

**BRIEFING TO THE SECURITY COUNCIL BY THE SPECIAL
REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL FOR IRAQ,**

MR. AD MELKERT

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Mr. President,

I welcome the opportunity to brief the Security Council today on the challenges facing Iraq and the role of the United Nations. As the Security Council considers the renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), I wish to reiterate the Secretary-General's personal commitment to see the United Nations continue to implement its mandate and assist the people and Government of Iraq to build a sustainable and prosperous future. During the past year, my team and I have been working with our Iraqi counterparts in a range of areas that are vital for Iraq's future. While notable progress has been made, major tasks are still ahead.

Government formation

Following the successful completion of the parliamentary elections on 7 March 2010, and the certification of the election results on 2 June 2010, Iraq has reached a critical juncture. Despite several months of negotiations, the transition to a new government is still pending. As stated in the Secretary-General's report before you, persistent delays in the government formation process are contributing to uncertainty in the country and create conditions that could be exploited by elements opposed to Iraq's democratic transition. This process represents a real test for Iraq's transition to democracy and the commitment of Iraqi leaders to adhere to the country's Constitution.

Continuing disagreements over who has the right to form the next government and the appointment to key posts persist. It is too early to speak of an impasse as some do, yet this cannot be excluded as a risk. There have been some encouraging signs: the main political blocs appear to agree on the need for a “partnership government” and have been discussing possible power sharing arrangements. I believe that at this stage, government formation could benefit from the adherence to a specific timeframe as well as a collective process through which a resolution could be reached.

While negotiations continue, attention must be paid to the business of governing during this period. Last week a common understanding seems to have evolved among all political blocs over whether indeed the stage of a “caretaker” government has been reached. While this is an issue for Iraqis to decide upon themselves, the concern is that a prolonged delay can impact on the day-to-day business of government and could affect all walks of Iraqi life.

It is well understood that the government formation process is a sovereign process and is the full responsibility of Iraqis themselves. For its part, UNAMI continues to meet and listen to all parties concerned and stands ready to provide assistance and support at their request.

It is indeed the enfranchisement of the voters that now matters most. I therefore reiterate the Secretary-General’s call in the report for Iraqi leaders to show a higher sense of urgency and work together to forge an agreement through an inclusive process, without further delays caused by either domestically or externally generated considerations. There is no reason to be pessimistic as yet, for Iraq has embarked on an historic path which will shape the future of the country. However, the onus is ultimately on Iraqi leaders to ensure an orderly and peaceful

transition of power. This is owed to the people of Iraq and expected by the international community.

Economic and Social Conditions

Further delays in the formation of government are also impacting on the country's basic infrastructure and services, affecting the livelihood and well-being of Iraqi citizens. Recent protests in a number of cities denouncing the lack of electricity is a sign of potentially growing disillusionment and anger over what has become a situation of daily life for the average Iraqi citizen. Supply of electricity is at about 67% of peak demand, with periods of blackout still averaging nationally more than 9 hours per day. The government has placed electricity production as a priority. This will still take several years to come, meanwhile negatively affecting prospects for employment and economic growth.

In furtherance of identifying the development agenda, on 26 July I chaired the Global Open Day for Security Council Resolution 1325 in Iraq. The meeting, widely attended by women parliamentarians and civil society leaders, called for wide ranging legal reform, technical support for reconciliation and advocacy for gender equality.

With the National Development Plan as a basis, the government has set its priorities to address these features of underdevelopment in a country with such rich resources. Yet political delays stand in the way of appointments, mandates and capacity building. After the signing of the UNDAF, many UN agencies are preparing for their part of the international technical assistance and advice that should accelerate progress on the ground. I must however express a word of concern on a less than clear strategic involvement of the international community in its support for Iraq. Recently, the Humanitarian Coordinator appealed to donors

“not to give up their commitment to the Iraqi people” as only 12% of the required \$187.7 million sought for the 2010 humanitarian action plan for Iraq had been received. Clearly, contributions from Iraq’s national budget should provide the lion’s share for development and humanitarian action in future. This will still take time, and time is not on the side of Iraqis who require significant support right now.

