 of 2003. The judiciary does not condone any violation of the rights of detainees, persons held in pretrial custody or convicted prisoners when such rights are guaranteed by the Constitution, legislative enactments or human rights principles. Detainees or their families are entitled to submit complaints through the judiciary or members of the Department of Public Prosecutions assigned to inspect prisons and detention facilities in accordance with the provisions of article 7 of the Public Prosecution Act.

52. Paragraph 18 of the list of issues: Terrorists are still targeting prominent personalities in the country, including members of the judiciary in view of the crucial role that they are playing in the administration of justice through the investigation and prosecution of persons accused of criminal acts such as terrorism. Although judges are provided with the requisite protection, some of them still fall prey to terrorists and attempts are made to intimidate them and pervert the course of justice by dissuading them from fulfilling their duty of ensuring the fair and impartial trial of all defendants regardless of their affiliations and ideologies.

53. The following list contains the names of judges killed in 2014 in terrorist acts targeting them directly:

| <i>Name of judge</i> | <i>Date of death</i> |
|---|----------------------|
| 1. Aidan Hasan Khalaf al-Jabbouri | 27/4/2014 |
| 2. Abdul Razzaq Zuhair Abdul Qadir al-Hamdani | 16/5/2014 |
| 3. Abdul Aziz Husain Murad al-Ammar | 8/8/2014 |
| 4. Ibtihal Muhammad Yunus Hasan al-Agha | 30/9/2014 |
| 5. Ibrahim Faris Ajmi al-Jannabi | 9/11/2014 |
| 6. Amer Abed Rashid Darb al-Azawi | 30/11/2014 |

54. Six employees on the permanent staff have been killed and two others wounded and, among the judicial bodyguards, six have been killed and three others wounded.

Treatment of persons deprived of their liberty (art. 10)

55. With regard to paragraph 19 of the list of issues, it should first of all be noted that the legal framework setting standards for the management of prison and detention facilities consists in the (dissolved) Coalition Provisional Authority Memorandum No. 2 of 2003, which is consistent with the Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (as well as other persons deprived of their liberty) and was designed to ensure secure and humane conditions in such facilities in order to restore law and order and protect the safety of the people of Iraq.

56. Section 1 of the above-mentioned Memorandum stipulates that: "This Memorandum prescribes standards to be applied in the Iraqi prison system under the authority of the Ministry of Justice." With regard to juveniles, in accordance with the Juvenile Welfare Act No. 76 of 1983 the facilities for their detention should be managed by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. However, as can be seen from the statistics on the number of detainees, the place of their detention, the reasons for

their detention and the detaining authority, the provisions of those two instruments are not being fully applied for the following reasons:

1. Juveniles and children are being held in detention facilities run by the Ministry of Justice, especially in the southern areas, because of the lack of juvenile facilities run by the Ministry of Labour in those areas and also because of the desire to facilitate regular contact between the juveniles and their families. It should also be borne in mind that those detention facilities comply with the provisions of section 4 of the Memorandum concerning segregation of the categories of convicted prisoners, prisoners awaiting trial and detainees, taking into account their gender and the type of offence committed;

2. Some detention facilities are being managed by the Ministries of the Interior and Defence in view of the magnitude of the vicious and large-scale attacks to which Iraq is being subjected due to the lack of control of its borders with neighbouring States, as a result of which Iraqi territory has become fertile ground for acts of terrorism and a haven for terrorists of various origins. In a decision issued in July 2015, the Prime Minister emphasized that all detention facilities should be managed by the Department of Corrections in the Ministry of Justice with the exception of juvenile facilities which should be managed by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs.

57. With regard to measures taken to improve conditions of detention and to ensure that adequate health services are provided in all places of deprivation of liberty, the control and inspection teams of the Ministry of Human Rights make regular and announced visits thereto in order to ensure that all the provisions of the Management of Prison and Detention Facilities Act are being applied. The inspection teams draw up detailed reports containing their observations concerning the situation of inmates and conditions of detention in those facilities, refer those reports to the competent authorities so that the negative aspects and improper practices noted can be remedied, and continue to monitor the facilities in order to ensure that shortcomings have been rectified and definitive solutions found to the documented irregularities.

