

# UNAMI FOCUS

## *Voice of the Mission*



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David Shearer, Amman 27 September 2007

### UNAMI Focus Interviews DSRSG, David Shearer

**UNAMI Focus:** Can you give UNAMI Focus readers a brief synopsis on both your personal and professional background? And how do you feel about your new position?

**David Shearer (D.S):** I am a New Zealander, I grew up there and I am married to a New Zealander. We have two children, age 10 and 9, a boy and girl. I have been involved in various humanitarian and aid activities for over 20 years starting with NGOs working in Sri-Lanka, Iraq - North of Iraq -, Somalia, Rwanda and then later with the UN and other organizations in Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Kosovo, Afghanistan. So a lot of it has been specialized around the area of conflict and post conflict. I also spent some time in London including a couple of years at the International Institute of Strategic Studies, focusing on conflict resolution issues. Then, I went back to New Zealand for a while where I was involved in politics as the political advisor to the New Zealand Foreign Minister.

So coming here for me is in a sense a combination of the various aspects of my career. This job is enormously challenging in many ways, it is the cutting edge perhaps where aid, humanitarian work and state building converges, in an extremely difficult operating - probably the most challenging place in the world. That challenge, was really one of the motivating factors for me applying for this job and I was extremely happy to be given the opportunity to take it.

**UNAMI Focus:** What do you hope to achieve by taking up this position?

D.S: Well, the component of the UN's work under my leadership is really about rebuilding and developing Iraq and (continued Page 2)



### SRSQ Zazi Bids Farewell to the UNAMI Family

When I was named Special Representative of the Secretary General for Iraq, I accepted the appointment with great honor, fully aware of Iraq's complexities and the type of challenges that lay ahead. I knew that achieving UNAMI's goals would be daunting, and would require unrelenting determination and perseverance. Above all, I knew that UNAMI's challenging tasks can only be achieved with the right team. You have been that exceptional team; professional, dedicated and principled.

As I leave, a part of me will always remain with you. My three years with UNAMI will remain unforgettable, and perhaps the most compelling experience of my life. The bonding and friendships I made within UNAMI's unique spirit are difficult to replace.

I also leave satisfied knowing that your new SRSQ, my colleague and friend, Staffan de Mistura, is exceptionally capable and knowledgeable with all issues related to Iraq. With your support, his leadership of UNAMI at this critical juncture is certain to enhance the Mission's prospects for meeting its obligations and UN commitments to Iraq as called for in the new mandate under UNSCR 1770.

Farewell for now my colleagues. I wish all the best and stay safe.

Ashraf Qazi



The SG Hosted a Farewell Dinner/Iftar for Iraqi Government Officials and International Diplomats SRSQ Ashraf Qazi, with Guests, Baghdad 1 October 2007

### Farewell Iftar / Dinner

Before his departure to his new assignment in Sudan, the Special Representative of the Secretary General, Ambassador Ashraf Qazi, hosted an Iftar Dinner for Iraqi Government officials and international diplomats at his residence in the International Zone in Baghdad. During this event, held on Monday 1 October 2007, few farewell speeches were conveyed expressing gratitude and appreciation for the positive role Ambassador Qazi exemplified during his United Nations assignment in Iraq that lasted over three years.

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## Interview with David Shearer (continued)

supporting Iraqis doing that. I realize that my part has also to fit with the other side of the political negotiations and particularly the reconciliation. So I will be looking to support, as much as I can, Staffan de Mistura, the new Special Representative for the Secretary General, and try to do what I can from my side to bring in the considerable capacities and expertise the UN has, to assist in that way. Ultimately, now with the new Security Council Resolution 1770, the UN has been given a wider mandate and a greater responsibility than that it had before. I believe we have the capabilities within the UN to make a real difference and that is what I want to do – make a real difference.

**UNAMI Focus:** In light of UN SCR 1770's call for an expanded UN role, what is your vision for the mission regarding humanitarian assistance?

