

UNAMI FOCUS

Voice of the Mission



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SRSR Activities

The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq (SRSR) Ashraf Qazi met Iraqi Foreign Minister Hoshiyar Zebari immediately before Zebari left for a regional tour in preparation for the Sharm al-Sheikh meetings, which took place from 2 to 4 May 2007. He also met with the Minister of Human Rights Ms Wijdan Mikha'il and discussed with her the 10th UNAMI Human Rights report. SRSR Qazi discussed the selection process for the new Independent High Election Commission (IHEC) commissioners with Deputy Speaker Khalid Attiyya. He received Council of Representatives member Maysoun Al-Damluji concerning proposed constitutional amendments by Al-Iraqiya Bloc and women's NGOs. He held discussions with President Talabani's Chief of Staff, Mr Kamran Karadawi and Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) President Massoud Barzani's senior adviser Mr. Rowsch Shaways on the current political situation and the implementation of article 140 in particular. SRSR Qazi participated by videoconference in the Secretary General's Iraq Policy Group's meeting and held teleconference with the Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, Under-Secretary-General Lynn Pascoe, Chef de Cabinet Vijay Nambiar and Special Adviser to SG Ibrahim Gambari on preparations for the forthcoming International Compact launch in Sharm Al-Sheikh on 3 May 2007.

SRSR Qazi and Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq (DSRSR) Jean-Marie Fakhouri attended the UNHCR conference "Addressing the Humanitarian Needs of Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons inside Iraq and in Neighbouring Countries" held in Geneva 17-18 April 2007. In Geneva, he held discussions with the Iraqi Foreign Minister, Head of the Iraqi Red Crescent, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights as well as US State Department officials and NGOs. On return to Baghdad, he met with Vice-President Tariq Al-Hashemi, Deputy Prime Minister Barham Saleh, Planning Minister Ali Baban and Dr. Ayad Samarai, head of the Constitutional Review's political committee. On 10 April, SRSR met with Hachem



The SG's Special Adviser Mr. Ibrahim Gambari and SRSR Ashraf Qazi, Baghdad- 5 April 2007

Al Hassani, member of the Baghdad Security Plan political committee to discuss the progress of the plan, political outreach, the government's legislative agenda and concerns over Kirkuk.

On 11 April he met two members of Al-Tawafuk bloc who presented a report on conditions in Camp Bucca detention facility and requested UN assistance in seeking an urgent revision in Multinational Forces in Iraq (MNF-I) and Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) detention policies.

SRSR hosted the visit of the Secretary-General's Special Adviser Mr. Ibrahim Gambari from 5 to 8 April and accompanied him in discussions with the President Jalal Talabani, Prime Minister Nouri Al-Maliki, both Vice-Presidents Tariq Al-Hashemi and Adel Abdel Mahdi, Deputy Prime Minister Barham Saleh, Planning Minister Ali Baban, Government Spokesman Ali Dabbagh and meetings with senior members of the diplomatic community. The visit culminated in a briefing for the international community at the Prime Minister's residence with the announcement of the launch meeting for the International Compact with Iraq at Shaam Al-Sheikh, Egypt on 3 May. In addition, SRSR had separate meetings with United Iraqi Alliance (UIA) leader Abdul Aziz Hakim and National Security Adviser Muafak Al-Rubaie in his capacity as Acting Prime Minister. He held discussions with newly arrived US Ambassador Ryan Crocker and attended a joint meeting with the Italian Ambassador Melani (Italy Co-Chair), EU and World Bank representatives to discuss the establishment of secretariat for IRFFI and the Compact.

UNAMI 10th Report on Human Rights in Iraq

UNAMI issued its 10 report on human rights situation in Iraq on 25 April, 2007. The report, which was launched in a press conference held at the mission's headquarters in Baghdad, covers the period from 1 January to 31 March 2007. Large-scale indiscriminate killings and targeted assassinations continue to impede efforts to bring lasting stability and security to Iraq, according to the report.