58. This supervisory role is not confined solely to the prison inspection teams of the Ministry of Human Rights since the national prison and detention facilities control system also includes other governmental and non-governmental bodies such as the parliamentary human rights committee, the independent High Commission for Human Rights, the Department of Public Prosecutions, the human rights directorates attached to the offices of the inspectors general of the Ministries of Defence, the Interior and Justice, the committees for the reception of special rapporteurs, and civil society organizations. Through their reports on their regular unannounced visits, these bodies have been highly instrumental in improving the situation of the inmates of all the detention facilities.

59. With regard to the subjection of women deprived of their liberty to rape and sexual harassment and assault, inspection teams consisting exclusively of women make unannounced visits during which they interview female inmates in private in order to put them at ease and create a positive rapport between the detainee and the visitor. The Ministry monitors all the investigation files in cases involving reported incidents of rape and assault. During the past five years, the number of such incidents amounted to:

| | |
|------|------|
| 2015 | none |
| 2014 | none |
| 2013 | 1 |
| 2012 | 3 |

2011 3

60. It is noteworthy that the Government formed a high-level commission of inquiry, consisting of representatives of a number of governmental and civil bodies in addition to Sheikh Khalid Al-Mulla, a prominent personality in the Sunni community, after a group of persons demonstrating in Ramadi in 2013/14 claimed that female detainees had been subjected to rape and sexual assault. The commission began its work by visiting all the detention facilities in which women were held, interviewing the female inmates and hearing their statements but did not find any evidence to corroborate the demonstrators' allegations. A communiqué and a report on the commission's work were issued at the time and the women's and human rights committees of the Council of Representatives also investigated those allegations during the Council's current session and likewise found them to be uncorroborated.

Statistics on all categories of detainees and convicts as of Monday, 6 July 2015

| <i>Category</i> | <i>Total</i> |
|-------------------------------------|---------------|
| Male detainees/civil offences | 352 |
| Male detainees/terrorist offences | 5 026 |
| Male convicts/civil offences | 14 830 |
| Male convicts/terrorist offences | 6 469 |
| Female detainees/civil offences | 130 |
| Female detainees/terrorist offences | 33 |
| Female convicts/civil offences | 653 |
| Female convicts/terrorist offences | 132 |
| Male juvenile detainees | - |
| Male juvenile convicts | 177 |
| Female juvenile detainees | 3 |
| Female juvenile convicts | 7 |
| Total | 27 812 |

Freedom of conscience and religious belief (art. 18)

61. With regard to paragraph 20 of the list of issues, the Iraqi Constitution guarantees freedom of worship and religious observance and makes provision for the requisite protection to enable members of minorities to enjoy those freedoms, including freedom of thought and culture and protection of places of worship and shrines of a religious and cultural nature.

62. The State's official religion is Islam and most of its legislative enactments, and particularly those regulating the social life of citizens, are derived therefrom. The teachings of the Islamic religion do not permit a Muslim to convert to another religion.

63. With regard to followers of other faiths, the secretariat of the Council of Ministers has been approached on the question of whether minors from minorities have the right, after converting to Islam, to revert to their former religion on attaining the age of majority. The secretariat's reply was based on the opinions of the State Consultative Council and other competent bodies which referred to previous decisions stipulating that minors were entitled to apply to a court, within the legally specified time limit, if they wished to change their religion since that did not constitute an offence of apostasy for which they could be punished. The Iraqi Government is following up this matter which requires legislative intervention in order to ensure that

members of religious minorities enjoy all their rights and are able to practise their religious observances in a natural manner in the same way as other sections of Iraqi society.

64. Act No. 105 of 1970 concerning the Baha'i faith stipulates, inter alia, that: "No one is permitted to propagate the Baha'i faith or belong to any of its congregations. Dissemination of its books and culture is prohibited and all its lodges must be closed". The ban on the recording of that faith in official documents that was imposed in decrees and directives issued by the Ministry of the Interior under the former regime remains in force. Although followers of the Baha'i faith, hoping to benefit from the positive developments and the new democratic environment, have made repeated requests for the repeal of those directives so that their faith can be recorded in official documents, the situation has not changed and those directives are still being applied even though Baha'is are entitled to the same rights as other Iraqis.