**D.S.:** The humanitarian situation seems to have got worst in some areas of Iraq and calls for an accelerated response from the UN and other humanitarian partners. At the same time the relief response needs to be coherent with development and rehabilitation aims. I was struck in the last three weeks with the outbreak of cholera in the north of Iraq and the surrounding of Sulaimaniyah in particular. We responded very quickly through the World Health Organization (WHO), to support the local authorities with equipment and advice to combat the cholera. So that was a humanitarian response, but the cholera itself was a result of the breaking down of water networks, and water networks need to be fixed and that is more a rehabilitation type of activity, – something the UNDP was looking at over the course of the last three weeks. So we have to make sure that when there is a problem on such issues, we provide an appropriate assistance both immediate and short term assistance, but also we follow up with the long term type of assistance and advice to create durable solutions and not just a one-off response..

**UNAMI Focus:** Do you think that a more robust UN humanitarian assistance to Iraqis would help augment reconciliation efforts in the country?

**D.S.:** I definitely think so, and I think Iraqi people obviously need to feel secure, not only physically, from a security point of view, but also to feel secure from the point of view of the facilities they need, hospitals, schools, power supply, water, all of those things, which are at the heart of life. So, I don't see these two things easily separated. When you join work on rehabilitation, you have to involve communities, leaders, government, and local government in doing that. And that process feeds into the reconciliation as well. So from the humanitarian and development side we need to stay closely linked to my colleagues in the political side. Both are inseparable and we have to make sure that each of our activities supports the other.

**UNAMI Focus:** A majority of UN agencies are based in Amman; isn't there a need and/or plans to change that situation?

**D.S.:** With the adoption of SRC 1770, we now have an opportunity to expand our presence on the ground, as well as to increase the number of UN personnel in Baghdad. It is not a massive change, but it is quite clear to me that unless we do have people, substantive staff on the ground working with the ministries, working with the Iraqi government, we are not going to be able to develop the relationships that will enable us to improve the situation in other parts of Iraq.

I think we need to be looking, as we have done, at creative ways in which we can be present and engage with the Iraqi authorities in a much better way. They certainly want that, and I would like to try meeting their wishes. That of course has to come within the context of the security environment; we have to be careful in monitoring that as well. But I think we need to examine the possibilities of closer engagement much closer. This is one of the things I will be looking into in Baghdad: to maximizing our impact, and at the same time minimizing our risk in light of SCR 1770.

**UNAMI Focus:** How critical in your view is the Iraqi refugees' issue, and conversely, what are the critical priorities for the UN in this regard?

**D.S.:** The situation of Iraqi refugees is extremely important because it is affecting the stability in the whole region including particularly in Jordan and Syria, who are bearing the grunt of these refugees coming over the border.

I think that there has been certainly an increase in the UN's role over the last 6 or 7 months, particularly from UNHCR in doing this, but ultimately it is the root cause of the problem that is to be found inside Iraq itself. These people are only fleeing Iraq because of the situation inside Iraq and for us, our primary focus needs to be at the cause of the problem, which is to drive the reconciliation and rehabilitation efforts inside Iraq.

**UNAMI Focus:** During a high level meeting in New-York, Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon said that "Iraq has become the whole world's problem". Was that the message he conveyed to you during your meeting with him?

**D.S.:** The Secretary General was very concerned about what was happening in Iraq and he conveyed that very strongly. He felt – and I was quite struck by this – that in adopting Security Council Resolution 1770, the UN had to step up towards an increased involvement in the various aspects of Iraq's reconciliation and development. Not only because of SCR 1770, but also – and he communicated this quite movingly – because it is the right thing to do. I sensed he feels personally that the UN should be increasing its participation. That was the very clear message he conveyed to me before I came here.