The report expresses UNAMI's concerns over rampant violations of human rights standards by insurgency and various armed groups, and recognizes that these crimes have targeted civilians, law enforcement personnel and government employees. In such an enormously challenging environment, the Iraqi Government has repeatedly reaffirmed its commitment to protect human rights in line with its international and national obligations. Despite progress cited in the report, it also notes frequent failures of the Iraqi rule of law institutions to protect the life and dignity of all Iraqis in a manner that conforms to the international humanitarian and human rights laws.

These incidents are highlighted in order to help the Iraqi authorities at all levels identify areas where further efforts must

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be made and where the United Nations and international community remain ready to assist the Iraqi Government. The protection and promotion of human rights for all Iraqis must be the foundation of the Government's national reconciliation efforts.

Unlike previous reports, the new UNAMI Quarterly Human Rights report does not contain official statistics of violent deaths regularly gathered by the Ministry of Health and the Medico-Legal Institute in Baghdad. This is because the Iraqi Government decided not to make such data available to UNAMI. This is a matter of regret because UNAMI reports have been regarded as a credible source of information regarding developments in the human rights situation in Iraq. UNAMI will continue to speak with the Iraqi authorities and urge them to provide the necessary information, collected by the Ministry of Health and the Medico-Legal Institute.

With regard to the ongoing Baghdad Security Plan (BSP), the report states, "The challenges facing the Government of Iraq are not limited to addressing the level of violence in the country, but also the longer term maintenance of stability and security in an environment characterized by impunity, a breakdown in law and order." UNAMI is concerned that large numbers of Iraqis, among them professional groups and law enforcement personnel, continued to experience intimidation and killings. It also notes continued political interference in the affairs of the judiciary, a matter in need of urgent attention.

The Report describes the deterioration of the freedom of expression affecting, media and media workers, religious and ethnic minorities, professional-groups including academics who are continuously targeted by religious extremists and armed groups in all areas of Iraq. It outlines the key human rights concerns relating to detention and internment, lack of judicial oversight and treatment of detainees and prisoners and expresses UNAMI's concern over the apparent lack of judicial guarantees in the handling of suspects arrested in the context of the BSP.

On displacements the report states, "According to figures from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), an estimated 736,422 persons were forced to flee their homes due to sectarian violence and military operations since the bombing of the Al-Askari Shrine in Samarra' on 22 February 2006. Of these, more than 200,000 were displaced since December 2006. Together with 1.2 million IDPs displaced prior to 22 February 2006, they are in need of continuous assistance, including shelter and improved access to the Public Distribution System (PDS)."

Political Update

The Prime Minister Nouri Al-Maliki made a regional tour, which included visits to Egypt, Kuwait and Oman. On 22 April, he held official talks the President of Egypt Mohammed Hosni Mubarak and Prime Minister Ahmed Nazif. At the meeting with Amre Mousa, the Secretary General of the League of Arab States, Al-Maliki emphasised the need of a broader Arab engagement with Iraq. Preparations for a ministerial meeting on Iraq in Sharm Al-Sheikh on 3-4 May along the bilateral relations were discussed during this tour. During the same week, Foreign Minister Zebari visited Turkey, Syria and Iran in preparation the Sharm Al-Sheikh meeting.

The US Secretary of Defence Robert Gates visited Iraq during the week and after meeting with the Prime Minister Al-Maliki on 20 April, announced that the US military commitment to Iraq was not open-ended and that he encouraged Al-Maliki "to reach out" to the Arab Sunnis community. The Prime Minister of Iraq from his side confirmed commitments to continuation of national dialogue and reconciliation efforts. The US Secretary of Defence had also a meeting with members of the Iraq Presidency Council and the Iraqi Minister of Defence.

