

UNAMI FOCUS

Voice of the Mission



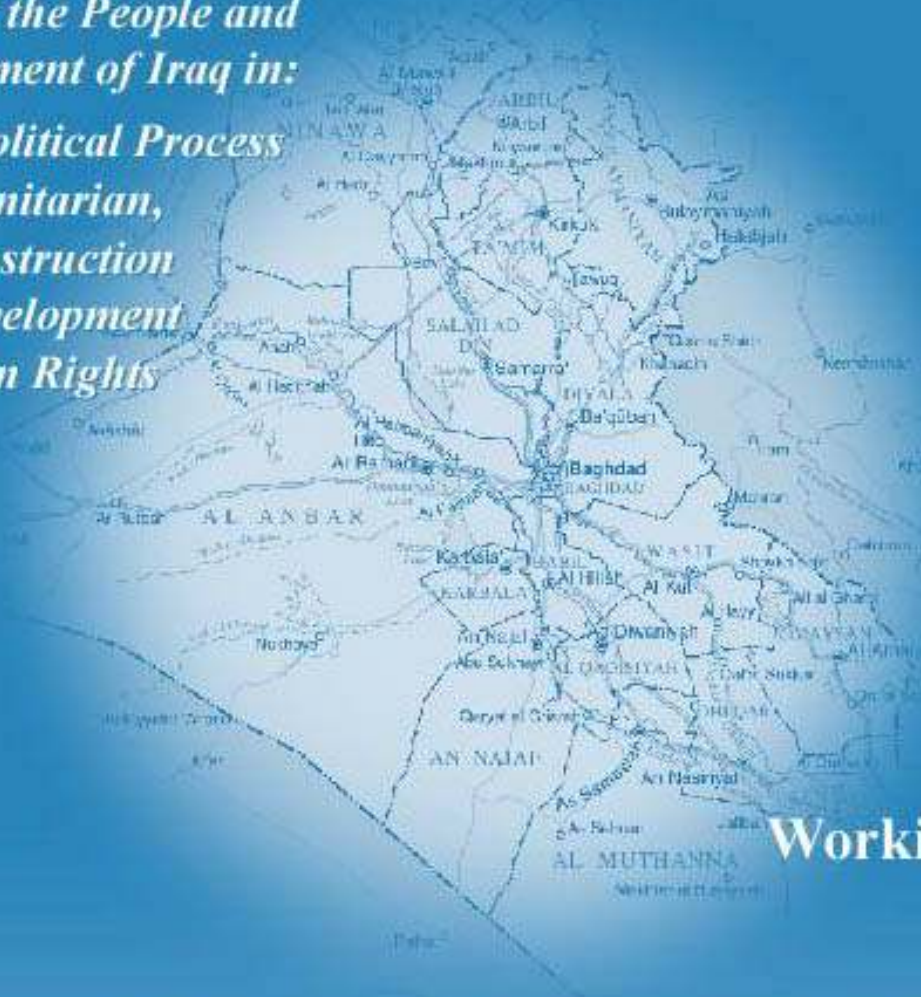
End of Year Issue

United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI)

December 2006

UNAMI's mandate is to assist the People and Government of Iraq in:

- *The Political Process*
- *Humanitarian, Reconstruction & Development*
- *Human Rights*



**Working together
for Iraq**



Message from SRSG Ashraf Qazi



Over the past six months, we at the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) in Baghdad continued to conduct our work under difficult and limiting conditions. The mandate given by the Security Council authorizing UNAMI to facilitate Iraq's political transition in conjunction with the Government of Iraq and Multi-National Forces in Iraq (MNFI), was renewed in August 2006. The prevailing political and security circumstances meant that UNAMI could only carry out its mission within a highly constricted environment. It should be stressed however, that despite these restrictions, UNAMI persevered in fulfilling its responsibilities diligently and professionally.

Little more than six months ago, Iraq witnessed the formation of its first constitutionally elected government. UNAMI has consistently viewed the formation of Prime Minister Nouri Al-Maliki's Government as an opportunity for the Iraqi political leadership to address Iraq's main challenges. Nationally, these challenges include reaching agreement on national reconciliation; ensuring an effective constitutional review; developing an independent capacity for conducting future elections; building democratic public institutions founded on commitment to good governance and adherence to international standards of human rights; and providing adequate public services that meet the basic needs of all Iraqis. It was in that context that the United Nations welcomed Prime Minister's Al-Maliki National Reconciliation plan announced last June, participated in the July 2006 Cairo meeting for Iraqi National Reconciliation under the auspices of the League of Arab States, and

has welcomed the Iraq National Reconciliation Conference held in Baghdad on 16-17 December 2006.

At the regional level, Iraq has taken important steps towards improving relations with its neighbors, most notably the restoration of diplomatic relations with Syria and the participation in the Neighboring Countries' Foreign Ministers meeting last July. These steps are designed to achieve Iraq's full re-integration into the region. At the international level, the Iraqi Government initiated the International Compact with Iraq (ICI) Jointly co-chaired by the Iraqi Government and the United Nations, the ICI will, over the next five years, bring together the International Community and Multinational Organizations to support Iraq in achieving its national vision.