## UNAMI Launches its 11th Report on Human Rights in Iraq

On 11 October 2007, the Human Rights Office launched its eleventh report on the situation of human rights in the country covering the period from 1 April to 30 June 2007. The report recognizes the challenges confronting the Government of Iraq in the face of ongoing violence and an ever-deepening humanitarian crisis.

*For further information on the 11th Human Rights Report, please visit [www.uniraq.org](http://www.uniraq.org)*

### Human Rights Update

UNAMI Human Rights Office (UNAMI HRO) continued its monitoring and protection activities in its offices in Erbil, Amman and Baghdad, meeting victims and witnesses of human rights violations, human rights organizations and activists and government and MNF officials. UNAMI HRO visited a number of prisons and detention centers by the Iraqi Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of Justice, as well as those under the authority of the Kurdish Regional Government. In discussions with the Ministry of Interior, UNAMI HRO is checking on the possibility to visit the Ministry's facilities in near future.

In order to address immediate needs in capacity building of Iraqi government and state officials, UNAMI HRO continued to organize various activities in Amman, Baghdad and Erbil. In June 2007, a transitional justice workshop took place in Amman discussing the reparations in conflict and post-conflict environments. The workshop, co-organized and implemented with the assistance of the New York-based International Center for Transitional Justice and UNOPS, aimed to engage a large number of parliamentarians, NGOs and other stakeholders in discussing relevant concepts of transitional justice and, in the process, outlining necessary steps to move forward.

On 3-4 June, UNAMI HRO organized a two-day workshop to discuss and review the draft Publications Law in Erbil. A specialized training course on international mechanisms for the protection of the rights of prisoners and detainees was held between 17 and 21 October in Amman. The course will be attended by corrections officials of the Kurdish Regional Government

In early September, UNAMI HRO hosted a second Training of Trainers in Amman on international human rights law. Participants included officials from the Iraqi Ministry of Human Rights. Other activities centered around the Rule of Law Coordination Working Groups in Baghdad, providing an opportunity to the Ministries of Defense, Human Rights, Interior and Justice to brief the international community and to request their support as appropriate.

## Office of Constitutional Support Update

The Office of Constitutional Support (OCS) has provided written commentary to the Constitutional Review Committee (CRC) on the draft report they submitted to the Iraqi Council of Representatives (CoR) on 23 May 2007. OCS also continued to monitor the constitutional review process and engaged with key members of the CRC, the CoR and political blocs, as well as with international interlocutors. The CoR subsequently extended the timeline for submission of the CRC's final report, first to 23 June, then after the summer recess (4 September), and, most recently, to the end of December 2007. During the extended review period, OCS continued to provide advice and support to the CRC, and its legal drafters, on the technical aspects of the amendments proposed by the Committee. Moreover, OCS met with representatives from the international community in order to coordinate engagement strategies and substantive advice for the Committee.

In addition to this, in late August, the high-level meeting held between Iraqi President Jalal Talabani, Vice-Presidents Al-Mahdi and Al-Hashemi, Prime Minister Al-Maliki and Kurdistan Region President Barzani, generated a top-level agreement on legislation relating to the formation of a higher commission for "accountability and justice," to replace the draft de'athification law, and on the draft Law on Governorates. OCS provided commentary on both the draft laws to the CoR.

Furthermore, the CoR formally requested the CRC to become involved in the development of key pieces of constitutionally mandated legislation. The CRC's engagement in this work would help to ensure that these legislative proposals remain consistent with the Constitution itself. Furthermore, as OCS already enjoys an established working relationship with the CRC, it would be able to provide effective advice and assistance under the legislative component of the process of constitutional implementation, as mandated in UN Security Council resolution 1770. Leading members of the Committee expressed the need for higher-level political intervention to achieve the desired level of consensus, and the extensions were subsequently granted with the expectation that they would enable the leadership of the Committee to continue discussions within and across the political factions.