65. Article 372 of the Criminal Code promulgated in Act No. 111 of 1969 prescribed a penalty of up to three years' detention or a fine not exceeding 300 dinars for anyone who attacked a religious faith or its symbols or publicly mocked its rites with a view to bringing them into disrepute. Under subsequent amendments made to that article in 1995 and 2010, the fine was increased to a minimum of 1 million and a maximum of 10 million dinars.

Freedom of expression and peaceful assembly and freedom of Association (arts. 19, 21 and 22)

66. Paragraph 21 of the list of issues: Journalists and media workers in Iraq have made tremendous sacrifices, equalling those made by civilians and military personnel, and have been subjected to terrorist acts targeting them directly during their discharge of their duty to document and publicize the crimes committed by *Da'ish* [ISIL] terrorist groups and make international public opinion more aware of their barbarity. The current Iraqi Government is making notable endeavours to support the work of the press and information media and ensure respect for freedom of opinion and expression so that the true state of affairs can be made known. All the legal proceedings that had been brought against journalists and certain media institutions were dropped by order of the Prime Minister and a statement issued by the Government in that connection indicated that the said order reflected the Prime Minister's desire to promote freedom of expression and his hope that the media would play a major role in the country's development. The statement called upon media and press institutions to act in a responsible manner and make an effective contribution to the development of national institutions, which was one of the current Iraqi Government's objectives. The President of the Journalists' Union welcomed that order, which he regarded as conducive to the creation of a safe environment for journalists in Iraq.

67. In this connection, we also wish to refer to the promulgation of the Rights of Journalists Act No. 21 of 2011 the aim of which was to ensure respect for freedom of the press and expression, safeguard the rights of Iraqi journalists and their heirs and highlight their important role in consolidating democracy in the new Iraq.

68. The Iraqi Media Network Act promulgated in 2015 was likewise designed to promote a free and independent media characterized by professionalism, impartiality and transparency to serve the interests of the Iraqi people as a platform for freedom of opinion and expression. However, persons working in this field have not been immune from attack by *Da'ish* and other associated terrorist groups and have even been attacked and harassed by governmental and other unknown bodies seeking to muzzle and obscure the true state of affairs and impose their hegemony through threats and intimidation. In 2014, the Iraqi Journalists' Union reported the murders of 14 journalists and 23 incidents involving attempted assassinations, arrests, raids on their

workplaces and attacks on their homes with a view to deterring them from exercising their profession. A total of 406 journalists were killed during the period from 9 April 2003 to 2014. The following table gives details of the journalists who fell victim to acts of terrorism in 2014.

| | <i>Name</i> | <i>Place of death</i> | <i>Cause of death</i> | <i>Date of death</i> | <i>Place of work</i> |
|-----|-------------------------|-------------------------------|---|----------------------|---|
| 1. | Firas Muhammad Attiya | Al-Anbar/Ramadi | Killed while covering the battle to the east of Ramadi | 20/1/2014 | Correspondent for the <i>Fallujah</i> satellite channel |
| 2. | Thamer Mani' Muhammad | Baghdad | Explosive device | 13/2/2014 | Freelance journalist |
| 3. | Muthanna Abdul Muhsin | Babil/Hillah | Car bomb | 9/3/2014 | Photographer for the <i>Al-Iraqiyah</i> channel |
| 4. | Khalid Abed Thamer | Babil/Hillah | Car bomb | 9/3/2014 | Assistant photographer for the <i>Al-Iraqiyah</i> channel |
| 5. | Dr. Muhammad Badeiwi | Al-Jadiriya | Shot by a <i>Peshmerga</i> army | 22/3/2014 | Director of the <i>Free Iraq</i> radio station |
| 6. | Wathiq al-Ghadanfari | Ninawa/Mosul | Armed assault east of Mosul | 27/3/2014 | <i>Al-Mawsiliya</i> satellite channel presenter and provincial media director |
| 7. | Humam Muhammad | Al-Anbar/Ramadi | Mortar shell fell on his house | 9/4/2014 | Correspondent for the <i>Taghyeer</i> satellite channel |
| 8. | Khalid Ali | Baghdad/north of Al-Khalis | Armed assault | 15/6/2014 | Photographer for the <i>Al-Ahd</i> channel |
| 9. | Mu'tazz Jameel | Baghdad/north of Al-Khalis | Armed assault | 15/6/2014 | Photographer for the <i>Al-Ahd</i> channel |
| 10. | Fatima Umar Abdul Karim | Baghdad | Explosive device | 22/9/2014 | Member of the Journalists' Union |
| 11. | Ali Ghazay al-Miyahi | New Baghdad | Explosive device | 10/9/2014 | Member of the Journalists' Union and editorial secretary of the <i>Qutoof</i> newspaper |
| 12. | Raad al-Ghazawi | Salah ad-Din/Al-Alam district | Abducted by <i>Da'ish</i> terrorist groups. His corpse was found one month later. | 10/10/2014 | Freelance journalist |
| 13. | Ammar Amer Latoufi | Al-Anbar/Ramadi | Killed by IED while accompanying the Al-Anbar police | 12/10/2014 | Photographer for the <i>Al-Anbar</i> satellite channel |