The past six months have also seen a sharp increase in sectarian, insurgent and criminal violence which caused the deaths and injury of tens of thousands of Iraqi civilians, imperiled security and adversely affected their ability to live a normal life. Most alarming, is the level of displacement, both internal and external, which threatens the very social fabric of Iraqi society and could have disastrous ramifications on its future. As a result of this violence and deteriorating security, the quality of human rights in Iraq continued to suffer.

In keeping with the organization's overriding priorities, at the end of November 2006, it was decided to temporarily reduce the number of international staff in Baghdad in order to facilitate the enhancement of physical security measures at the UN accommodations compound. Such redeployment of some of our international staff to UNAMI's Amman and Kuwait offices will in no way compromise the quality or volume of our efforts or limit our ability to render the services UNAMI is committed to dispense for Iraq.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ashraf Qazi', written over a light blue grid background.

Special Representative of the
Secretary-General for Iraq (SRSG)
Ashraf Qazi

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Political Update

By UNAMI Political Office

A delegation representing UNAMI attended the Arab League-sponsored meeting of the Iraq National Accord Conference Preparatory Committee, which took place in Cairo from 25 to 27 July. The meeting was also attended by the full spectrum of Iraqi political, religious, and tribal communities, as well as members of civil society. Although participants did not set a new date for the Conference, they decided to keep the preparatory phase open-ended. In a concluding communiqué the participants agreed to continue their dialogue, supported national reconciliation efforts and called for a curbing of the upsurge in violence.

On 22 July 2006, the Higher Committee for National Reconciliation held its first meeting, led by Prime Minister Nouri Al-Maliki and the Minister for National Dialogue, Akram Al-Hakim. The Committee is composed of political, religious and tribal leaders and has been working throughout August to coordinate the implementation of the Reconciliation Plan. The Prime Minister stated that no one with Iraqi or Coalition blood on their hands could be represented, whereas Speaker Mohammed Al-Mashhadani argued that the committee should be open to all, thus indicating that the scope for amnesty remains to be established.

In August 2006, Prime Minister Al-Maliki visited Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, United Arab Emirates, and Turkey in order to gain support for the International Compact with Iraq and other government initiatives. In Washington, Mr. Al-Maliki was received by President George W. Bush. He addressed a joint session of the United States Congress, where he characterized the violence in Iraq as a struggle between true Islam and terrorism, which wraps itself in the cloak of Islam. In his speech, Al-Maliki described his National Reconciliation Plan as "an olive branch" extended to those who accept the logic of dialogue and participation.

The Council of Representatives (CoR), which reconvened on 5 September 2006 after the summer recess, finalized the establishment of its 24 parliamentary committees and considered several pieces of legislation, including some key bills related to the implementation of the Constitution. Through these committees, the Council adopted a number of pieces of legislation, including a law on the import and retailing of oil products; amendments to the criminal code; amendments to the general prosecution law of 1979; and a law on national investment. Discussions at the political and technical levels on a draft national hydrocarbon law are ongoing.

On 12 September 2006, a group of parliamentarians from the Sadrist block of the Shia coalition, the United Iraqi Alliance, and from Sunni political parties called for a timetable for the withdrawal of the multinational force. As a result, the Defence Committee of the CoR held discussions on the status of the multinational force. On 25 September 2006, the CoR established the CRC, which is composed of 27 members in proportional representation to the distribution of seats in the Council. On 15 November 2006, following a prolonged debate over its chairmanship, the Committee held its first formal session.

Following a conference of tribal leaders in August 2006, Prime Minister Al-Maliki held a meeting with a spectrum of civil society figures and institutions on 16 September. The conference with political leaders, originally scheduled for October, was postponed several times.

Prime Minister Al-Maliki and members of his cabinet made several visits to Iraq's neighbouring States as part of the efforts of the Government to foster their cooperation in stabilizing Iraq. In that context, on 12 and 13 September 2006, Prime Minister Al-Maliki visited Iran for meetings with Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

On 18 September 2006, the Interior Ministers of the countries neighbouring Iraq held their third meeting in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. The participants adopted a protocol on combating terrorism, illegal border infiltration and organized crime. On 21 September 2006, the tenth meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the neighbouring countries of Iraq was held in New York.

On 2 October, Prime Minister Al-Maliki announced a four-point Ramadan accord, which was supported by major political parties. A key element of the agreement included the establishment of local security committees composed of political, religious, police and army figures. The Prime Minister also initiated direct contacts through his personal representatives with Iraqi opposition groups within Iraq and in Jordan, Egypt and other neighbouring countries.

Reconciliation initiatives in Iraq have been complemented by the efforts of regional actors. On 20 October 2006, Iraqi Shiite and Sunni religious leaders, in a meeting sponsored by the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), issued in Mecca a declaration calling for an end to sectarian bloodshed in Iraq. The agreement was welcomed by political and religious leaders both inside and outside of Iraq.

The Government-appointed committee established under article 140 of the Constitution for the normalization of the situation in Kirkuk held five sessions and established a number of sub-offices in the area. On 11 October 2006, the CoR established a parliamentary committee to oversee the work of the committee.

On 11 October 2006, the CoR adopted the law on the formation of regions. The draft law was finally put to a vote as a result of a compromise "package deal" reached on 24 September, according to which the enacted law would not be implemented for 18 months and the Constitution Review Committee (CRC) would be given one year to complete its work.