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## Humanitarian, Reconstruction and Development Activities

While the situation in Iraq remains complex and difficult as exemplified by Tal Afar, Diyala and the bombings in Sinjar, there are a number of positive initiatives. This update includes the efforts and activities of the international humanitarian organizations, agencies of the United Nations, donor

countries and NGOs during the period of May – September 2007.

To spark greater public attention to the humanitarian situation, UNAMI together with UNHCR, assisted the Government to organize the first coordination meeting chaired by the Minister of Displacement and Refugees in July 2007.

As part of the development of the Joint Operations Plan for Humanitarian Action in Iraq, under the guidance of the DSRSG Fakhouri, OCHA-facilitated a two-day workshop on 4-5 June 2007 in Amman, Jordan. Focal points representing IASC agencies and selected NGO partners, respectively, began development of this Joint Operations Plan. The operational plan was designed as a cohesive and inclusive instrument containing specific components of priority, needs-based and life-saving humanitarian interventions.

UNAMI was involved in the first meeting of the neighboring countries on Iraqi refugees through support to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the preparation of the event. The meeting looked at ways to ease the burden of countries that are hosting more than 2.3 million Iraqis. The participants included representatives from Iraq, Syria, Egypt, the Arab League and UN agencies. The U.S., Turkey, Iran, Russia, Japan and the UN acts as an observer and moderator between the host government and Iraq.

Discussions were engaged with the MNF-I to establish a humanitarian civil-military coordination working group (CMCoord). The purpose of this group would be to establish an essential dialogue to support UNAMI humanitarian activities. The draft ToRs for CMCoord Working Group is being discussed by the MNF-I and UNAMI. This follows as response to an important need to harmonize UN Agencies' civil-military interaction with the MNF-I, as well as exploring pathways to interaction with the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF).

Following the Sharm El Sheikh launch of International Compact with Iraq, the Government has set up the ICI Secretariat, supported by the UN and EC. Working with the World Bank, the HRD Unit assisted the Government of Iraq in the preparation of the International Compact with Iraq Mid-Year Progress Report which was launched on 16 July in Baghdad and 20 July in New York. The report represents an important milestone as the Compact for Iraq is implemented and seeks to realize the Government of Iraq's National Vision for peace, prosperity and a new international partnership. HRD participated in the IRFFI Facility Coordinating Committee (FCC) and Co-Chairs meeting in Baghdad on 31 July 2007. The FCC reviewed the revised IRFFI Terms of Reference to be approved during the IRFFI/IRFFO meeting in Bari (Italy) on 28-29 October 2007; in addition an IRFFI Secretariat has been established. The new IRFFI Terms of References strengthen Iraqi

ownership through a greater role in management and the project approval process.

Following the bombings of Sinjar, UNAMI Erbil coordinated humanitarian efforts with the UN Agencies, NGOs, the Iraqi Red Crescent Organization and Kurdistan regional authorities to assist the victims. UN Agencies have combined their resources to deliver immediate humanitarian assistance to affected families, while the SRSR has paid a visit to the area to discuss durable solutions.

Since August, the United Nations together with the Government of Iraq have combined resources to contain the cholera epidemic. The United Nations Country Team, via WHO coordination, is providing technical support to Iraq in the form of water quality control and treatment and strengthening surveillance capacity within the Ministry of health.

The United Nations Country Team has held a retreat on 23-24 September 2007 for the reformulation of its assistance strategy 2008-2010 for Iraq. The intention is to align strategic priorities with the National Development Strategy and the International Compact with Iraq. Recommendations were made to enhance the coordination process through the cluster system and to expand general UN presence in Iraq and particularly within Governorates, where security permits.

The DSRSG, Jean-Marie Fakhouri (HC/RC), concluded his assignment with UNAMI on 30 June 2007.

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## Electoral Update

The UNAMI electoral team continues to work with the Independent High Electoral Commission to ensure it attains a state of preparedness for future electoral events. One of the first tasks of the Board of Commissioners, appointed 8 May, was to accept the invitation of the Election Commission of India to host an orientation workshop in New Delhi. Preparations were facilitated by UNAMI in close cooperation with UNOPS. The well-received workshop brought together international electoral experts and members of the Board to discuss important electoral-related issues and develop priorities for the future.

