



**International Convention on
the Elimination of All Forms
of Racial Discrimination**

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Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

**Combined twenty-sixth and twenty-seventh
periodic reports submitted by Iraq under article 9
of the Convention, due in 2023***

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* The present document is being issued without formal editing.



I. Introduction

1. The Republic of Iraq is honoured to be submitting its combined twenty-sixth and twenty-seventh periodic reports to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, under article 9 (1) of the 1965 International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, and in line with the Committee's own reporting guidelines and general recommendations. The Republic of Iraq, which acceded to the Convention on 14 January 1970, reaffirms its adherence to the concepts and goals enshrined therein. The present report will detail the steps taken to implement the Convention.
2. The Republic of Iraq submitted its combined twenty-second to twenty-fifth periodic reports to the Committee in the form of a single document which was discussed at the Committee's 2687th and 2688th meetings held on 29 and 30 November 2018. The Committee subsequently adopted its concluding observations at its 2701st and 2702nd meetings, held on 10 and 11 December 2018.
3. In paragraph 47 of its concluding observations, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination asked Iraq to provide, within one year of the adoption of the concluding observations, information on its follow-up to the recommendations contained in paragraphs 20 (minorities in the disputed territories), 24 (minority women) and 34 (citizenship). The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Human Rights Department) duly responded to that request in its communication No. 12/T/4/2182 dated 2 December 2019.
4. The present document is a joint national report that has been drafted by a committee headed by the Minister of Justice and with members drawn from the relevant government agencies. The Committee's concluding observations were also sent to the Iraqi High Commission for Human Rights.
5. Under its Decree No. 112 of 2021, the Council of Ministers approved the five-year national human rights plan (2021–2025), which marks a path for governmental and sectoral institutions and agencies to follow, in the light of recommendations and concluding observations received by Iraq during periodic discussions of reports before treaty- and non-treaty-based mechanisms. The plan aims to create a system of national legislation that is consistent with international treaties, develop national policies to protect and promote human rights, consolidate national gains and build institutional and individual capacities. The Decree envisages the creation of a central committee to monitor the implementation of the plan, in which regard the secretariat conducted field visits to sectoral bodies to facilitate the implementation of the plan and its integration into those bodies' own annual plans. For its part, the Kurdistan Regional Government has drafted and approved the Region's own human rights plan (2021–2025), a process that involved all the institutions in the Region and that took account of the human rights plan of the Republic of Iraq, as one part of a national mechanism for implementing international recommendations in accordance with United Nations standards.
6. Early legislative elections were held on 10 October 2021, the fifth round of elections since 2003, to choose members of the Iraqi Council of Representatives, the country's highest legislative and oversight authority. In all, 9,629,601 persons voted out of a total electorate of 22,116,368, a participation rate of 43.54 per cent. With regard to gender representation, 234 men and 95 women were elected. It is hoped that legislative elections will be held in Kurdistan Region during the course of 2023.

II. Implementation of the Convention and of the recommendations contained in the concluding observations

Article 1 and recommendations 6 and 10

7. Estimates of population, area and population density for each governorate of Iraq in 2020 are given in the table below.

<i>Governorate</i>	<i>No. of inhabitants 2020</i>	<i>Area</i>	<i>Population density (souls per km²)</i>
Baghdad	8 558 625	4 555	1 879.0
Basra	3 063 059	19 070	160.6
Nineveh	3 928 215	37 323	105.2
Sulaymaniyah	2 277 171	17 023	133.8
Erbil	1 953 341	15 074	129.6
Dahuk	1 361 211	6 553	207.7
Kirkuk	1 682 809	9 679	173.9
Anbar	1 865 818	137 808	13.5
Salah al-Din	1 680 015	24 363	69.0
Diyala	1 724 238	17 685	97.5
Dhi Qar	2 206 514	12 900	171.0
Maysan	1 171 802	16 072	72.9
Babil	2 174 783	5 119	424.8
Karbala	1 283 484	5 034	255
Najaf	1 549 788	28 824	53.8
Wasit	1 452 007	17 153	84.7
Qadisiyah	1 359 642	8 153	166.8
Muthanna	857 652	51 740	16.6
Totals for Iraq	40 150 174	435 052	92.29

8. Statistics on population estimates are included in the core document of the Republic of Iraq.

9. Decree No. 3 of 2020 of the Ministerial Council for Human Development underscores the need to abide by the provisions of article 14 of the Constitution. This means that the Supreme Judicial Council cannot endorse any legislation that targets a specific segment of the population or gives rise to any form of discrimination. Article 14 establishes the principle of non-discrimination, stipulating that Iraqis are equal before the law without discrimination on grounds of gender, race, nationality, origin, colour, religion, sect, economic or social status or belief or opinion. Moreover, acting under that constitutional provision, neither the Council of State, the Supreme Judicial Council nor any other body can allow a bill (or a single provision within a bill) to pass if it directly or indirectly permits any form of discrimination, with the exception of instances of positive discrimination that have been approved for a certain category or group of persons to enable them to enjoy their rights on an equal footing with the rest of society.

10. Article 8 (1) of the Labour Code prohibits any violation or infringement, for whatever reason, of the principle of equality of opportunity and equality of treatment. In particular, this applies to discrimination, whether direct or indirect, between workers in matters relating to vocational training, employment or working conditions. Article 11 (1) of the Labour Code stipulates: "Workers have the right to submit a complaint to a labour tribunal or to a civil or criminal court if they suffer any form of forced labour or sexual harassment in their employment or their profession". This applies equally to child labour or human trafficking, and the Code sets forth the penalties for each offence. In this way the law guarantees the rights and freedoms of workers.

Articles 2 and 5 and recommendations 8, 12, 22, 24, 26, 28, 30, 32, 34, 36, 38 and 43

11. On 26 June 2022, the Supreme Judicial Council unanimously approved a code of judicial conduct, which has been distributed to all Iraqi courts. The code describes standards of behaviour and ethics that are desired and expected from judges and members of the Public

Prosecution Service. It also defines principles of judicial conduct and seeks to consolidate such standards and forms of behaviour, urging judges and prosecutors to evaluate their own conduct and to adapt it to bring it into line with the standards contained in the code. This helps members of the judiciary to develop their judicial and administrative skills, and to contribute to the creation of a judicial environment that is constructive and more transparent for all judicial workers and for society as a whole.

12. The Supreme Judicial Council has formed a legal committee composed of retired judges possessing great experience and ability. The purpose of the new body, known as the Legal Review and Amendment Committee, is to discuss the changes that need to be made to current laws. The Committee has submitted several proposals and amendments that have led to tangible progress in integrating the provisions of international treaties into Iraqi law. The proposed amendments have been duly submitted to the President of the Supreme Judicial Council.

13. In accordance with Security Council resolution 2379 (2017), judges have been offered training and have attended workshops and courses with a view to improving their effectiveness vis-à-vis international crimes. The purpose of these initiatives is to develop their abilities in investigating such crimes and combating impunity, on a basis of equality and non-discrimination.