There were news reports that Al-Maliki would make changes in his cabinet after returning to Iraq from his regional tour. 'Al-Iraqiya' bloc has presented three potential candidates for the Minister of Justice in replacement of Hashem Al-Shibli, who resigned on 30 March 2007. The Fadhila Party, which withdrew its 15 MP's from the UIA bloc at the Council of Representatives last month, announced that it would be ready to join Al-Maliki's government and that the mid of April resignation of six Sadrist ministers had opened way for cabinet restructuring based on professional criteria and not party or confessional quotas. 'Al-Tawafuq', the Arab Sunni parliamentary bloc, repeatedly asked to replace the Defence Minister Abdul-Qadir Al-Ubaydi and reportedly had some candidates.

On 21 April, Sadr movement MP's rejected amending the existing De-Baathification legislation and criticised the government's draft of the new 'Accountability and Justice Law' as "an attempt of a constitutional coup" aimed at bringing Baathists back into the political process. The draft was also criticised by Ahmed Al-Chalabi, the De-Baathification Committee Chairman.

The Grand Ayatollah Ali Al-Sistani received in the third week of April a group of Sunni clerics, who represented different Arab and Kurdish congregations of Iraq. At this meeting the Grand Ayatollah reportedly declared that the killing of Shias or Sunnis is forbidden in Islam and called on Iraqis to avoid sectarian and ethnic conflicts. Sadr-ad-

Din Al-Qubanj, Imam of the main Najaf mosque and Al-Sistani's representative, called in his Friday sermon on 19 April for setting a timetable for the MNF-I withdrawal. Another prominent Shia cleric, Sheikh Abdul Mahdi Al-Karbalae, who represents the Grand Ayatollah in Karbala, urged Iraqis to support the security operation despite the bombing and suicide attacks.

On 19 April, the Al-Qa'eda affiliated "Islamic Emirate of Iraq" announced its "cabinet" for its self-proclaimed state. As reported, the ten ministers will "serve" under the leadership of Abu Omar Al-Baghdadi. Notably, "the cabinet" includes Abu Ayyub Al-Masri, the leader of Al-Qa'eda in Iraq, as "the minister of war".

Tribal sheikhs and religious leaders of Anbar Governorate convened a conference on 22 April, where they pledged to consolidate their efforts in fighting Al-Qa'eda in Iraq and called their tribesmen to join Iraqi security forces.

From 21 to 22 April, Iraqi politicians from all major political blocs voiced their protests against the construction of security barriers around mainly Arab Sunni districts of Adhamiya and Dura in Baghdad. The Prime Minister Al-Maliki, while in Egypt, said that he was not properly informed about this project and ordered a halt to construction works. On 23 April, U.S. Ambassador to Iraq Ryan Crocker said that the MNF-I "will respect the wishes" of the Iraqi government regarding the barrier.

In the last week of April, Masoud Barzani, President of the Iraqi Kurdistan Region made a European tour that took him to Italy, France and Belgium where he held talks with senior officials in the said countries.

Constitutional Support Newsflash

The Constitutional Review Committee of the Council of Representatives entered the final phase of its deliberations prior to the 15 May deadline for submission of its recommendations. During the second week of May, the Committee has largely met in a small subgroup consisting of four members representing the four principal political constituencies. The Committee's intent was to deliver its submissions on 15 May, although the recommendations might not reach the Council of Representatives (COR) until 22 May as the result of a week-long parliamentary recess. While a consensus-based agreement on amendments to some technical aspects of the constitution has appeared likely, it is less clear whether the Committee will reach consensus on the core substantive issues, including the distribution of powers and the sharing of oil wealth, prior to its deadline.

Parliament may decide to grant the Committee additional time to achieve consensus in these areas, but at time of writing a decision has not yet been reached by the Speaker and his Deputies on this issue. The Office of Constitutional Support (OCS) has presented its final commentaries and responses on the Committee's textual proposals and has continued to meet with key members of the Committee and with the international community to elaborate on its advice. Meetings have included a joint discussion with the Chair and Vice Chairs of the Committee and, separately, a meeting with COR Deputy Speaker Sheikh Khaled Attiyah. OCS has received high-level indications that, in addition to welcoming support from OCS on technical aspects of the constitutional Review process, there is welcomed support for an ongoing role to provide technical submissions on parallel legislative developments that have constitutional dimensions. These include the draft Governorates Law, the draft Debaathification Law and the draft hydrocarbon law.