UNAMI is also undertaking preparations for the Board to participate in electoral training and observation activities to be hosted, respectively, by the Republic of South Korea and Australia.

Upon their return to Iraq the Board of Commissioners has continued to work closely with UNAMI on a comprehensive capacity building programme. This programme, funded through International Reconstruction Fund For Iraq (IRFFI), has been developed in conjunction with UNAMI and its partners – including UNDP and UNOPS – and the Electoral Commission. Work to implement identified priority activities has included holding workshops for both the Board and the Electoral

Administration on strategic and operational planning, voter registration and other technical areas.

Building on the previous role UNAMI played in observing the selection process of the Board of Commissioners, UNAMI was invited to observe the selection of the directors of 19 Governorate Electoral Offices. UNAMI will issue an observation report on the selection process, and considers the appointment of the directors an essential step in moving the election commission to a state of operational readiness.

Voter registration is seen by UNAMI as critical for holding credible and accepted elections in Iraq. UNAMI and its partner IFES are advising the Electoral Commission on the steps necessary to convert the recently acquired Public Distribution System database, which could form the basis for the voter registry for the next election.

Consultations continue with Iraqi stakeholders on fundamental issues such as the electoral system and how to accommodate IDPs in election activities. Considerable challenges remain in preparing for future electoral events in Iraq. However UNAMI remains ready to advise on the legislative, administrative and executive decisions necessary to move this process forward.

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#### **Brief from PIO**

In the past several months, UNAMI's Public Information Office (PIO) continued to inform Iraqis, targeted audiences and other stakeholders on the Mission's various activities, most notably on the cholera outbreak in Northern Iraq and the launch of UNAMI's 11th Human Rights Report.

In addition to the two major press conferences, the office continued its daily trilingual monitoring and updates on developments in Iraq (in Arabic-English-and Kurdish) through regional and international media news outlets. Through the networks and tools available through PIO, all UN agencies' efforts and activities that are undertaken collaboratively with UNAMI benefit a great deal from them.

As for the developments in Iraq, PIO over the last several months, has drafted and disseminated widely over 20 press releases addressing various topics. Some of these topics include the SRSG's condemnation of the most recent attacks on the Holy Shrines of Samarra', the Kirkuk bombings, as well as the Sinjar bombings in Northern Iraq. In a separate press release, UNAMI highlighted the United Nations coordinated efforts to assist the victims of the Sinjar bombings. Additionally, UNAMI commended the efforts of the Iraqi Constitutional Review Committee, covered the SRSGs visits to the Kurdistan region and announced the release of the progress report on the International Compact with Iraq. In terms of national reconciliation, PIO issued press releases on both the SRSG's call for enhanced reconciliation climate in the country as well as his concern over the shelling of Northern Iraq.

With the expansion of the UNAMI's mission in line with UNSCR 1770, the PIO envisions to further its public information role by communicating the mission's priorities towards implementing the broader mandate which includes national reconciliations, regional dialogue, refugees (internal and external) and overcoming border disputes in the country. This strategy will also include devising the tools necessary to overcome challenges.

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#### **Political Affairs Update**

The government of Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki was faced with a growing challenge as his government lost part of its ministers due to the withdrawal of some parties: On 29 June Tawafuq suspended participation of its ministers in the cabinet to protest the arrest of the Minister of Culture, Muhammad Abdallah al-Hashemi. All six ministers from the bloc, including Deputy Prime Minister Salam al-Zobaie, resigned subsequently on 1 August as their demands, presented on 25 July, were not met. On 5 August another political party, the Iraqiya List, suspended the participation of its five ministers in the cabinet. All these came in addition to the resignation of six Sadrist Movement ministers that had taken place earlier in the year.