14. The Supreme Judicial Council runs training and development programmes on international laws and treaties for judges and prosecutors. Many judges have also received specialized training in other areas, such as how to address human rights violations that constitute crimes, including crimes of a sexual nature, during investigation or trial, and how to deal with victims in accordance with the latest international standards.

15. Training programmes on human rights and international humanitarian law are held for officers, non-commissioned officers and functionaries using a manual entitled "Human Rights in the Iraqi Army". Twenty-nine training courses and lectures have been held in the field with a view to disseminating and promoting a culture rooted in human rights and international humanitarian law, with 449 persons attending.

16. The Iraqi High Commission for Human Rights is running specialized training programmes for officers and enlisted men of the security agencies of the Ministry of the Interior. The programmes focus on police work according to human rights principles and on the humanitarian practices that need to be followed during security operations. Training courses and workshops on human rights and interaction with civilians during periods of armed conflict are also being run for members of the armed forces, intelligence agencies and the National Intelligence Service.

17. In the years, 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021, a total of 42 training courses and workshops on human rights were held in Iraq for law enforcement officials at the Ministry of Interior, in cooperation with international organizations, with a total of 858 participants.

18. In the years, 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021, a total of 396 courses and workshops on human rights were held in Iraq for law enforcement officials at the Ministry of Interior, organized by training centres in Baghdad and the provinces, with a total of 12,570 participants.

19. In the years, 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021, a total of eight training courses and workshops on human rights were held outside Iraq for law enforcement officials at the Ministry of Interior, with a total of 34 participants.

20. The Counter-Terrorism Service runs specialized training courses on how to administer prisons and detention centres in a manner that upholds human rights principles, protects detainees and prevents torture.

21. Personnel working in prisons and juvenile correction centres have been enrolled in a number of basic training courses and workshops on how to deal with inmates, convicted persons, detainees and incarcerated juveniles. The training also covers the laws that regulate detention as well as programmes to promote and protect human rights and to guard against abuse and torture.

22. The judicial authorities in Kurdistan Region are careful to appoint judges and lawyers with significant court experience, and to organize specialized training courses.

23. In coordination with the Judicial Council, the British Consulate in Erbil has launched a capacity building programme for judges while, in cooperation with the Kurdistan Bar Association, it has also organized training for lawyers. These initiatives serve to consolidate understanding of basic human rights principles and of international standards, particularly among newly appointed judges.

24. The United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (UNITAD) has organized in-person and online training courses on human rights, international humanitarian law, international criminal law and war crimes. Twenty judges and investigators participated in the initiative, which lasted for three months.

25. Eleven judges from Kurdistan Region took part in training courses which were run in cooperation with UNITAD over three phases. The first and second phases have been implemented, and it is hoped that the third phase will be rolled out soon.

Recommendation 12

26. The Statutes (No. 1 of 2020) of the Iraqi High Commission for Human Rights designate the Commission's administrative and technical subdivisions and their respective functions.

27. Articles 7 to 10 of the High Commission for Human Rights Act No. 53 of 2008 set forth the mechanisms and procedures for the selection of commissioners, which are intended to guarantee a high degree of transparency in the selection process. For its part, article 12 of the Act defines the powers of the commissioners and of the board of the Commission, while article 14 identifies the sources whence the Commission is to be funded so as to guarantee its independence and impartiality. The Commission's financial resources consist of:

- (a) Allocations from the general State budget;
- (b) Resources from inside and outside Iraq, provided that there is no infringement of national law or of the independence of the Commission;
- (c) The Commission may accept the resources mentioned in subparagraph (b) only following approval by the Council of Representatives by an absolute majority;
- (d) The Commission's cash assets are to be placed in a special account at an Iraqi bank;
- (e) The accounts of the Commission are to be audited and overseen by the Federal Board of Audit.

28. The mechanism for selecting the members of the Commission is set out in article 8 (3) of the High Commission for Human Rights Act. At its first meeting, the Council elects a president and a vice-president from among its members, by a majority of votes cast in secret ballot. According to article 8 (4), women must make up at least one third of the members of the Commission, while article 8 (5) stipulates that at least one full member and one reserve member must be representatives of a minority.

29. Following the abolition of the Ministry of Human Rights in 2016, the Iraqi Government provided support to the High Commission by transferring 525 staff from the former Ministry to the Commission, together with financial allocations for those staff. In addition, the Iraqi Government has provided the High Commission with 2 buildings in the Iraqi capital and a further 14 across most of the governorates, excluding Kurdistan Region.

30. In 2019, the federal budget estimates allocated to the Iraqi High Commission for Human Rights amounted to 26,497,230,000 Iraqi dinars (ID).

31. In 2021, the federal budget estimates allocated to the Iraqi High Commission for Human Rights amounted to ID 31,655,670,000.

32. Act No. 69 of 2017 constitutes the third amendment to the High Commission for Human Rights Act No. 53 of 2008. Article 1 of Act No. 69 stipulates that article 7 of Act No. 53 is to be abrogated and replaced by the following:

(a) The Council of Representatives is to create a committee of experts of no more than 15 members and including representatives from the Council of Representatives itself, the Council of Ministers, the Supreme Judicial Council and civil society organizations;

(b) The committee's job is to select candidates to the board of the Commission by means of a national declaration, in which regard it may benefit from advice and technical support provided by the Human Rights Office of the United Nations in Iraq;

(c) The Human Rights Office of the United Nations in Iraq may appoint a representative to attend the meetings of the committee, as an observer.

33. The committee of experts to select the members of the board of the High Commission for Human Rights was duly established, under the leadership of the Deputy Speaker of the Council of Representatives and with membership from the bodies listed under the amended article 7 of the High Commission for Human Rights Act. The committee has held a series of meetings. The selection criteria will be based on candidates' qualifications and their experience in the field of human rights, in accordance with international legal standards.

34. On 11 July 2021, the Federal Supreme Court was called to examine the constitutionality of the Independent High Commission for Human Rights Act No. 53 of 2008. The issue concerned article 2 (1) of the Act, which states: "A commission is to be established with the name of the High Commission for Human Rights, which shall enjoy legal personality and have financial and administrative independence. Its headquarters is to be in Baghdad, and it is to be connected and accountable to the Council of Representatives." The Court ruled that this article violates article 102 of the Constitution, which stipulates: "The High Commission for Human Rights, the Independent High Electoral Commission and the Commission on Integrity are independent commissions. They are monitored by the Council of Representatives and their functions are regulated by law." The Court decided that "monitoring" is not the same as "being connected to" and therefore issued a ruling declaring the unconstitutionality of articles 2 (1), 12 (5) and 16 (4) of the Independent High Commission for Human Rights Act No. 53 of 2008.

Recommendation 22

35. The Iraqi Constitution recognizes Arabic and Kurdish as official languages of Iraq. It also guarantees the right of Iraqis to educate their children in their own mother tongue, such as Turkmen, Syriac or Armenian in State-run schools, in accordance with educational regulations, or in any other language in private schools. The Ministry of Education has a special directorate for the teaching of Kurdish, another for Turkmen and another for Syriac. Furthermore, article 4 (4) of the Constitution states that Turkmen and Syriac are to act as additional official languages in administrative units densely populated by groups that speak those languages.