Human Rights News

Widespread and systematic human rights violations continued to be perpetrated in many areas of Iraq, including the killing of civilians. While incident and casualty figures vary from week to week, no trend towards a significant improvement is emerging. During the second week of May, two mass kidnappings were recorded. On 8 May, 30 Iraqi civilians were abducted from a main road in Baquba at an allegedly fake checkpoint. Earlier, on 7 May, nine policemen were abducted in Diyala governorate. Three days later, the "Islamic State of Iraq" circulated a video allegedly showing the murder of the men via the internet.

After a decrease in late April, the number of unidentified bodies rose again during the first half of May. Large numbers of bodies were found in Baghdad's Rashid district. The Human Rights Office (HRO) is investigating this.

Attacks on professionals working in the media and education sector continued. According to information received by HRO, there were incidents involving the assassinations of Iraqi journalists in Kirkuk on 6 and 9 May. Those journalists executed in the latter incident also appear to have been tortured as well. On 7 May, gunmen stormed a school in Khalis and executed two teachers, reportedly in front of the schoolchildren. On the same day, unknown gunmen shot and killed Sabah Al-Tai, the Associate Dean of the Basic Education College, and wounded his colleague professor Abdul Aziz Dakhil on a highway north of Baghdad. The body of Bassem Jarad, a professor at Basra University, was found on 8 May following his kidnapping a day earlier. In another incident, Saad Muhammad, a professor at the University for Islamic Studies, was killed on

11 May along with his brother.

UNAMI HRO in Baghdad interviewed members of the Christian minority expelled from Al-Dora neighborhood in Baghdad, who stated they were being systematically subjected to intimidation, extortion, kidnappings and killings. Between 16 April and 10 May, 101 families sought shelter in one church in Baghdad alone. Many of these displaced persons are in urgent need of humanitarian assistance since they are unable to return to their homes.

On 10 May, MNF-I Commanding General David Petraeus issued a letter condemning torture and abuse by MNF-I soldiers as illegal, immoral and ineffective. He ordered his troops to "treat noncombatants and detainees with dignity and respect" and to report illegal conduct. The letter followed the release of a US Army mental health advisory survey in which a third of all soldiers stated their belief that torture was an acceptable under extreme circumstances. HRO welcomes General Petraeus' message, but remains gravely concerned about continuing reports of incidents involving the killing of civilians during military operations conducted by MNF-I forces.

HRO Erbil has compiled an extensive case file on the public murder of a Yezidi woman. Earlier reports placed the victim's age at 20, but subsequent information received indicated that she 17 years old, making her legally a child. As of 9 May, 26 people suspected of involvement in her killing had been identified, at least six of whom were under arrest. In an incident that may have been another revenge killing sparked by the original crime, two Yezidi civilians were murdered by gunmen in Mosul on 9 May.

HRO continued to monitor administrative detention cases. On 8 May, HRO visited the Erbil Asayish (General Security) detention facility to discuss administrative detention processes with the Director. HRO was granted full access to the facility and to interview detainees on their legal status and conditions of detention. HRO interviewed detainees including those convicted and sentenced to either life imprisonment or the death penalty.

Humanitarian, Reconstruction & Development Activities

The humanitarian crises in Iraq continues to escalate with the number of IDPs reported to have increased to nearly 800,000 (170,000 in the North), and increasing reports of problems with access to vulnerable areas where the provision of basic services is deteriorating (e.g Sinjar in the North, North Diyala, Baghdad, etc.). UNAMI continues to liaise with the authorities, civil society representatives and other stakeholders throughout the northern governorates to try to mitigate the humanitarian problems and work within the parameters of the Strategic

Framework to devise methodologies for better access to remote or vulnerable areas for the United Nations Country Team (UNCT).