Following these departures, the Prime Minister announced the formation of an alliance on 16 August, consisting of his government's political parties including Dawa and SIIC (both Shia parties) and the PUK and the KDP (both Kurdish parties). This was followed by a further agreement on 26 August among Prime Minister al-Maliki, President Jalal Talabani, Vice Presidents Adil Abd-al-Mahdi and Tariq al-Hashemi, and Kurdistan Region President Massoud Barzani on a series of legislative initiatives. The leaders agreed to replace the current De-Baathification Law with the Law on the Higher National Commission for Accountability and Justice and approved the draft 'Law on Governorates Which Are Not Part of a Region'.

On 27 August heavy intra-Shiite fighting broke out in Karbala at the height of a religious festival and continued for three days. In the wake of the incident, on 29 August Muqtada al-Sadr, the leader of the Sadrist Movement, ordered the Mahdi Army to suspend all activities for six months. The movement announced its withdrawal from the United Iraqi Alliance (UIA), the majority bloc on 15 September. As a result the UIA lost 32 of its 113 seats. The Council of Ministers approved the draft Hydrocarbon Framework Law on 3 July while many of its members were absent because of the Tawafuq boycott and the Sadrist resignation. However, the draft law has not been discussed at the Council of Representative so far. Meanwhile, the Kurdistan National Assembly passed the Kurdistan Region Oil and Gas Law, and the Law entered into force upon the approval of Kurdistan Region President Massoud Barzani on 9 August.

The Commission for the implementation of Article 140 relating to Kirkuk and other disputed territories met on August under its new Chairman Raid Fahmi, the Minister of Science of Technology and a member of the Iraqiya List.

Regional / international efforts to improve the situation in Iraq are underway. On 24 July a new round of direct U.S.-Iran talks on Iraqi security issues was held in Baghdad. A technical meeting was held on 6 August in Baghdad as a follow-up to the second round. Consultations focused on the modalities for establishing a proposed tripartite security commission. On 9 September the government of Iraq hosted a second expert-level meeting of neighbouring countries (Iran, Turkey, Kuwait, Syria, Jordan, Saudi Arabia). The meeting was also attended by representatives from Egypt and Bahrain, as well as the permanent members of the Security Council, the Organization of Islamic Conference, the G-8, and the League of Arab States.

#### **Fiji Guard Activities—Rugby**

On a Sunday after noon, the experience of a rugby game between Fiji and South Africa, through the lens of the Fijian UN peace makers living in the International Zone of Baghdad, was relayed through global media. In an article, written by Reuters on 7 October, entitled *Rugby transports small corner of Fiji to Baghdad*, David Clark portrayed the experience of more than 50 Fijian soldiers and security guards working for United Nations who were watching closely a world cup rugby game between South Africa and Fiji.

Clarke quotes some of our Fijian colleagues expressing sentiments of enthusiasm. For example, George Natoga, 32, said "With this game going well it makes us feel happy. It makes us feel at home with all these Fijian guys together." Another colleague, Kiniviliame Salabogi, 43, said "The game takes us away, particularly from the daily duties," and then he added "We think of our home and families."

As optimism continued amongst the UN Fijian employees, hoping for a breakthrough in the international rugby scene, Osiri said "We're going to win this game, we are going to win, I'm confident". Slowly, it began to set in that Fiji was going to loose to South Africa. A sense of disappointment prevailed over the Fijian soldiers and security guards, however, there is still a strong sense of pride, for Fiji Islands—a small island nation, with a population of less than a million inhabitants, in the South Pacific Ocean east of Vanuatu, west of Tonga and south Tuvalu—to make it to the international ranks of rugby. It was well put by Jack Komaitai who said "I was emotional to hear the national anthem and when we started playing. Even though we didn't make it through the quarter final, it is the same as Australia and New Zealand." Komaitai was very proud of the Rugby players for making it this far.



#### **UNAMI Focus**

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