36. The Official Languages Act No. 7 of 2014 was promulgated as an expression of respect for the national and linguistic diversity of Iraq and to uphold the humanitarian dimension in the country's newly inaugurated era of federalism. The Act reflects the teachings of Islam, which enjoins respect for other languages, and it enables the communities of Iraq freely to express their wants and needs in their own mother tongue. Article 2 of the Act states that linguistic awareness is to be disseminated with a view to bringing different ethnicities together and to deepening and consolidating national and humanitarian understanding. Article 5 (2) stipulates that support is to be provided to Arabic and Kurdish, and to other languages such as Turkmen, Syriac, Armenian and Sabaeen Mandaean.

37. According to article 22 of the Kurdistan Region Official Languages Act No. 6 of 2014: "In each administrative unit where a large proportion of the population is made up of different national groups, the language of that group shall, alongside Kurdish, be an official language for education, communication, and internal administrative affairs."

38. A Syriac language department has been set up within the Faculty of Languages at the University of Baghdad. In addition to this, the Office for Christian, Yazidi and Sabaeen Mandaean Endowments has directorates and representative offices for minority religions, including Christianity, Yazidism, Yarsanism, Zoroastrianism, Mandaism and Baha'ism, the aim being to consolidate ties between those faiths. Followers of those religions and schools are free to practise their religious rituals in their own places of worship.

39. The Directorate-General for Syriac Education has produced five posters displaying information in Syriac, written using the Estrangela script, about the Syriac education departments in the governorates of Baghdad (Rusafah 2), Nineveh, Kirkuk and Basra.

40. The Directorate-General has also produced 34 posters, each measuring 160 cm x 80 cm, displaying information in Syriac about schools in Baghdad where the Syriac language and the Christian religion are taught.

41. With regard to cultural rights, there are satellite channels, books and magazines available in the languages spoken by ethnic and religious minorities, such as Kurds, Turkmen, Assyrians and Syrians.

42. The Ministry of Culture has set up a department for cultural diversity, which seeks to safeguard and preserve diverse linguistic and cultural heritage, to propagate cultural and creative activities and to advertise the cultural reality of the country.

43. As concerns education, the Kurdistan Regional Government has made great efforts to protect the rights of minority groups, also by opening dozens of schools at various levels of education for national and religious groups, as follows:

- Study in Turkmen: There are 18 Turkmen-language schools located in Erbil, Sulaymaniyah, Karmiyan and Kifri, and the Regional Government has provided all the necessary school supplies. A special directorate for the teaching of Turkmen has been created in the Ministry of Education;
- Study in Syriac: There are 18 Syriac-language schools located in Erbil, Aynkawah, Shaqlawah, Kuysinjaq, Diyana and Hawdiyan as well as in the areas of Bartalah, Hamdaniyah, Tallkayf, Qaraqosh, Karamlays and Qush) and the Regional Government has provided all the necessary school supplies. A special directorate for the teaching of Syriac has been created in the Ministry of Education;
- Study of the Yazidi religion: An office within the General Directorate of Education in Dahuk oversees the study of the Yazidi religion. Since 1999, Yazidi students have been able to study Yazidism in State-run schools in the areas in which they live, from first grade to twelfth grade.

Recommendation 24

44. The Yazidi Female Survivors Act No. 8 of 2021 aims to provide material and moral compensation for female survivors and others covered by the provisions of the Act, as well as to guarantee them a decent life, rehabilitation, care and the means to reintegrate into society, and to prevent the violations against them from recurring.

45. Under article 3 (1) of the Act, a central directorate for the welfare of female Yazidi survivors of Da'esh was created, which is answerable to the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. Under article 10 (1) of the Act, the Ministry established a committee responsible for examining applications from female Yazidi survivors and other women who are legally eligible for redress and compensation for damages. The committee members come from the various stakeholders involved in the compensation process.

46. During and after conflict broke out in Iraq, national law has served to protect women. This includes the Criminal Code (Act No. 111 of 1969), in which articles 393 and 394 address the crimes of rape and sodomy, article 421 addresses the crime of abduction and articles 405 and 406 deal with murder. For its part, article 2 of the Anti-Terrorism Act No. 13 of 2005 covers acts of terrorism including violence, threats and abduction, for which it envisages the death penalty or imprisonment. Article (1) (a) of the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act No. 28

of 2012 specifies imprisonment as the punishment for criminal acts such as transporting, recruiting or harbouring persons using threat of force or by abduction, fraud, deception or abuse of authority with the aim of selling them or using them in acts of prostitution, sexual exploitation, forced labour, begging or trafficking in their organs. Article 4 of the Yazidi Female Survivors Act addresses the harm caused by the crimes of Da'esh against Yazidis and other groups such as Christians, Turkmen and Shabaks, in particular children and women. Those crimes include sexual violence, abduction, sexual slavery, sale in the slave market, forced marriage and pregnancy, forced abortion and physical and psychological harm. The Act aims to restore their rights, compensate them and rehabilitate and reintegrate them into society. The Code of Criminal Procedure states that victims have the right to file a complaint and claim compensation for any material and moral damage suffered.

47. The Supreme Judicial Council has taken a series of steps to deal with the crimes of sexual violence that occurred during the conflict. When the areas formerly under the control of Da'esh were liberated, including Sinjar, Nineveh Plains and Tel Afar, the Council reopened all the courts there, including the investigating courts. Investigating judges began taking legal action against those crimes, including recording complainants' statements, collecting evidence and issuing arrest warrants against perpetrators, whose statements and confessions were also recorded. The accused persons were then referred to the competent criminal courts so that they could be put on trial and given appropriate sentences.

48. A national plan has been launched to implement Security Council resolution 1325 (2000). The plan envisages a series of activities, including mapping economic opportunities and ensuring that female survivors of violence during conflict are not stigmatized and can be reintegrated into society. The plan also aims to provide health, legal, psychosocial and other services for women; health care for female survivors of violence, including rape victims; access to abortion; and protection for women and girls in camps, displacement sites and areas of return.

49. The Ministry of Health has prepared a strategic plan for gender-based violence (2022–2026) which is the main vehicle for delivering therapeutic, preventive and psychological services to survivors of gender-based violence.

50. In order to ensure women's participation pursuant to Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), the Government launched the Second National Plan for Implementation of the Resolution and the Implementation Plan on the Joint Statement on Sexual Violence. Both plans focus on protection of women and girls impacted by the armed conflict and gender-based violence and on ensuring that the perpetrators do not escape punishment. They include the following goals:

- Protecting women and girls, particularly those in camps, areas for displaced persons and places of return;
- Ensuring accountability and the delivery of justice to prevent impunity for perpetrators;
- Protecting impacted women and girls from sexual violence and reintegrating them into society;
- Expediting the enactment of a law on protection from domestic violence.

51. Investigating authorities have taken the necessary measures to facilitate and encourage reports from women concerning cases of violence and rape. In order to simplify the process, complaints and reports of crimes of violence and rape can now be filed at all judicial investigation departments at investigating courts, at centres run by the Family and Child Protection Department in the Ministry of the Interior or at police stations throughout Iraq.