Notwithstanding that compromise, the law was passed by a very narrow margin, as a number of parliamentarians boycotted the vote in the Council of Representatives.

On 27 October Prime Minister Al-Maliki and US Ambassador Khalilzad issued a joint statement where they agreed "to working together to respond to the needs of the people". The statement reiterated the Iraqi's Government commitment to "a democratic, stable Iraq and to confront the terrorist challenge." On 28 October Al-Maliki and U.S. President George Bush had a 50-minute teleconference and announced the formation of a joint coordination committee to address the following priorities: accelerating the training of the Iraqi security forces and the transfer of responsibility for security to the Government of Iraq, including assumption of command and control over Iraqi forces.

In a letter dated 11 November 2006 addressed to the President of the United Nations Security Council (S/2006/888), Prime Minister Al-Maliki, on behalf of the Government of Iraq, requested that the mandate of the multinational force be extended for an additional 12 months. On 28 November 2006, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 1723 (2006) extending the mandate of the multinational force until 31 December 2007. The Council also decided that this mandate could be reviewed at the request of the Government of Iraq or no later than 15 June 2007, and that it would terminate the mandate earlier if requested by the Government of Iraq.

In Parliament, the law on the establishment of the Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC) remains stalled due to unresolved issues related to the distribution powers between the IHEC and the regional electoral commissions foreseen in the draft law. As a consequence the date for Governorate elections has yet to be set. Despite this, there are indications that political actors are gearing up in anticipation of these elections occurring next year. For example, the National Trend, a new coalition of "secularist" forces consisting of

parties affiliated to former Prime Minister Allawi's Iraqi National List and other political formations, announced its formation on 10 November in Basra. Reportedly, the formation of the coalition has been welcomed by Sheikh Yacoubi, the spiritual mentor of the Fadhila Party.

Prime Minister Nouri Al-Maliki met with U.S. President Bush in Amman on 30 November to discuss Iraq's political situation and the abilities of Iraqi forces to take over security in the country. Bush and Al-Maliki reportedly agreed that Iraq should not be partitioned into separate, autonomous zones. The Prime Minister also invited the neighbouring countries to cooperate with the national unity government. Al-Maliki said after the summit that all Iraqi security forces would be ready to come under his command by next June.

The national reconciliation conference convened in Baghdad from 15 to 16 December. In his opening address, Prime Minister Al-Maliki called for a review of de-baathification policy and announced a cabinet reshuffle to take place shortly. At the closing session, 30 recommendations were made by four sub-committees, which tackled national balance and expansion of political participation, constitutional amendments, dissolved entities and completion of sovereignty and militias. ■

Human Rights Challenges

By UNAMI Human Rights Office

In the past few weeks, Iraq has moved rapidly into a state of humanitarian and human rights crisis. The sectarian conflict in the country has assumed a dynamic and brutality that is growing day by day in intensity as Iraq gains all the attributes of a failed state. Incidents of extreme violence continued throughout Iraq. Whereas the state officials reported finding tens of bodies bearing signs of torture and execution-style killings in Baghdad, reports regarding suicide or attempted suicide of women, incidents of "honor killings", abductions associated with sexual exploitation,

and continuous threats directed at women were received from the northern parts of Iraq.

While the Government has repeatedly stressed the need to ensure respect for human rights and the rule of law, human rights violations, particularly against the right to life and personal integrity, have continued unabated. A vicious cycle of violence and revenge killings leads to lawlessness and a growing sense of insecurity in the country due to the lack of effective accountability for on-going and past crimes and the general feeling of impunity.

Targeting of professionals, intellectuals, Government officials and members of the security forces as well as political, tribal and religious leaders, continued on the rise. Violence is also affecting education, as many schools and universities have failed to open or have had their schedules disrupted and educators, professors and students were forced to leave the country.

In September and October, HRO expanded its office in Erbil, which continues to monitor worrying trends of human rights violations against women in the North. HRO has also met with parliamentary members, Ministers and NGOs to discuss the prevalence of unlawful detention cases. The rights and security of Arab IDPs in the North is also a matter of concern as the violence in south and central Iraq prevails, prompting more Arabs and other groups to flee to the North.

In June, 06, UNAMI HRO launched a Thematic Working Group on Human Rights (TWGHR) within the UN Country Team (UNCT) in Amman. Under the chairmanship of DSRSG Jean-Marie Fakhouri, the group held three meetings intended to facilitate sharing of information on human rights and rule of law issues and to identify priorities and projects to be programmed by the UNCT in order to increase the UN's protection work in Iraq.

Consultations within the framework of the Rule of Law Sector Working Group

(ROLSWG) continue with the meetings of the various core teams for Ministry of Justice (MoJ), Ministry of Human Rights (MoHR) and the High Judicial Counsel, which were formed to facilitate discussions at the practical level. UNAMI HRO contracted a consultant to prepare a strategic framework for Rule of Law Program in Iraq including actions needed to strengthen the judiciary system. In this regard, HRO, in cooperation with the Chief Justice and the MoJ is planning to organize a rule of law conference in January 2007, in order to define this strategy.

Through its main *"Human Rights Program for Iraq 2006-2007"* which is implemented in collaboration with Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), UNAMI HRO continued its efforts in promoting human rights and the rule of law in Iraq through continuous coordination and consultations with representatives of Iraq government and civil society organisations. Under the umbrella of this project the following activities have been implemented.