DSRSG Fakhouri returned from the global conference of UN Humanitarian/Resident Coordinators in Geneva, where he took the opportunity to have consultations with the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC) and others on how to move the Strategic Framework for Humanitarian Action in Iraq forward. An Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) team arrived to finalise the protection and advocacy strategies and to facilitate the two workshops held on 15 to 16 May. The first two members of the longer-term OCHA Surge Team arrived on 18 May and will be responsible for moving the consultations forward as well as finalizing their own operational plan.

The first week of May saw the UNAMI Humanitarian, Reconstruction and Development (HRD) team's successful support to the International Compact meeting held on 3 May in Sharm Al-Sheikh. The UNAMI advance team provided support to the New York and Baghdad delegations from the UN, as well as secretariat support to all delegations. The meeting resulted in the adoption of the International Compact with Iraq (ICI) and affirmation by a number of delegations of their intentions to offer debt relief and/or funds within the context of their support to Iraq and the Compact.

The Deputy Humanitarian and Reconstruction Coordinator participated in the IRFFI Facility Coordination Committee (FCC) meeting held on 11 May in Rome, Italy. The meeting was a follow up of the IRFFI Donor Committee's meeting in Istanbul and was co-chaired by Italy and the Government of Iraq, represented by the Deputy Minister of Planning. The outcome of the meeting was the finalisation of the Terms of Reference for a consultancy aimed at evaluating the roles and responsibilities of the various components of the IRFFI organisational structure, reviewing and examination of the present processes for identification and approval of projects and, based on some best practices in the management of trust funds, propose changes to IRFFI for consideration. At the meeting it was also agreed to establish a Secretariat in Baghdad that will be manned by two staff funded by the Iraq and Italy respectively.

In order to better reflect significant events that have transpired both on humanitarian and reconstruction/development issues since January 2007, the Head of HPSO convened a meeting of UNCT reporting officers to revitalize the monthly updates. In order to create the background for the UN's support to both humanitarian issues and ICI and other development-oriented activities, it was deemed opportune to provide updates covering the first trimester of 2007. The Humanitarian Update will reflect the process undertaken by the UN and its partners to

develop the Strategic Framework for Humanitarian Action in Iraq, as well as activities that have been ongoing. The Reconstruction and Development Update will highlight the ICI process and the support activities undertaken by the UN.

Electoral Update

During the second week of May, the IHEC Board of Commissioners was briefed by the heads of most departments of the Electoral Administration on their functions and role. UNAMI provided advice on the agenda of the briefings and attended all of them. The new Chief Electoral Officer has proposed the establishment of new committees that would review, among other issues, the staffing levels and the suitability of the current Commission staff. The commissioners have requested courtesy calls with President Talabani and Prime Minister Al-Maliki. The meeting between the new and the outgoing Board of Commissioners, which was supposed to take place in Cairo the second week of May, was cancelled due to availability and technical reasons and the official hand-over and briefing took place in Baghdad instead.

The swearing in of the nine new IHEC Election Commissioners was completed in the first week of May and they held their first board meeting with UNAMI attending. In a separate closed session, the Board selected new officers for a one-year term including the Chairman Mr. Faraj Mirza Lateef Al-Haidari, Vice-Chairman Mr. Ussamah Abdulmajeed Abdulhameed Al-Anee, Chief Electoral Officer Mr. Kareem Mahmoud Shabeeb Al-Tamimi and a Rapporteur Mr. Iyad Hilal Hussein Al-Kanani. All members were pleased with the outcome of the vote.