52. The Council of Ministers has approved a national strategy to combat violence against women. Its purpose is to promote the rights of Iraqi women of all ages, protect them against negative discrimination and violence and limit the impact of those phenomena. The strategy – which covers four themes: prevention, care, protection and policies and their implementation – draws from sources such as treaties on women's and human rights as well

as from the Constitution which contains numerous provisions envisaging equality of gender and equality before the law.

53. The Ministry of Migration and Migrants has included displaced women in small income-generating projects such as tailoring, women's hairdressing and other initiatives. The Ministry has also run training courses from which more than 582 displaced women have derived benefit as well as discussion groups on topics such as understanding the concept of gender-based violence, women's rights, domestic violence, protection during situations of conflict, integration of persons with disabilities, stability and sustainable development.

54. In all, 1,529 female Yazidi survivors and 88 Shabak women who suffered sexual violence have been included in the social protection network without having to fulfil the normal prerequisites. Each female Yazidi survivor has been granted ID 2 million.

55. The Ministry of Planning has updated the national strategy to combat gender-based violence to accommodate all the changes made since 2014 and to respond to Goal 5 of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, which aims to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls, and gender-based violence.

56. Mobile teams from the Family and Child Protection Sections of the Ministry of Interior have been set up in camps of displaced persons who fled from Da'esh. The teams work to protect the displaced women, prevent violence against them, provide legal and judicial protection and combat impunity. A caravan in each camp acts as a mobile unit to receive complaints from women who have been subjected to violence, in coordination with organizations and agencies of the United Nations and non-governmental organizations.

57. If there are signs of physical injuries or if a sexual assault has occurred, the Ministry of the Interior refers victims to hospital for treatment. The medical report is then annexed to the investigation file and is shown to the investigating judge so that the perpetrator can be summoned or arrested and to ensure that the offence does not go unpunished.

58. The military provides the Department for the Empowerment of Women in the Ministry of Defence with monthly appraisals on the crimes of sexual and gender-based violence that fall within the Department's purview. All violations are documented in the database. A special database of abducted Yazidi women has been created in cooperation with stakeholders, civil society organizations and national and international organizations.

59. A centre has been set up to investigate crimes of genocide, where legal specialists, psychologists and sociologists are on hand to provide services to Yazidi women rescued from Da'esh. Assistance has been given to more than 2,000 women, over 1,000 of them above the age of 18, who were taken to hospital where they received treatment and psychological assistance from specialists.

60. A total of 2,036 cases of sexual assault have been recorded in Dahuk against Yazidi women and girls, of whom 1,052 were over the age of 18 and 984 under the age of 18. More than 1,278 people have received psychological, social and legal assistance at the counselling centre in Dahuk from the psychological and social treatment unit, whose staff were trained by the Commission for International Justice and Accountability. The Commission also signed a contract with the Kurdistan Regional Government to assist in the investigation and documentation of crimes and the gathering of evidence. For this purpose, the Da'esh Crimes Investigation Unit was established, which has done a lot of serious work, in particular by preparing hundreds of legal files for cases related to the enslavement of girls, women and children among Kurds, Yazidis and other groups.

61. The Ministry of Interior of Kurdistan Region formed mobile field teams in camps to report crimes of sexual violence or harassment committed against women and girls.

62. Treatment, support and rehabilitation centres have been established for women rescued from Da'esh in the governorate of Dahuk. Fifty centres have been opened to raise awareness and provide psychological and health services in the camps in Kurdistan Region.

63. A rehabilitation centre for women rescued from Da'esh has been set up in Erbil by the Directorate of Yazidi Affairs in the Ministry of Endowments and the American CRI Organization. There have been around 163 beneficiaries of this centre.

64. In Kurdistan Region, the 10-year national strategy to combat violence against women in Iraq (2017–2027) has been updated. It focuses on legal aspects as well as on prevention, protection and care. The Public Directorate for Combating Violence against Women has worked with international organizations, United Nations agencies and civil society to set up 23 roving teams to facilitate operations and the delivery of assistance and services to displaced persons and refugees in all cities of the Region. Every year, over 1,500 cases of violence are recorded, some of which are addressed directly while others are sent to the specialized courts for the initiation of legal proceedings.

65. The Kurdistan Regional Government has acted promptly to free and return abductees. It has also formed a committee to collect information and follow up on abductees' files, allocated a budget for this purpose and provided the necessities for shelter and reintegration into society. As of January 2023, 3,554 people had been liberated from Da'esh, as shown in the table below.

Women	1 207
Girls	1 051
Men	339
Boys	957

66. The Kurdistan Regional Government sent 1,000 female survivors to Germany for treatment, in particular psychological treatment.

Recommendation 26

67. The Iraqi Constitution guarantees the rights of minorities, while national election laws guarantee their adequate representation by granting them their own quota in the Council of Representatives and local councils. In addition, Act No. 58 of 2018 has been approved which regulates and enlarges the minorities' endowment office, changing its name to the Christian, Yazidi and Sabean Mandaean Endowment Office.

68. Article 13 (2) of the Elections Act No. 9 of 2020 stipulates that certain groups are to be allocated certain quotas of seats, as shown below, without this affecting their quota if they participate in the national lists:

- Christians have five seats distributed among the governorates of Baghdad, Nineveh, Kirkuk, Dahuk and Erbil.
- Yazidis have one seat in Nineveh.
- Sabean-Mandaeans have one seat in Baghdad.
- Shabaks have one seat in Nineveh.
- Feyli Kurds have one seat in Wasit.

69. Article 14 in section IV on constituencies stipulates that the list of candidates must include one woman for every three men. This ensures that the quota for women is achieved in elections and in their representation in parliament.

70. The High Electoral Commission Act No. 31 of 2019 was issued with the aim of holding free, fair and transparent elections that are truly representative of the will of voters, that provide equality of opportunity and that promote the democratic process.

71. On 25 June 2019, the Council of Ministers agreed – in a derogation from budget regulations – that Sabean, Shabaks and Feyli Kurds should be included under Council of Ministers Decree No. 86 of 2018. The Decree concerns remuneration for posts in the public service, as regards persons who have left their post, retired or resigned, and the decision of the Council of Ministers places those groups on an equal footing with Christians and Yazidis.

72. The Iraqi Government and other authorities have sought to ensure substantive equality and to combat all forms of discrimination in legislation, procedures and policies, and to tackle the stereotypes that may exist as a result of social customs and traditions that are not legally

endorsed. National laws discriminate positively in order to promote the rights and abilities of women, such as the right to participate in political life including elections, voting and nominations. The right to participate in working life as well as equal opportunities in education and employment are also guaranteed by law.

73. The Iraqi Government has adopted several policies to promote social justice and combat racial discrimination in State institutions in the areas of employment, job performance and the attraction of qualified scientific and professional expertise. Various ministries have officially advertised jobs and committees have been set up to identify competence and experience as presented in job applications.