Establishment of a National Human Rights Commission in Iraq: In mid-July, several meetings were held between UNAMI HRO, the Human Rights Committee of the CoR and MoHR to discuss and finalize the draft law on the establishment of the Commission. In cooperation with (OHCHR), HRO organized a five-day Human Rights Workshop for Iraqi Parliamentarians, from 7 to 11 August in Geneva, Switzerland.

UNAMI HRO organised a workshop in Amman, on 17-18 October 2006 with participation of 30 Iraqis including members of the CoR as well as representatives of NGOs. The workshop discussed the roles and functions of the National Human Rights Commission according to the Paris Principles. It discussed measurement indicators for the independence of the Commission, implementing the draft legislation;

investigative and complaint powers, roles of the Commission and relationships with the Parliament and civil society organisations. Additionally, HRO contracted two international consultants to develop a project proposal for the establishment of the human rights commission. The consultants developed the project proposal and had initial discussions with some donors.

Development of a National Strategy on Transitional Justice: On 22 and 23 July, UNAMI HRO, OHCHR and the International Centre for Transitional Justice (ICTJ), in partnership with MoHR, organized a meeting on transitional justice in Iraq. Participants included representatives of the CoR, ministries, civil society and political parties. Discussions focused on international legal standards and best practices and a review of various transitional justice mechanisms applied in Iraq. On 1 October, a follow-up meeting on transitional justice was organized where all the participants reiterated their support to implement the recommendations of the four working groups in the previous meeting.

Provision of OHCHR Publications on Human Rights: HRO is helping in the establishment and strengthening of Human Rights Libraries at MoHR, MoJ, and the CoR through provision and distribution of human rights publications from the OHCHR and other human rights resources and materials.

Training of Librarians in Geneva:

UNAMI HRO/OHCHR in cooperation with UNOPS and Human Rights Documentation and Information Systems International (HURIDOCs) organised a specialised training designed for Iraqi librarians in Geneva held from 27 November - 8 December 2006 for 15 librarians from libraries at MoHR, MoJ, and various Iraqi universities.

Organisation of seminars to be led by the Ministry of Human Rights: In cooperation with MoHR, HRO organised a three-day

seminar aimed at clarifying the role of Ministry in relation to mainstreaming human rights within government institutions. HRO is currently engaged in preparation of specialised trainings to be offered to the MoHR staff members in different areas of human rights.

Human Rights Education through NGOs:

HRO has developed a small grant program (US\$ 600,000 in total) for human rights NGOs. HRO has selected 11 NGOs to implement 12 specialized Human Rights seminars /workshops with 30 participants each throughout Iraq. This is done to raise human rights awareness in Iraq. The campaign focuses on the rights of marginalized groups such as women, disabled, minorities, and children.

Study on Minority Women in Iraq:

UNAMI HRO in cooperation with OHCHR, UNIFEM, Minority Rights Group International (MRG) and Iraq's Minorities Council (IMC) are preparing to conduct a study on the situation of women in minority communities in Iraq. The study will provide information on gaps in the legal/constitutional protection system for minority women. HRO has selected a team of Iraqi female researchers. A first preparatory/training meeting was organised on 10-11 December, 2006 in Amman. The meeting discussed the situation of women in Iraq and the specific challenges facing minority women. Training on research methodologies, gender issues, minority rights and concerns, and human rights issues were also delivered.

Basra Leadership Human Rights Awareness Raising Project: HRO in cooperation with MoHR in Basra organized three seminars on human rights that brought together religious leaders, members of political parties, members of the provincial Council, regional Ministries representatives and NGOs to discuss the human rights concerns and elements of protection necessary for curbing the growing violence in the lower south area. Additionally, 3,000 human rights posters were distributed around the four governorates of the Lower South. ■

Humanitarian, Reconstruction and Development

By Humanitarian, Reconstruction and Development (HRDO)

The second half of 2006 was marked by two key elements: continued population displacement due to sectarian violence and threats of violence, and the development of the International Compact with Iraq. The Humanitarian, Reconstruction and Development Teams, under the guidance of the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General (DSRSG)/Humanitarian Coordinator, worked alongside their government counterparts and donors on these two matters.

The implications of the content and direction of the Compact have influenced the strategic planning of the United Nations' role in Iraq. The UNCT has recalibrated its focus and programming to complement the Compact. In this regard, a two-pronged assistance strategy is being employed whereby the United Nations will continue to focus on providing assistance for the delivery of essential social services, while providing targeted institutional and operational capacity-building support to the Government of Iraq.

The Humanitarian, Reconstruction and Development Teams in Baghdad and Amman provided substantial support, in terms of documentation preparation, logistics, and facilitation of the technical review meetings and the two international Preparatory Group Meetings, held in Abu Dhabi and Kuwait in September and October respectively. This also included the design and launching of the website for the Compact (www.iraqcompact.org), to support the dissemination of information on the process and progress as broadly as possible to all stakeholders. It is anticipated that the technical maintenance of the site will be fully handed over by the government by the end of January 2007.

UNAMI continued to emphasize the need for Iraqi leadership of humanitarian development initiatives as an essential means to promote national stability. To this end, the consultancy services of a Contingency Planning Adviser from the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, as well as a Civil Society Legal Adviser provided through UNOPS, have been secured to support the relevant government institutions.