| Name | Place of death | Cause of death | Date of death | Place of work |
|----------------|-------------------------|--|---------------|----------------------|
| | | chief Major General Saddak Al-Dulaimi | | |
| 14. Ali Rasham | Babil/ Jurf al-Sakhr | Killed while covering the battles at Jurf al-Sakhr | 15/11/2014 | Freelance journalist |

69. The details of the incidents involving attacks on journalists are as follows:

- On 4 January 2014, Khalid al-Qarghouli, a correspondent for the *Al-Zaman* newspaper in the Al-Anbar governorate, was injured when a mortar shell fell on his house in the town of Ramadi. The house suffered extensive damage as a result of the explosion;
- On 12 January 2014, Salah Nazzal, a correspondent for the *Al-Mawsiliya* channel, and his driver were injured when a magnetic explosive device stuck to their vehicle detonated while they were covering a media event in the city of Mosul;
- On 13 January 2014, Seif Talal, a correspondent for the *Al-Sharqiya News* channel in the governorate of Diyala, was wounded by gunfire from unknown assailants while he was driving his private vehicle north-west of Baqubah;
- On 20 January 2014, Muayyad Ibrahim, a correspondent for the *Al-Anbar* channel, and Abdul Rahman Muhammad Attiya, a correspondent for the *Fallujah* channel, were injured while filming the incident in which Firas Muhammad Attiya, a correspondent for the *Fallujah* channel, was killed in the city of Fallujah;
- On 17 March 2014, Osama al-Nujaifi, the former Speaker of the Iraqi Parliament, prevented staff of the *Al-Iraqiya* channel from covering parliamentary activities after accusing the channel of being biased in its media coverage;
- On 23 March 2014, Raji Hamdallah, an editor in the office of the Iraqi Media Network in Babil, was wounded by gunfire from unknown assailants while travelling to his workplace in the town of Hillah. He was taken to hospital in a serious condition;
- On 10 April 2014, Ammar Dahham al-Alwani, director of the *Sawt al-Anbar* radio station, was arrested while preparing a radio programme denouncing the practices of some provincial officials who had misappropriated public funds;
- On 16 April 2014, Hussein Ghani, a staff member of the *Al-Fayhaa* channel's office in Basra, was detained for passing in front of the home of the Basra police chief without carrying an identity card;
- On 17 April 2014, Ammar al-Alwani, director of the *Sawt al-Anbar al-Hurr* radio station, was arrested by a provincial security unit while preparing a radio programme denouncing the practices of some provincial officials who had misappropriated public funds;
- On 27 April 2014, two photographers for the *Al-Sharqiya News* channel escaped attempted assassination by an explosive device to the east of Mosul;
- On 28 April 2014, six journalists were injured when an explosive device detonated under the vehicle in which they were travelling to the north of the city of Mosul to cover the parliamentary elections there;