74. Article 15 of the Emergency Food Security and Development Act No. 2 of 2022 stipulates that holders of graduate and postgraduate degrees in all subjects are to be contacted to work in governorate departments and the local administrations of governorates not incorporated into a region. In all, 1,000 persons are to be contracted in each governorate at a monthly salary of ID 300,000 for a period of 3 years, for training and development purposes.

75. During its second regular session held on 1 November 2022, the Council of Ministers decided to create posts to facilitate the appointment of the country's 74,732 first-time graduates and postgraduates. The Federal Service Council is to take steps to appoint these individuals in coordination with the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research.

76. The Government has adopted a national policy that upholds the right of all groups in Iraqi society to hold high-level offices of State based on their experience and their academic and technical qualifications. The programmes and activities of the Government and government institutions do not incorporate any approaches or policies that endorse discrimination on grounds of colour, sex, race, religion or sect. In fact, efforts are constantly made to combat such phenomena, which would lead to an immobilization of the State and its institutions.

77. The Department for the Empowerment of Women has been set up as part of the organizational structure of the Secretariat of the Council of Ministers where it acts as a guarantor for the promotion and protection of women's rights and gender equality. It seeks to incorporate gender into governmental policies in order to achieve justice and equity in the development process and to advance the status of rural women. The Department develops female empowerment policies and seeks to raise awareness about the issue in all its aspects. It also reviews legislation that contains discriminatory provisions and has formed an administrative unit for the empowerment of women, tailored to the needs of each ministry.

78. Under Administrative Order No. 32 of 2021, a high-level committee was formed under the supervision of the Secretariat of the Council of Ministers (Department for the Empowerment of Women). The committee launched an executive action plan entitled "Supporting Women's Political Participation in the 2021 Elections" which had several objectives, including:

- Adopting institutional measures to support women's political participation;
- Safeguarding women's political participation by enforcing laws and regulations intended to protect female candidates;
- Building women's capacity and enabling them to undertake political activity and participate in elections;
- Increasing society's understanding of gender and of women's role in politics.

79. As a result of the committee's work:

- Procedures and a facilitator mechanism were developed to protect female candidates and their electoral campaigns;
- A public facilitator mechanism was established to receive complaints;
- Training programmes were run that benefited 669 of a total of 980 female electoral candidates;
- Staff from the Independent High Electoral Commission received training on gender standards and objectives;

- A report on the legal environment and its impact on women's political representation in Iraq was drafted, which identified the necessary intervention points as regards gender;
- The candidacy and seat distribution systems were reviewed with a view to increasing women's electoral opportunities.

80. Kurdistan Region has endorsed a national strategy for the development of women with a view to advancing Kurdish society and promoting women in the region on a basis of civil democracy, respect for human rights and public freedoms and renunciation of all forms of discrimination. In addition, a high-level committee has been established to combat violence against women in the region.

81. A human rights plan (2021–2025) has been drafted for Kurdistan Region with a view to enhancing the Region's own role in formulating its human rights policy. The plan consists of 27 sections that cover the enactment of laws, rights and fundamental freedoms including equality, women's rights and other areas of human rights promotion.

82. There are now 148 women in the Independent Human Rights Commission of Kurdistan Region, including the head of the Commission, who is a Christian.

83. The Kurdistan Regional Government works to protect women's rights through mechanisms such as the Supreme Council for the Advancement of Women, which monitors the policies and strategies used by the Regional Government as regards women's and girls' empowerment in the political, social and economic fields. The objectives of such policies and strategies include empowering women and girls, enhancing their active participation in economic, social, political and cultural development and eliminating all forms of gender-based discrimination.

Recommendations 28 and 43

84. The Iraqi Government has adopted a number of five-year national strategies and plans (2010–2014, 2013–2017 and 2018–2022) as well as the 2030 Millennium Development Goals. It has also embraced the principles of equality and non-discrimination between different segments of society and is implementing the poverty reduction strategies (2010–2014 and 2018–2022) and the government programme (2018–2022). For its part, the Health Insurance Act No. 22 of 2020 aims to ensure quality health services throughout the country, accessible at any time, while also reducing the financial burdens on citizens, alleviating poverty and achieving social solidarity and health justice.

85. The Iraqi High Commission for Human Rights has taken several steps towards eliminating racial discrimination through appeals, educational campaigns and training workshops. The Commission has also had a role in helping non-governmental organizations in Basra with their efforts to support persons of African descent by submitting their appeals and demands to the executive authorities at both the governorate and national levels.

86. The Iraqi High Commission for Human Rights received a complaint relating to people of African descent in Basra which it recorded and referred to the Public Prosecution Service, which in turn referred it to the human rights court in Rusafah for the complaint to be considered and legal action to be taken.

87. The Iraqi Government's legislation, plans, policies and programmes are free from all forms of racial discrimination, and opportunities are available to all. The Government is working to provide people of African descent every means to practise art and sports, the aim being to enhance their sense that there is no discrimination between them and other members of society. It is also working to produce various cultural works, including theatre, short and full-length films, art exhibitions, publications and articles, which aim to promote peaceful coexistence and the unity of all parts of society while rejecting regional segregation on the basis of ethnicity or religion.

88. Cultural seminars and programmes continue to be held to promote the rights of people of African descent and to change stereotypes and prevailing views about this group in Iraq. The diversity of sects and other groups in Iraq makes it necessary to spread a spirit of

tolerance, peaceful coexistence and acceptance of others irrespective of their colour, race or religion.

89. The Human Rights Department at the Ministry of Justice received several requests from persons of African descent which, given the importance of promoting and consolidating the values and principles of human rights in Iraq, it forwarded to the office of the Governor of Basra for it to examine in the light of its own jurisdiction and powers. That examination led to the conclusion that the suffering of people of African descent in Iraq is the result of socio-historical heritage rather than systematic government measures.

Recommendation 30

90. A second poverty reduction strategy (2018–2022) has been drafted. The strategy, which took around two years of considerable effort to prepare, aims to reduce poverty by 25 per cent over five years. It has three components:

- Creating opportunities to generate sustainable income;
- Empowerment and building human capital;
- Establishing an effective social safety net.

91. These basic components include six outcomes that address different aspects of poverty:

- Ensuring higher and sustainable income for the poor;
- Improving health rates;
- Improving education for the poor;
- Providing suitable housing and an environment responsive to challenges;
- Providing effective social protection for the poor;
- Undertaking emergency-response activities.

92. Work has been done to provide mobile schools to ensure the availability of educational opportunities for Roma children on the basis of the Compulsory Education Act No. 118 of 1976, as amended.

93. The granting of Iraqi nationality documents to Roma and Qaraj, in derogation to the Iraqi Nationality Act, was a temporary measure used until the draft amendment to this Act was approved, which included a special provision for them.

94. The Roma Cultural Centre was established in Kurdistan Region, which is aimed at preserving the customs, traditions and culture of this group.

95. The Roma in Kurdistan Region enjoy rights of ownership, of education and of employment in governmental departments and institutions on an equal footing with other citizens in the Region.

Recommendation 32

96. The Iraqi Labour Code (Act No. 37 of 2015) applies to all workers and other persons of similar status in Iraq. It also prohibits foreign workers from working in Iraq until they have obtained a permit issued by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs under which they enjoy the protection of national law.