The IHEC Board agreed to accept the invitation of the Election Commission of India to host the training course for the new Commissioners. Preparations for this orientation workshop, which is held in cooperation with UNOPS, are proceeding, and a detailed agenda is being developed. The Orientation course is scheduled from 30 May to 9 June in New Delhi. Discussions are also underway with the Election Commission of the Republic of Korea for more advanced training later in the year. The outgoing Commissioners have agreed to participate in a transition and handover workshop with the new IHEC Commissioners in Cairo from 17 to 19 May, which is also supported by UNOPS. In the first week of May, This week UNAMI's capacity building team supported the presentation of briefings for the new Commissioners by all the departments of the Commission. The same week also witnessed the conclusion of a four-day legal drafting workshop in Amman for all of the legal advisors in the Election Commission. Existing regulations and the Commissioner Code of Conduct were reviewed with recommendations drafted for the incoming Board. One of the outgoing Commissioners

and UNAMI's election legal advisors participated in the workshop.

Brief from PIO

Between mid April and mid May, the regular monitoring of Iraqi, regional and international media continued. On 14 May, UNAMI Public Information Office (PIO) issued a press release on the conclusion of the constitutional review process, where SRSQ Qazi urged the various political blocs and leaders to make the compromises necessary to establish a fully functional federal system for Iraq. In the first week of May, The UNAMI Spokesman organized *ad hoc* media encounters for the SRSQ with international media in Sharm Al-Sheikh, while PIO produced a special media digest on Sharm al-Sheikh meetings and posted fact sheets on the International Compact on the UNAMI website.

On 25 April, UNAMI PIO organized a press conference on the release of the 10th UNAMI Human Rights Report, which again received widespread local and international coverage. As part of the UNAMI PIO devised a media strategy for launching the International Compact with Iraq, UNAMI PIO finalized fact sheets on the Compact and organized interviews for the SRSQ with AFP, WP and the NY Times in the last week of April. On 30 April, PIO issued a press release on behalf of the SRSQ regarding the selection of Iraq's new Electoral Commissioners.

Fiji Guard Activities

The first week of May witnessed a handover in the Fiji contingent between the out going United Nations Gurads Contingent (UNGU) Batt 5, which completed six months Tour of Duty (TOD) and the incoming UNGU Batt 6.

As the packing began, so too was the preparation of handover notes and procedures for the handing over of command appointments to the incoming Batt 6 personnel. It was a time associated with reflection on the challenges that were encountered which very much formed the core of the six months TOD with UNAMI.

With the inbound Advance Party of UNGU Batt 6 arriving into Diwan in 01 May, Hand-Over procedures were undertaken. The incoming personnel fully took over command of UNGU operations on 06 May 07. The occasion was formalized in a solemn Church Service in which the handing over of the Batt Colors to the incoming command elements by the outgoing was conducted.

Incoming command elements are: UNGU Batt 6 Contingent Commander (CONTICO), BRIGGEN Timoci Lesikivatukoula Natuva and Commanding Officer (CO), LTCOL Jackson Evans. The outgoing UNGU Batt 5 CONTICO was BRIGGEN Samuela. Saumatua and UNGU Batt 5 CO LTCOL Mosese Tikoitoga.

.Upon settling into their respective Areas of Responsibilities (AORs), UNGU Batt 6 wasted no time in directing their efforts into the implementation and observance of security procedures. This was further complemented by requests for material to cater for additional security measures in the respective locations in Baghdad and Erbil which needed upgrading.

Due to the nature of the mission, UNGU Batt 6 has made it its priority to implement the necessary upheavals at as early a stage as possible to ensure its success. This encompasses the review and refinement of Emergency Procedures as seen fit whilst fulfilling its responsibilities in this challenging operational environment under the UNAMI.

As UNGU Batt 6 focuses on the challenges which lie ahead, it wishes to take this opportunity to thank the UNAMI SRSQ, COS and members of both the International and Local Staff at the respective facilities for the cooperation shown to our outgoing colleagues of UNGU Batt 5. In due course, we hope that upon the foundations of the past UNGU Batts that together we cultivate a healthy and coercive work environment for the betterment of all concerned. This of course is to be done with the welfare and betterment of the nation of Iraq and its people at heart.



Handover between Command of UNGU 5 and UNGU 6, Baghdad, 06 May 2007

UNAMI Focus

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