Political reconciliation: Ninewa and the disputed territories

Mr. President,

Once the government formation process has been completed, it is imperative that Iraqi leaders continue to make national reconciliation a priority and address the many outstanding political and constitutional challenges facing the country. This includes Arab-Kurdish relations, particularly as they relate to disputed internal boundaries, revenue-sharing, legislation related to hydrocarbons, the federal framework and the constitutional review process. One area that I am pleased to report on is our serious efforts to promote dialogue in Ninewa governorate.

Following last year’s initiative by Deputy Prime Minister Issawi UNAMI has continued to support efforts to achieve progress in relation to Ninewa residents currently in detention in the Kurdistan region. Additionally, as part of this process a forum has been created for Ninewa’s various minority communities to come together to identify ways to protect their rights.

Central to the discussion in Ninewa is the handling of security arrangements between the Government of Iraq and Kurdistan regional security forces. The trilateral combined security agreement between the federal security forces, the

Kurdistan Regional Government security forces, and the USF-I that currently operates in the disputed areas has made significant progress towards confronting instability in these areas. Efforts to establish clear and sustainable security arrangements for years ahead remain vital.

It is my hope that the process to end the boycott of the Ninewa Provincial Council will gain momentum, particularly as clarity and progress is achieved on some of the efforts just outlined. It is also hoped that the Ninewa talks could create a positive atmosphere for addressing the issue of disputed internal boundaries and improving relations between the Kurdistan region and the rest of Iraq.

Normalization: Chapter VII and the relations with Kuwait

My visit on 20 June to Kuwait, as well as various informal exchanges, has confirmed that the time has come for a serious concerted effort to draw outstanding issues to a close. With the new Ambassador of Iraq having arrived in Kuwait, conditions for a results- oriented dialogue have improved. Entering an era of “good neighbourliness” would serve as the necessary response to relevant Security Council resolutions, in particular resolution 833 (1993), and at the same time be of great mutual benefit for trade and development. Once the formation process is complete, it is essential that the new government moves quickly to fulfill Iraq’s outstanding obligations under Chapter VII resolutions, which are necessary for Iraq to achieve international standing equal to that which it held prior to the adoption of these resolutions. I hope actions taken by the new government in this regard will create a new momentum for the Secretary-General’s report pursuant to resolution 1859 (2008) which was submitted last July and remains pending with the Security Council. UNAMI continues its work to assist parties in this endeavour.

UN in Iraq: transition and resources

In a climate of uncertainty and volatility, UNAMI and the UN Country Team continue to work on the basis of their respective mandates in order to provide, at their request, the kind of support to the Government and people of Iraq that will contribute to stability, investments and long term development.

I should inform the Council that the practical implications of the US military drawdown are now starting to impact on our operations. We have engaged with the Government of Iraq to ensure that the conditions for the future UN presence in Iraq are on a secure and sustainable basis. This will require finalization of the UN-Iraq Status of Mission Agreement (SOMA), and an increase the UN's own security and operational capacity encompassing aviation, transport, infrastructure and life support. I must stress that in order to keep the UN presence at current or even higher levels, adequate financial resources from Member States will inevitably be required. I call upon the Council to weigh the implications of this particular period of transition as part of its considerations on the extension of the UNAMI mandate. I would like to remind the Council that a great number of UN staff are still operating under challenging working and living conditions. A clear signal of ongoing commitment and support is critical to all those who are dedicating themselves to helping the Iraqi people build a peaceful and prosperous country.

Mr. President,

Iraq has made considerable progress since 2003. It has come a long way in consolidating its peace and security and promoting the welfare of its citizens. Nevertheless, we cannot underestimate the challenges that it still faces. It is essential that the Security Council, and the international community as a whole, do

their utmost to ensure that all necessary support continues to be provided to Iraq until such time that it can reach its full potential. I wish to assure you that the Secretary-General and UNAMI will endeavour to implement whatever new mandate the Security Council establishes, working for the benefit of the people of Iraq.