In the North, UNAMI worked closely with the government, donors and humanitarian actors to respond to the devastating floods that caused severe destruction in Erbil and Suleymania Governorates. Supporting the government in the assessment process as well as providing essential relief items such as water and shelter, the UNAMI team also advocated for the designation of a focal point within the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) for humanitarian issues.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimates that an additional 1.6 million people have fled the country since 2003, of which between 500,000 and 700,000 are currently in Jordan; approximately 600,000 are in Syria, and about 100,000 are in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. A total of 436,000 Iraqis have moved to Europe, the Americas, Africa and Asia. Every day approximately 2,000 Iraqis flee the country to the Syrian Arab Republic and 1,000 to Jordan. The United Nations agencies and their partners continue to provide food, shelter and non-food items to as many displaced Iraqis as resources permit. However, the resources available are not sufficient to adequately address the growing humanitarian crisis faced by Iraqis displaced within and outside of the country.

In order to address the overall human security situation in Iraq, the DSRSG/Humanitarian Coordinator had extended discussions with the Emergency Relief Coordinator, who convened a series of meetings with donors to raise awareness and promote an integrated approach that would address the immediate and long-

term needs of Iraqi civilians. UNAMI has raised its level of advocacy as well with the international community, in order to identify additional means for supporting United Nations agencies in their work with displaced Iraqis.

The HRD teams, under the leadership of the DSRSG, will continue to monitor the humanitarian situation in the country, and provide information and technical support. At the same time, while the Compact formulation process is drawing to a close, the next steps of supporting its implementation, monitoring its progress and advocating for proper resources to ensure its success will constitute a major portion of UNAMI's HRD activities in 2007. ■

Constitutional Support Newsflash

BY UNAMI Office of Constitutional Support (OCS)

The Office of Constitutional Support (OCS) held the last seminar of Iraqi multiparty dialogue in Istanbul, Turkey, from 25 to 28 July. The seminar addressed checks and balances, independent institutions, civil service, civil/military relations/militias, de-Baathification and transitional justice. The dialogue was attended by 36 Iraqis, including representatives of the President and Prime Minister, parliament members, academics, technocrats and civil society representatives. The dialogue was concluded with a press statement and meeting with the Turkish media.

As a direct output of the multiparty meetings, and at the request of participants, OCS convened as a matter of priority a small representative group of Iraqis who attended the meetings to enable them to synthesize a submission for presentation to the CRC and as a basis for discussion with civil society groups more widely.

OCS has continued to engage key Iraqi political actors, including leading members of the CoR,

to discuss the formation of parliamentary committees, the CRC and possible modalities of UN assistance. OCS has also continued to work on producing publications on the issues from previous multiparty dialogues already held (human rights, judiciary, federalism, fiscal federalism, natural resources).

An initial proposal from the Supreme Council of Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI) and the Kurdish coalition on regional formation law was strongly opposed by Sunni groups. Tawafiq, Fadillah and Iraqiya presented alternative proposals. Dispute also arose between the parliamentary committees of Legal Affairs and Regions/Governorates, as there was no agreement on which of the two committees should consider the draft before tabling it at plenary level. Within the current agreement, the committee on Legal Affairs drafted a proposal based on the four existing drafts, including the 18-month moratorium, which was considered for first reading on Tuesday 26 September 2006.

In this context, OCS has been engaging its Iraqi counterparts in order to both sound their positions on these different issues, and to offer its assistance in the upcoming review process. In particular, OCS has shared a) a non-paper on constitutional review and constitutionally-mandated legislation, outlining suggestions on addressing legal implementation of constitutional mandate subject to review; and b) a non-paper on options for establishment, composition, management and technical support to the CRC. In the context of the CoR decision to establish the CRC, OCS engaged the leadership of the committee and offered UN assistance in both management of the process and provision of substantive support.

Beyond discussion on constitutional review and regional formation, discussion has also been held on draft law on governorate powers, and on draft law on hydrocarbons. In the first case, an initial draft was considered at the level of the regions/governorates committee. In the second, both the Kurdish authorities and the national Ministry of Oil have presented drafts, on which

Deputy Prime Minister Barham Saleh tried to facilitate agreement. On a parallel constitutional development, the Kurdish Assembly has tabled a draft Kurdish constitution.

Over the first week of October, OCS has remained engaged with the CoR over the establishment of the CRC and process of drafting the law for the formation of regions, which was passed by the CoR on 11 October.

On 26 September, the CoR agreed on the formation of a CRC in accordance with the new Iraqi Constitution. It named 24 out of the 27 committee members. The remaining three members, representing minority groups, were announced after consultations with the Speaker. The parliament also held the first reading of the draft law on the formation of regions and agreed that the implementation of the law would start only 18 months after the passage. OCS has continued (i) to engage the leadership of the committee (ii) to offer UN assistance in both management of the process and provision of substantive support. In the context of the linked discussions on establishment of the CRC and the first reading of the draft law on formation of regions, OCS has been engaging members of parliament with the dual objective of both sounding party positions on current developments and positioning itself as provider of advice in the upcoming review process.