97. Article 11 (1) of the Labour Code stipulates that workers have the right to file a complaint with the labour tribunal or the civil and criminal courts if they are subjected to any form of forced labour or sexual harassment in the course of employment and occupation. The Code also prohibits child labour or trafficking in persons, and specifies penalties for each act, thus ensuring the rights and freedoms of workers.

98. The Labour Code stipulates that workplaces are to be subject to inspection by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs by means of specialized committees, which check that

laws relating to working conditions, the protection of workers and their rights are being duly implemented. The committees provide information and technical guidance to workers and employers, and have a mechanism to receive workers' complaints regarding violations of their rights. The committees can enter workplaces freely and without prior warning and may take urgent measures when there is a violation or danger to workers' safety and health. Workers' complaints are dealt with in complete confidentiality and culprits are referred to the judiciary without discrimination as to whether the worker concerned is Iraqi or a migrant.

99. The Iraqi investigative and criminal courts, in coordination with the security agencies, are working to combat human trafficking in all its forms, including trafficking in foreign workers, and to hold the perpetrators to account. Work is continuing to ensure the voluntary return of victims to their countries of origin, while retaining all their rights as victims pursuant to the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act No. 28 of 2012.

100. Work is being done to regulate labour inspection and networking with the relevant ministries and departments; to consolidate and apply occupational health and safety standards; and to apply and enforce the Labour Code with regard to decent work standards (forced and child labour, working hours and conditions, time off).

101. Foreign workers in Kurdistan Region enjoy the same rights and privileges as locals, including social insurance, with 17 per cent being levied and deposited into a social insurance fund.

102. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs in Kurdistan Region has formed a committee of three women who visit homes where foreign women work and examine their working conditions. A free hotline (on the number 5500) has been set up for persons to file complaints or report any kind of abuse, which the committee can then investigate.

103. Ninety-three cases of human rights violations have been brought before the judiciary in Kurdistan Region against commercial entities such as factories, workshops and companies. Of these, 70 have been settled. In 2021, 271 complaints were submitted, 73 of which have been settled.

104. Investigations have been carried out into 340 recruitment companies, 29 of which have been referred to the competent courts.

Recommendation 34

105. In order to remove the injustice faced by Feyli Kurds and to complement previously implemented government measures, a committee was formed under Administrative Order No. 33 of 2019, chaired by the Deputy Secretary-General of the Council of Ministers for Administrative and Financial Affairs. The committee members come from the General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Migration and Displacement and the Property Claims Commission. The committee is responsible for implementing the pledge and official statement of the Iraqi Federal Government (issued under Council of Ministers Decrees No. 426 of 2010 and No. 225 of 2019) to the effect that – in a derogation from the 2019 budget regulations – that Sabeans, Shabaks and Feyli Kurds should be included under Council of Ministers Decree No. 86 of 2018. The Decree concerns remuneration for posts in the public service, as regards persons who have left their post, retired or resigned, and the decision of the Council of Ministers places those groups on an equal footing with Christians and Yazidis. The committee is responsible for implementing mechanisms, plans, strategies and procedures to remove any negative impacts on Feyli Kurds, ensure that their rights are restored, address their status, settle the root causes of their grievances and publicize the injustice they face via various media channels. The committee also works to examine all related issues, entitlements and obstacles and to secure appropriate solutions.

106. The Directorate of Nationality Affairs at the Ministry of Interior has prepared a first draft amendment to article 17 of the Iraqi Nationality Act, proposing that all provisions relating to Feyli Kurds be reconsidered so that they are subject to the same provisions as Iraqis with regard to nationality, without discrimination. The Directorate has also prepared a second draft amendment (No. 3 of 2014) which includes guidelines to facilitate the

implementation of the provisions of article 13 (a) of the Iraqi Nationality Act No. 26 of 2006 and seeks to ensure that this group obtains its full rights as regards Iraqi nationality. The draft amendment is currently being presented to higher authorities. The Directorate continues to grant Iraqi nationality certificates to this group, pursuant to their legal entitlement, when reviewed by the Directorate of Nationality Affairs.

107. Pursuant to article 3 of the Iraqi Nationality Act, the Iraqi Government does not restrict any Iraqi citizen's access to nationality, regardless of their religious or spiritual affiliation or beliefs. The Act has restored the rights and legal status that had been taken away from certain minorities, including the Feyli Kurds, by the practices of the former regime. In addition, all annotations, such as "frozen", "blacklisted", "cancelled", "abrogated" or "exiled" have been removed from their personal records and their legal status has been restored.

Recommendation 36

108. The Iraqi Nationality Act stipulates that a person born to an Iraqi mother and a foreign (non-Iraqi) father is Iraqi regardless of whether their place of birth is inside or outside Iraq.

109. The granting of nationality in Iraq is governed by the Nationality Act No. 26 of 2006, article 3 of which considers the following persons to be Iraqi citizens:

- Anyone born to an Iraqi father or mother.
- Any person born in Iraq to unknown parents. Foundlings discovered in Iraq shall be deemed to have been born there unless evidence to the contrary is provided.

110. Current Iraqi legislation includes no provisions under which Iraqi citizens are prevented from acquiring or are deprived of nationality on the basis of their belonging to a particular national, ethnic or religious group.

Recommendation 38 (a)

111. The Ministry of Migration and Displaced Persons and related entities, is working to secure the rights of refugees to Iraq, in accordance with relevant laws and directives, in particular the Political Refugee Act No. 51 of 1971, so that refugee status is regulated in accordance with human rights principles and with international refugee rights standards. There are several proposals for developing the provisions of the Act to ensure compliance with international standards.

112. Under the Foreigners Residency Act No. 76 of 2017, which regulates the residence of foreigners, Iraq – acting in accordance with international rules – respects the rights of persons residing in its territory, even those whose presence is incompatible with the provisions of the Act. Those rules include the principle of non-refoulement which is envisaged under relevant international norms and human rights treaties. Palestinians have a special legal status that Iraq continues to respect and uphold.

113. In 2016, a memorandum of understanding was signed between the Iraqi Ministry of the Interior and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Under paragraph 2 (4) of the memorandum – "Scope of cooperation between the two parties" – the Ministry of the Interior undertakes to refrain from forcibly expelling asylum-seekers not recognized by the standing committee for refugee affairs and other refugees given expulsion orders by the Iraqi courts. The undertaking is based on the understanding that UNHCR will consider the applications submitted by such individuals for third-country resettlement, in accordance with the relevant laws and conventions, and inform the Ministry of the Interior, through the standing committee, of the outcome within a period of one year, which may be extended for a similar period where there are bona fide reasons for so doing.

114. Iraq and the European Union signed a partnership and cooperation agreement covering various areas, including migration and asylum, as well as voluntary return, readmission, reintegration, technical cooperation and border management.

115. In accordance with the principle of non-refoulement enshrined in international instruments and treaties, Iraq has abrogated several memorandums of understanding under which Iraqis residing in Sweden, Denmark and Norway were compelled to return.