- On 25 May 2014, Haidar al-Mansouri, head of the Basra office of the Journalists' Union, and his son were assaulted by a police unit. His son was detained for several hours without any reason being given;
- On 23 May 2014, unknown armed assailants forced their way into the office of the *Al-Baghdadiya* channel in Samawa, inflicted several knife wounds on its correspondent Husam al-Aqouli, wrecked the office's contents and stole its cameras;
- On 3 June 2014, the Basra police arrested Haidar al-Hilfi, a correspondent for the *Al-Baghdadiya* channel, and his brother, one of the channel's photographers, on the pretext that the channel was not licensed to operate;
- On 6 July 2015, the director of the photography section of the *Diyala* satellite channel escaped attempted assassination by three unknown armed men who attacked his home in the town of Baqubah. He wounded one of them in the exchange of fire;
- On 14 July 2014, Maytham al-Shibani, a correspondent for the *Alhurra* channel, and the channel's photographer Maytham al-Khafaji were wounded by gunfire while covering the battles to liberate Jurf al-Sakhr in the governorate of Babil and, on the same day, *Da'ish* terrorist groups blew up the house in which several journalists were living in the town of Tikrit after accusing the journalists of not being loyal to that terrorist organization;
- On 25 August 2014, a hand grenade thrown at the office of the *Al-Fayhaa* channel in the city of Basra caused material damage but no casualties;
- On 29 August 2014, the Babil police released Isa al-Atwani, a photographer for the *Al-Sumeriya* channel, and the channel's correspondent Sarmad Bilaibil several hours after arresting them for filming the petrol shortage at a filling station;
- On 2 September 2014, an explosive device detonated near the house of the *Alhurra* channel's correspondent Maytham al-Shibani in Diwaniyah caused damage to the house without injuring him;
- On 15 November 2014, the *Al-Iraqiya* channel's correspondent Haidar Shakour was wounded while covering the battles at Baiji;
- On 22 December 2014, Selim al-Khlifawi, editor-in-chief of the *Akad* news agency, was released five months after being arrested at Karbala while covering the armed clashes between the security forces and followers of the cleric Mahmoud al-Sarkhi near Karbala University on 2 July of that year;
- On 26 December 2014, the *Al-Iraqiya* channel's presenter Ali Muftan and its correspondent Ali Jawad were wounded while covering the battles to the south of Samarra and were taken by helicopter to a hospital in Baghdad.

70. Paragraph 22 of the list of issues: Judicial investigations carried out in connection with the incidents that took place in Hawijah are currently being considered by the investigative chamber of the Central Criminal Court, which is the body competent to decide, in the light of the findings of the investigation, whether the persons responsible for those incidents should be prosecuted.

Protection of children (art. 24)

71. Paragraph 23 of the list of issues: National measures have been taken to ensure that every child is registered immediately after birth. According to the results of the multiple indicator cluster survey, 99 per cent of the births in Iraq in 2011 were registered.

72. With regard to other rights of the child, the Iraqi Nationality Act No. 26 of 2006, as amended, stipulates that, at birth, every child is entitled to a nationality. The Act also addresses the issue of children who are stateless or of unknown parentage and the Iraqi Government has formed a national committee, consisting of representatives of the Ministries of Justice, the Interior, Health, Labour and Human Rights, the Supreme Council of the Judiciary, the Baghdad Provincial Council, the Iraqi Media Network and the Bar Association, to settle exceptional cases of children lacking an identity, usually because of problems relating to proof of marriage.

73. The citizens' affairs department of the secretariat of the Council of Ministers, in collaboration with a number of ministries, is implementing a large-scale project, known as the "legal consulting rooms", to provide legal support for those unregistered cases.

74. With regard to the reports concerning the enlistment of children, it should be noted that Iraq is a party to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict and submitted its report thereon to the Committee on the Rights of the Child in Geneva in January, 2015.

75. In this connection, we wish to point out that, although voluntary enlistment is permitted on attainment of the age of 18 years, volunteers are required to submit documentary proof of their age before their applications are accepted. Article 30 of the Military Service and Pensions Act No. 3 of 2010 stipulates that voluntary military service under contract is open to persons between 18 and 25 years of age wishing to serve in technical grades and persons over 18 but under 30 years of age wishing to serve in other grades. Volunteers under 18 years of age are not admitted to the military schools.

76. Article 66 of the Military Code of Justice (Act No. 19 of 2007) stipulates that anyone who draws up or presents a false report, statement or official document concerning service or a post, or forwards it to a person of higher rank while knowing it to be false, is liable to a penalty of imprisonment. Accordingly, falsification of a child's documents for the purpose of his enlistment constitutes a punishable offence under the provisions of that article.

77. Article 13, paragraph 2 (z), of Act No. 10 of 2005 establishing the Iraqi Supreme Criminal Tribunal further stipulates that conscripting or enlisting children under 15 years of age in the national armed forces, or using them to participate actively in hostilities, constitutes a war crime. Under paragraph 4 (g) of the same article, conscripting or enlisting children under 15 years of age into armed forces or groups or using them to participate actively in hostilities constitutes a serious violation of the laws and customs of war applicable in armed conflict not of an international nature and likewise amounts to a war crime.