On 25 of September the Speaker of CoR announced the formation of a CRC and that it would conduct its work over the following one year period. Membership of the committee was later announced to be 29 CoR members, with a further two CoR members nominated to be observers. Representation from all key political blocs has been secured. The CoR went into recess straight after announcement of the CRC, without determining the issue of the chairperson. Negotiations on this matter took place during the two-week CoR recess for Eid Al-Fitr and when the CoR resumed. On 15 November, the CRC met for the first time in plenary. It announced that date as being the commencement of its work in proper and the date from which the one year time period of

work would commence. It further determined that its own work programme to be confined to six months, effectively extending the Article 142 four-month deadline by making use of the two-month CoR recess in January and February 2007. On 15 November, CRC also announced that management of the committee would occur through a 'Presidency Council, made up of Sheikh Hummam Hammoudi (UIA) as chairperson, and Fouad Masoum (Kurdish Alliance) and Iyad Sammarai from the Iraqi Islamic Party (IIP) as deputy chairpeople. They agreed that decisions would be taken by consensus.

The CRC met a handful of times at the plenary level since its initial meeting on 15 November. It announced the launch of a public submission campaign that ran for a month (20 November - 20 December), in which advertisements encouraged the Iraqis to submit their views on the constitution either in writing to the CoR or through email to a nominated address. The chairperson has indicated that once these public submissions have been analysed the Presidency Council will create CRC sub-committees to focus on the various issues brought to light through the public submission process.

UNAMI/OCS and UNOPS are providing technical assistance to the CRC. This assistance will focus on the provision of expert advice on substantive issue areas, as well as support to the CRC secretariat and may include modest outreach support. ■

Brief from Public Information Office

By UNAMI Public Information Office (PIO)

The Public Information Office (PIO) has continued discharging its main task of informing Iraqis, targeted audiences and other stakeholders of the activities of the substantive components of UNAMI. This includes the daily trilingual (Arabic, English and Kurdish) monitoring of Iraqi, regional and international media news outlets. In addition to organizing

media events, the office also prepares special media reports in Arabic and English on the major developments on the Iraqi arena.

Following the joint Iraq-UN statement on the International Compact for Iraq (ICI) on 27 July 2006, UNAMI PIO has compiled and circulated a special media report on Iraqi, regional and international news coverage of ICI and reactions to it. The sixth issue of Focus News Bulletin in Arabic was distributed to members of Iraqi Cabinet, Speaker of the Parliament and his deputies and other stakeholders, including the diplomatic corps in Baghdad. On 16 August, PIO has held a press briefing on the last seminar of Iraqi multiparty dialogues on matters related to the Iraqi Constitution, which took place early in the month.

Around mid July, the English mid-year hardcopy of the UNAMI Focus News Bulletin was distributed, with copies having been forwarded to the Offices of the Secretary-General and Deputy Secretary-General along with additional copies to key UN officials at the United Nations headquarters in New York. The office issued three press releases: on the publication of the UNAMI Human Rights Report on Iraq (18 July); on the SRSG's urging all Iraqis to stop the scourge of violence (19 July); and on the two-day meeting organized with the co-sponsorship of UNAMI Human Rights Office (HRO) on Transitional Justice in Iraq (22 July). On the same day, the Office also sent a draft statement to the Secretary-General's Office on the continuing cycle of violence in Iraq.

On 22 July, 2006, PIO invited all the Baghdad-based media representatives to cover the opening and closing sessions of the UNAMI-led meeting on Transitional Justice, which took place at the Al-Rasheed Hotel in Baghdad. PIO also arranged five Satellite channel interviews for Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General (DSRSG) Michael von der Schulenburg, following the opening session of the meeting, as well as a television interview with DSRSG Jean-Marie Fakhouri following the closing session. Some 17 international,

regional and Iraqi media organizations attended the event, which received a wide coverage. PIO organized two televised interviews with the UNAMI Chief of the Human Rights Office and his Deputy, one two international TV stations based in Baghdad.

On 26 July, PIO issued a press release on the continuation of UNAMI's series of Iraqi multiparty dialogue seminars, as the Office of Constitutional Support (OCS)-organized seminar on accountability in government and good governance was held in Istanbul from 26 - 28 July. On 27 July, PIO issued a UN-Iraq joint statement on the formal launch of the ICI.

PIO has posted, on the mission's website five monthly bilingual (Arabic and English) electronic versions of the UNAMI Focus magazine. In addition, PIO issued on 3 September 2006 a press release in which SRSQ Ashraf Qazi condemned the brutal murder of Shia pilgrims on their way to Karbala.

PIO arranged a press conference following the conclusion of a series of Iraqi multiparty dialogue seminars, which were organized by the Office of Constitutional Support in the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (OCS/UNAMI). Representatives of Iraqi political parties, technocrats, academics and civil society organizations, along with leading international experts on key constitutional issues participated in the seminars. Participants tackled federalism related issues including fiscal federalism and oil and gas, the judiciary, human rights, and accountability of government.

PIO also disseminated a media advisory, in cooperation with the media bureau of the Deputy Prime Minister of Iraq, Mr. Barham Saleh, to regional and international press to invite them to attend the Compact preparatory meeting in Dubai on 10 September 2007.

On 6 October, the Chief of UNAMI PIO, Said Arikat, moderated the joint press encounter that followed a formal ICI Ceremony, which SRSQ Ashraf Qazi had with Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Barham Saleh.