Recommendation 38 (b) and (c)

116. Under Council of Ministers Decree No. 100 of 2021, Iraq has adopted a national plan for the return of displaced persons to their liberated areas of origin. The overall aim of the plan is to develop a general implementation framework for addressing the problems faced by displaced persons; facilitating their voluntary return to their areas of origin in a way that preserves their dignity, or finding alternative solutions for those who are unable to return within specific timescales. The plan also aims to contribute to their development, reintegration into society, rehabilitation and empowerment, and to ensure that their aspirations are in line with the Sustainable Development Goals. This is being done via a number of sub-goals, namely:

- Calculating the number of displaced persons in camps and their geographical distribution.
- Identifying the needs of internally displaced persons living outside displacement camps and any support that may be required.
- Identifying obstacles preventing internally displaced persons from resolving their prolonged displacement.
- Planning programmes and activities to solve the problem of displacement, such as facilitating the return of displaced persons, and developing a framework for estimating the costs of such programmes and activities.
- Distributing roles and responsibilities among executive and support agencies, each in its own area of competence.
- Closing many displacement camps while constantly encouraging displaced persons to return to their areas of origin.
- Paying out returnee grants of ID 1.5 million to Yazidi and other returnees.
- Continuing post-conflict recovery and reconstruction efforts and forming a special committee to follow up on reconstruction projects for destroyed villages in Kirkuk Governorate.
- Providing displaced families with legal services, with the staff of the Ministry of Migration and Displaced Persons handling issues associated with returning home in the various governorates, including calculating the period of service of those dismissed on political grounds, arranging for their return to work, and arranging for a team of lawyers to complete the procedures and act on behalf of displaced persons in personal cases.
- Opening “Your right to education” centres to attract children in the 10–15-year age group in displaced persons camps and host communities, for the academic years 2016/17 and 2017/18.
- Simplifying examination procedures for displaced students.
- Opening literacy centres in displacement camps.
- Ensuring access to education online for students affected by armed conflict.

117. The Ministry of Migration and Displaced Persons and related entities, is working to secure the rights of refugees to Iraq in accordance with relevant laws and directives, in particular the Political Refugee Act No. 51 of 1971, so that refugee status is regulated in accordance with human rights principles and with international refugee rights standards.

118. The Ministry of Migration and Displaced Persons and the Ministry of the Interior have established field committees to issue official documents to displaced persons. They have also opened offices to replace the civil status departments in Anbar and Nineveh. Furthermore, a

committee has been formed within the Ministry of the Interior and in coordination with UNHCR whose task is to issue identification documents to all displaced persons. Displacement camps in Erbil and Dahuk Governorates have been visited and, from 2019 to 2022, a total of 85,851 official identification documents were issued to the residents, of which 20,787 were civil status cards and 65,064 were Iraqi nationality certificates.

119. Reception centres and shelters for displaced families have been set up inside State-run camps. As of 2019, there were 89 inhabited camps. The camps reflect human rights standards and guarantee respect for the dignity of displaced persons.

120. All the basic needs of displaced families are adult met, and more than 62 million food, health and commodity baskets have been supplied; 174 camps have been set up to receive and shelter displaced families, who have also been provided with financial grants.

121. Field teams have been formed to supervise the process of registering displaced families, in order to safeguard their rights and ensure that they receive deliveries of food aid. For a period of one year from the date of a family's return from the camps, they are provided with two food rations per month, as well as a health basket and other basic necessities, including refrigeration and heating. Each family also receives financial assistance amounting to ID 2.5 million, disbursed in three payments. Returning families also receive a grant of ID 1.5 million; some 30,000 returnee families have received this grant. In addition, 899 female Yazidi survivors have received grants of ID 2 million. A total of ID 225,038,545,450 has been allocated for the implementation of the relief and social aid programme for internally displaced persons.

122. There is close coordination between the Iraqi Government and representatives of the United Nations to repatriate Iraqi citizens stranded in overcrowded camps or detained in north-east Syria following the collapse of the terrorist organization Da'esh.

123. The National Security Advisory, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the International Centre for Counter-Terrorism (ICCT) held a high-level technical seminar in Baghdad on prosecution practices, rehabilitation programmes and reintegration programmes in the context of the efforts of the Iraqi Government to repatriate almost 30,000 Iraqi citizens from Hawl camp in north-east Syria, the vast majority of whom are women and children with limited access to food, health care, education and other basic rights and services.

124. Ministry of Health teams make field visits to displacement camps to deliver essential health services, conduct health campaigns, radiological surveys and vaccination campaigns, provide reproductive health services, carry out screening, treatment and follow-up of tuberculosis patients, arrange for consultations with clinical specialists and referrals for laboratory testing for HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases, and provide non-communicable disease prevention and control services.

125. Working groups from the Ministry of Health have intensified their field visits to camps in order to ensure the sustainability of the health-care services provided to displaced persons. Working alongside local teams in the governorates where displaced persons are located, the groups oversee the delivery of medication and medical supplies to internally displaced persons in camps and at other locations.

126. Joint action mechanisms with the Ministry of Health in Kurdistan Region have been strengthened with logistical support commensurate with the numbers of displaced persons in each governorate and through the provision of maternal and childcare services, nutritional assessment, early detection of and medication for chronic diseases, and registration and monitoring of cancer cases.

127. Ambulance services are provided for displaced persons in camps and at other locations, with the participation of health-care departments in the governorates. In addition, the camps are provided with mobile clinics in partnership with the World Health Organization (WHO) and other agencies.

128. The Iraqi Government has taken a series of measures to ensure that internally displaced persons enjoy the right to education, including extending the transfer period for displaced persons to the end of the spring vacation to prevent interruptions to their studies. Directorates work in coordination to provide students with transfer documents following

liberation of their homelands in Nineveh, Anbar, Salah al-Din and Kirkuk Governorates. General directorates for education have been instructed to return displaced teaching staff to their governorates of origin following liberation. However, steps have also been taken to ensure that other displaced persons, whose homes have been destroyed, can remain in the governorates to which they were displaced so that their children can remain in school for the current academic year. Some 49 “Your right to education” centres have been opened to attract children in the 10–18 age group in displaced and host communities in the governorates. The Ministry of Education has set up an operations room to process displaced students, introducing specific practical measures to address their circumstances, help solve their problems and ensure their return to the governorates from which they were displaced, thereby contributing to a return to normal life and stability in those governorates. A series of decisions have been taken and cultural and social programmes rolled out with the aim of promoting a culture of societal inclusion and civil peace. There have also been psychological awareness-raising programmes for population groups in the liberated areas in the form of special workshops, research and studies.

129. As of 1 April 2023, the Ministry of Migration and Displaced Persons had recorded the return of 507,129 families, 90,180 of whom had been living in camps. As of 2023, a total of 149 displacement camps had been closed in Iraq. The Ministry of Migration and Displaced Persons has implemented numerous social, psychological, economic and housing programmes to mitigate the effects and consequences of displacement, in addition to programmes relating to transportation, evacuation, temporary shelter, prolonged displacement, water, food and permanent shelter.