78. Iraq is making every endeavour to fulfil its moral and legal obligation under the provisions of international treaties to protect the lives and future of children by shielding them to the greatest possible extent from armed conflict and all acts of violence. Unfortunately, as a result of the ferocious terrorist onslaught and its impact on the socio-economic situation in Iraq, some transitory practices and phenomena have inevitably appeared in the social fabric and children have obviously not been immune thereto. However, we believe that these transitory practices and phenomena will soon disappear and we wish to emphasize that the Iraqi legislation in force provides due protection for children while the terrorist groups are being confronted.

79. A generation growing up in a terrorist environment is not solely an Iraqi problem; it is a matter of regional and global concern. The presence of children in Mosul, Ramadi and Diyala is disturbing in view of their potential recruitment into the battalions known as *Fityan al-Islam* (Young Heroes of Islam) which *Da'ish* terrorist

groups have formed and are training to use weapons, kill and plant explosive devices. These new battalions are modelled on the “Birds of Paradise” units which the *Al-Qaida* organization formed in 2007 to train young boys to kill so that they could be used to carry out suicide attacks.

80. *Da'ish* terrorist groups have committed an unimaginable variety of criminal acts of sabotage and attempts to extend their influence at gunpoint. Most recently, these cowardly groups have attacked civilians, raped a large number of women and young girls and recruited hundreds of children for homicide and suicide operations. They have also imposed a different lifestyle insofar as women and young girls have been subjected to a specific dress code and prohibited from leaving their homes, hairdressing salons and sports halls have been closed, places of worship, shrines and mausoleums have been demolished and individuals, including children, have been sentenced to flogging, torture and death for smoking.

81. The Iraqi Government is diligently monitoring the latest developments and gathering information, data and statistics on the recruitment of children and the consequences of their exploitation. The Department of Children's Rights, which is preparing a comprehensive study on the dangerous effect of acts of terrorism on the child's personality, participated in the international conference that was held under the slogan “Let's protect children from *Da'ish* terrorism” to put an end to the recruitment of children by *Da'ish*. We are also in favour of calling upon the international community and the bodies concerned to take the following action:

1. Request the United Nations to adopt a resolution designating the child recruitment operations in which *Da'ish* terrorist groups have engaged in Iraq as acts of genocide and crimes against humanity;
2. Request Parliament to expedite the promulgation of the Iraqi Child Protection Act;
3. Urge the international community to take a stand against extremism in keeping with the humanitarian view of the manner in which others should be treated;
4. Urge educational, religious and tribal institutions and civil society organizations to adopt an educative and awareness-raising initiative within the framework of harmonious coexistence and promotion of the values of peace and fraternity in order to counter extremism.

Right to participate in public life and rights of minorities (arts. 25 and 27)

82. Paragraph 24 of the list of issues: Although a bill of law on the protection of minorities was introduced during the last parliamentary session, its adoption has so far been delayed by a number of proposals made by members of minorities during its discussion. The bill was designed to achieve the following objectives:

- Regulate the exercise of the political, administrative, cultural and educational rights of all sections of the Iraqi people;
- Ensure equality among all sections of the Iraqi people;
- Promote a spirit of mutual understanding, tolerance and solidarity and ensure that the rights of minorities and the rule of law are respected and put into practice;
- Prohibit any activity intended or likely to lead to the persecution, marginalization or merging of any minority in a majority community;

- Provide guarantees of individual rights, including rights in respect of worship, language, culture, education, employment opportunities and political participation.

83. The Iraqi Constitution guarantees participation by members of minorities in the political process in the same way as other sections of society. In fact, it grants them special privileges insofar as they are assigned quotas that are separate from those of other coalitions and political parties and their proportional representation in provincial and district councils was increased in 2013. Many members of minorities are also serving in the security, police and military forces protecting the areas in which they live.

84. With regard to measures taken to prevent attacks on members of minorities, the Government documents violations to which citizens, and particularly minorities, are subjected so that compensation can be paid in respect of the damage suffered and so that the criminals who attack, displace or kill families and children and blow up homes and places of worship can be brought to account. Protection brigades consisting of members of minorities have been formed to help to safeguard areas in which they constitute a majority.