PIO issued press releases on a meeting between Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri Al-Maliki and SRSQ Ashraf Qazi (2 October); and on SRSQ Ashraf Qazi's meeting with Iraqi President Jalal Talabani (4 October). In addition, PIO started preparations to publish the end-of-year (hardcopy) UNAMI FOCUS News Bulletin. It includes a substantive analysis of political, electoral, human rights, constitutional, humanitarian and reconstruction challenges facing Iraq, as juxtaposed with UNAMI's activities.

On 16 October, UNAMI PIO organized an informal meeting between the SRSQ two international media representatives working in Baghdad. On 19 October, UNAMI PIO arranged for a joint press conference that was held by Iraq's Deputy Prime Minister Dr. Barham Saleh and SRSQ Ashraf Qazi following UNAMI's hosting of the Second Technical Level Preparatory Group Meeting for the International Compact for Iraq.

UNAMI PIO also issued press releases wishing Iraqis a happy and peaceful Eid Al-Fitr (22 October) and supporting the Declaration of Makkah Al-Mukaramah (22 October). The latter press release noted UNAMI's willingness to provide any assistance required to facilitate the implementation of this declaration. The Kurdish version of the UNAMI web-site was officially launched on 30 October, 2006, making it the third language in which the web-site can be viewed (in addition to English and Arabic).

The PIO also worked with the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development to prepare for a press conference, which was held at the headquarters of the Fund in Kuwait on 31 October 2006.

On 12 November, UNAMI PIO issued a press release on a workshop on Strengthening the Human Rights Protection in Iraq held by UNAMI Human Rights Office together with the Iraqi Ministry of Human Rights. This was followed by PIO organizing a press conference for the workshop at the Al-Rasheed Hotel on 13

November. On the same date, PIO organized an interview for DSRSG Fakhouri with an Italian daily newspaper, to discuss the International Compact with Iraq and other issues relating to humanitarian and reconstruction efforts.

In the second half of 2007, PIO organized three press conferences on launching three bi-monthly reports on the human rights situation in Iraq by the Human Rights office of UNAMI. ■

UNAMI Electoral Activities

By UNAMI Electoral Team

During the second half of 2006 UNAMI Office of Electoral Assistance focused on the support to the CoRo in the establishment of the legal framework for the conduct of future electoral events, the transition from the IECI to the permanent electoral commission, preparations for the update of the voters roll and capacity building of electoral staff through training.

The electoral team invested considerable resources and efforts in assisting the CoR in the enactment of the Independent High Electoral Commission Law. The draft has been stuck in the Parliament after two readings following a dispute on the role of the Federal electoral commission and future regional bodies. The electoral team has provided numerous commentaries to the draft on the way the relation between central and regional commissions relate in other federal states. Also, commentary has been given on other critical aspects such as provisions for strengthening the independence of the new commissioners, the division of tasks among the Board of Commissioners and the Chief Electoral officer, the procedure for appeals, mechanism for reporting to the Parliament and the mechanisms for nomination and appointment of commissioners.

In October, the Law on Formation of Regions was adopted by the Council of Representatives. The final text incorporated some of the suggestions presented by the electoral team,

including that the future referenda on the forming regions will be conducted by the Federal electoral Commission, instead of the provincial bodies as originally suggested, and that the threshold for accepting new regions be raised to majority of the voters provided that more than 50% of the electors participated.

Even though the law for the establishment of the permanent electoral commission has not been adopted yet, UNAMI electoral team initiated the preparations for a seamless transition from the IECI to the IHEC. The issues under consideration include the occupancy rights to the IECI building, the transfer of relevant records, inventory of assets and list of staff.

In September the voter registration committee, a joint IECI-international electoral assistance team group resumed its activities. Its main tasks has been to identify options for updating the voters list in case an electoral event is called at short notice while preparing the strategy for a permanent voters roll that would not be based in the Public Distribution System.

In November and December, UNAMI Office of electoral assistance, together with the Scuola Tecnica Superiore de Santa Ana organized a series of training courses in office management, operational planning, procedures writing, voter education and GIS IT systems for electoral staff from Baghdad headquarters and provincial offices as part of the strategy for reinforcing the Iraqi capacity to conduct credible and professional future electoral events. ■

UN Fiji Guard Unit Newsflash

By Fiji Guard Unit (UNGU)

The Fiji Guard Unit has continued carrying out its role with the utmost sincerity and professionalism. The continuation of its efforts to provide a safe and secure environment for UNAMI Staff within the designated compounds remains to be the highest priority in its daily activities.

Change of Guards

The month of November witnessed the changing of guards with the UNGU -4 under the leadership of Brigadier General Ioane Naivalurua handing over the reigns to his predecessor come successor Brigadier General Samuela Saumatua, who had previously served as Contingent Commander for UNGU- 2. The two Commanding Officers for the Units, outgoing CO- LTCOL Seremaia Tuikoro and incoming CO LTCOL Mosesé Tikoitoga also officially handed over responsibilities concurrently. The changing of guards on 03 November was conducted during a military ceremonial parade and solemnised in a Church Service which officially marked the completion of UNGU -4 operational duties in Iraq. It also can be seen as the end of the fourth Chapter of the Fijian Guard Unit's current deployment in Iraq.

The new guards are a mixture of young and mature faces, highlighting a mixture of military operational experiences spanning an average of 10 years. This experience reinforced with training, professionalism and the previous Unit's achievements are the foundations from which UNGU- 5 launched itself into the unknown fifth chapter of the UN Fijian Guard Unit deployment in Iraq.

Operational Readiness Check (ORC)

The rotation of troops required the conduct of an Operational Readiness Check for incoming UNGU -5. This ORC as it is commonly known is important in evaluating and assessing all operational aspects of UNGU duties. This initial UNGU - 5 ORC was conducted over a period of Four days under the supervision of UNGU - 5 Operations Officer, Major Gadai. The ORC was also conducted for UNGU based at Erbil in the North for a week. Overall the exercise was a success and will be conducted monthly over the next six months.

During this period the newly appointed Regional Director for Safety Security Department in New York, Mr.Gerard Martinez visited the UNGU - 5 Command and also spent

an hour with guards where he was accorded a traditional welcome and farewell Ceremony. The visit was timely since it provided an opportune time for the Director to meet the new UNGU.

Outreach Program

In continuation of the programs that were put in place, UNGU maintained its close contacts with other professional stakeholders who operate within its immediate area of interest. The importance of these contacts made possible by the Outreach program greatly proved its worth during the handover program for the incoming and outgoing Contingent Commanders.

UNGU - 5 experienced its first outreach program during an invitation extended by the US Embassy for its Choir, during the American Thanksgiving Day celebrations.

A Guard of Honor to welcome the SRSG on his return to Baghdad was also conducted on 23 November. This ceremonial task is a continuation of the recently acquired protocol task inherited from the previous unit.

Future Efforts

UNGU looks forward to the challenges that lie ahead and is very aware of the changing operational situation with respect to the Political climate in Iraq. These factors will undoubtedly raise the unit's vigilance and level of operational readiness. The unit's focus is none other than Safety and Security of UNAMI.

As another year draws to close, UNGU wishes to take this opportunity to thank our predecessors for their effort and achievements. It also wishes to extend its appreciation to the UNAMI Civilian staffs for their patience and understanding when carrying out its security duties. Your Safety and Security is our responsibility. The Unit wishes everyone the best and a successful new year. ■

UNAMI Commemorates the Third Anniversary of the 19 August 2003 Baghdad Bombing

On 19 August 2006, SRSO Ashraf Qazi led a UNAMI commemoration of the third anniversary of Baghdad UN Headquarter bombing. The commemoration took place at UNAMI headquarters in Baghdad. Participants including representatives of the Iraqi Government observed a minute of silence during a formal ceremony.



One of UNAMI staff members read the Secretary-General's message to the staff on the third anniversary observance of the 19 August 2003 Baghdad bombing:

"Three years after the UN's darkest day in Baghdad, our hearts remain heavy.

We pause again to recall irreplaceable colleagues and unforgettable friends.

Iraq, which suffered its deadliest period of conflict last month, needed people like Sergio and his team. Others have now bravely taken their place. Because we can best honour the memory of our fallen heroes by carrying forward their legacy, by continuing their work, and by seeking inspiration from their example.

Their death marked the UN's loss of innocence. This Organization had been attacked before, and it has been targeted

since. But the Baghdad attack dealt a fatal blow to the illusion that wearing a blue helmet, or hoisting a UN flag, placed us above the fray. It undermined the belief that international civil servants could assume that their impartiality would be accepted and respected by all parties to a conflict.

Today, more than ever, UN staff confront direct and deadly threats to their safety.

My first responsibility as Secretary-General is to take care that no staff member's life is needlessly or recklessly endangered. Let me therefore assure colleagues here, and all those in the field, that I will continue doing my utmost to ensure that UN staff have the training, protections and policies they need to carry out their vital work in the service of humankind.

Were they with us today, I believe our murdered colleagues would be immensely proud that, despite the dangers, the difficulties, and the near unbearable grief, our work for peace continues, undeterred and undiminished, whether in Lebanon, in Darfur, in Timor-Leste, Haiti or Iraq.



This is our answer to their loss. This is our living tribute to fallen friends." ■



In memory of those who perished for UN principles....

في تفجير مقر الأمم المتحدة ببغداد، ١٩ آب/الغسطس ٢٠٠٣

In memory of those killed
in the bombing of
United Nations Headquarters
in Baghdad on 19 August 2003

A la mémoire de ceux qui ont
péri dans l'attentat contre le siège
des Nations Unies à Bagdad
le 19 août 2003

Saad Hermiz Abona
Reham Al-Farra
Emaad Ahmad Salman Al-Jobory
Raid Shaker Mustafa Al-Mahdawi
Omar Kahtan Mohamed Al-Orfalli
Leen Assad Al-Quadi
Ranilo Buenaventura
Gillian Clark
Manuel Martin-Dar Fernandez-Heredia
Arthur Helton
Rick Hooper

Reza Hossaini
Ihsan Taha Hussein
Jean-Sélim Kanaan
Christopher Klein-Beeckman
Khidir Saleem Sahir
Alya Ahmad Sousa
Martha Teas
Basim Mahmood Utaiwi
Sergio Vieira de Mello
Fiona Watson
Nadia Younes