85. With regard to the conduct of a population census, the Ministry of Planning conducted regular general censuses from 1927 to 1997. Although the Central Statistical Organization in the Ministry of Planning made attempts to conduct a general population census in 2004, this was precluded by the security and political situation. In 2006, the Ministry of Planning made a further attempt to conduct the census in 2007 but this was postponed until 2009 on the recommendations of the State Advisory Board on the Iraqi Census for technical reasons such as the unstable provincial security situation and the lack of unanimity in political decision-making. As an alternative, a general census of buildings, housing, facilities and households (listing and enumeration) was held in 2010 under extremely difficult conditions due to the security risks and technical and organizational challenges. The census provided a set of demographic, socioeconomic and educational data as well as information on ancillary activities such as financial and insurance services, etc. Data on the composition of the population could not be obtained for the above-mentioned reasons.

86. Paragraph 25 of the list of issues: The Government has taken the following measures to deal with attacks on members of minorities in the areas under its control:

1. Documentation of violations to which citizens, and particularly minorities, are subjected so that compensation can be paid in respect of the damage suffered and so that the perpetrators can be brought to account. The documented cases included around 2,000 acts of homicide, the displacement of 2.5 million persons, the abduction of around 5,000 individuals, more than 280 cases of rape and the demolition of around 140 places of worship;

2. On 20 November 2014, the Council of Ministers decided to designate violations to which constituent elements of the Iraqi people (Yazidis, Turkmen, Christians, Shabak, Feyli Kurds and others) have been subjected at the hands of *Da'ish* terrorist groups as acts of genocide, with all the rights that this entails;

3. The Government agreed to form protection brigades consisting of persons from the areas occupied by *Da'ish* terrorist groups in order to provide logistic and any other forms of support required to help government forces to liberate those areas;

4. As soon as those areas have been liberated, programmes will be prepared to rehabilitate families, and especially women, who have been subjected to acts of violence;

5. The Women's Welfare Department in the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs has agreed to include Yazidi female victims of sexual violence who have been freed from *Da'ish* terrorist groups among the categories entitled to claim social protection network benefits. The Ministry's next step will be to extend this measure to Yazidi divorcees and widows and restrict the registration of applications for social protection benefits to displaced persons;

6. A civil registry office has been opened in Shaikhan for persons from the governorate of Ninawa in order to facilitate the procedures for the replacement of lost documents;

7. Yazidi volunteers are admitted as cadets in the Police Academy;

8. In collaboration with the Ninawa Provincial Council and the Arbil Passport Directorate, an office has been opened in the administrative centre of the Shaikhan district to issue passports and certificates of Iraqi nationality to rescued Yazidi women so that they will not need to travel to Baghdad for this purpose;

9. Numerous urban areas in northern Iraq have fallen under the control of *Da'ish* terrorist groups and many citizens, and especially members of minorities, have suffered as a result since the minorities are concentrated in those areas. United Nations teams, in collaboration with the Iraqi Government and the Kurdistan Regional Government, are endeavouring to provide emergency assistance by air or other available supply routes in addition to the humanitarian assistance that international and local civil society organizations are providing for migrants and displaced persons.

Dissemination of information relating to the Covenant (art. 2)

87. Paragraph 26 of the list of issues: In this regard, the National Centre for Human Rights in the Ministry of Human Rights is implementing a programme to raise awareness of human rights in general and make all governmental sectors and institutions, as well as civil society organizations, more familiar with human rights instruments. A special programme to disseminate information on human rights, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, is broadcast on the State's official television channel and the National Centre for Human Rights also organizes awareness-raising symposiums and conferences for the same purpose.

88. This report was prepared by a multisectoral committee chaired by the Minister for Human Rights and including representatives of the other ministries and institutions concerned. The first draft of the report was posted on the website of the Ministry of Human Rights and its posting was announced in several newspapers so that comments thereon could be received from competent academics, activists and civil society organizations. A number of civil society organizations and other persons concerned were also invited to attend a symposium held for the purpose of hearing their views and observations on the draft report, the preparation of which coincided with another national initiative consisting in the formulation of a national plan for human rights in which civil and political rights featured prominently.