130. Iraq has continued to pay the salaries of staff displaced from areas controlled by Da’esh terrorist groups by issuing smart cards so that they can receive their salaries in the areas to which they have been displaced. Displaced staff are permitted to work in and receive their salaries from corresponding departments, helping to sustain them until they can return home.

131. Thanks to the improved security situation, displaced persons have been able to return. Mines have been cleared, explosives defused, remnants of war removed and police stations re-opened in liberated areas. Troops have been deployed around those areas and at points of entry, and they cooperate with citizens in intelligence matters, to detect infiltrators and terrorist cells. Women heads of household receive grants allocated to returning and integrated families.

132. The Ministry of Planning has been examining an application to re-establish the governorate of Halabjah in the Kurdistan Region, a badly affected area where acts of genocide took place. A field visit has been made to the area and a development report and administrative boundary maps have been drafted. Work to re-establish the administrative entity is currently pending.

133. The authorities have been coordinating with IOM to repair 300 houses in Nineveh and Anbar, and to install 491 mobile housing units for returning families whose homes were destroyed.

134. There are ongoing efforts in coordination with international organizations, United Nations entities and security agencies to develop plans and programmes to address obstacles to the voluntary return of displaced families, as well as to collect information and data on those returning from displacement after living in camps, with the hope of including and prioritizing them in future financial grant programmes.

135. The Kurdistan Regional Government has taken the following measures for internally displaced persons and refugees:

- Allocating land for the construction of camps.
- Building camps and providing essential services such as water and electricity.
- Establishing a civil administration inside the camps and providing protection and security for staff; opening Arabic-language schools at all levels for the 58 per cent of refugee children and 91 per cent of displaced children studying in camps.

- Ensuring the provision of health services.
- Facilitating the entry and exit of relief and humanitarian personnel to the camps.

136. The Kurdistan Regional Government has granted displaced persons and refugees the right to work and to enjoy other rights on an equal footing with the rest of the inhabitants of the Region. Consequently, 63.5 per cent of displaced persons and 87.9 per cent of refugees are in employment.

137. The Kurdistan Regional Government has done its utmost to prepare for the return of displaced persons to safe and liveable areas where everyday basic services are available, while giving displaced persons the choice between returning to their areas of origin or continuing to stay in camps. A total of 7,757 refugee and displaced families returned to their homes during the year 2020.

138. As of 2022, the number of internally displaced persons living inside the Region's camps stood at 175,112, approximately 34,983 families. Meanwhile, the number outside the camps stood at 490,092 individuals, approximately 68,281 families.

139. In order to enable displaced and refugee students to continue studying, the Regional Government has opened special schools for them and provided them with school supplies. The numbers of students and schools for refugees in the Kurdistan Region are as follows:

- Approximately 212,200 displaced students.
- Approximately 20,000 refugee students.

Table showing the distribution of displaced students and schools in the Kurdistan Region:

<i>Governorate</i>	<i>Number of students</i>	<i>Number of schools</i>	<i>Faculty and teaching staff</i>
Dahuk	56 854	142	2 230
Erbil	86 944	174	1 405
Sulaymaniyah	32 535	91	4 818
Total	176 333	407	8 453

140. The Kurdistan Regional Government has solved the problem faced by Christian and Yazidi students displaced from Nineveh Governorate, who risked not having their degrees recognized in the future if they continued to have guest student status. The Government has agreed to amend their guest student status by transferring them to universities in the Region, while allowing them to continue their studies in those universities for free. Therefore, Christian students from the Nineveh Plains will continue their studies in the Region's universities free of charge.

141. The Ministry of Justice is organizing training workshops with the aim of raising awareness about the principles and concepts underpinning human rights mechanisms. It has also prepared a booklet on the efforts of the Iraqi Government to advance human rights since 2003. Furthermore, the High Commission for Human Rights and the Independent Human Rights Commission for Kurdistan Region are working to consolidate and develop a culture of human rights by running workshops, conferences and training programmes, in addition to disseminating publications.

Article 3

142. The Committee is referred to the previous report, in addition to which the following information can be provided.

143. The Republic of Iraq does not practise acts of racial discrimination or racial segregation against any public or private body or against any individual, irrespective of colour, gender or religion and regardless of whether the person concerned is a citizen or a non-citizen.

Article 4 and recommendation 14

144. The authorities have drafted a strategy to combat violent extremism that leads to terrorism. The strategy is aimed at creating an environment that encourages moderate, open and tolerant thought and behaviour, and rejects violent and extremist ideas. It also aims to foster a national spirit that respects different cultures, while addressing shortcomings and gaps in anti-extremist legislation.

145. A list of rules for political action and discourse has been approved, ensuring that acts or rhetoric that incite societal division along religious, sectarian or ethnic lines are not used for partisan purposes.

146. Partnerships have been set up with regional and international organizations, including the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, to consolidate the principles of cooperation and understanding; unify religious discourse against extremist ideology; mobilize international supporters and donors; and encourage cooperation and coordination between ministries and international and governmental organizations in all areas, with the aim of combating extremism and promoting a culture of human rights, tolerance and acceptance of others.

147. Article 5 of the Political Parties Act No. 36 of 2015 stipulates the following:

1. A party is to be founded on the basis of citizenship and in a manner that does not contravene the Constitution.
2. A party may not be founded on the basis of racism, terrorism, takfirism or confessional, ethnic or national extremism.
3. It is forbidden to found a party that adopts or promotes the ideology or approach of the dissolved Baath Party.

148. The Media and Communications Commission has introduced regulations for broadcasting in Iraq. These include codes of professional conduct for the media, rules regulating media broadcasts, general guidelines on accuracy and balance in news reporting and non-incitement to violence and hatred, and rules for media coverage. These provisions impose minimal restrictions on media outlets, in line with best global practices in that field. The regulations were developed in accordance with the law and the Constitution. The codes of conduct are based on article 38 (1) of the Iraqi Constitution (“The State shall, without detriment to public order and morality, guarantee freedom of expression by all means, and freedom of the press, printing, advertising, media and publishing”), article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The codes of conduct contain a general description of the basic principles and rules that apply to all media bodies and a detailed explanation of how they should be applied so as to enable the media to work freely and protect the multi-ethnic and multireligious society of Iraq.

149. The Media and Communications Commission emphasizes that all incitement to violence and all forms of expression that incite hatred are forbidden. This includes incitement to ethnic or religious hatred or hatred towards any individual or group on the basis of their origins or their affiliation or non-affiliation to an ethnic group, gender or religion. Special attention is paid to speeches and statements made by political, religious, tribal or media figures that incite the public to violence.

Article 6 and recommendation 16

150. The High Commission for Human Rights has received only one complaint related to racial discrimination. The complaint was recorded and then referred to the Public Prosecution Service, which in turn referred it for consideration to the human rights court in Rusafah.

151. The number of complaints against the terrorist entity Da’esh stood at 37,374 in 2018; 34,475 in 2019; 30,388 in 2020; and 23,435 in 2021.

152. A total of 36,195 decisions to compensate victims were issued by the courts of appeal in 2021.

153. There were 6,046 cases related to alleged torture by Da'esh terrorist groups in 2021.

154. The Supreme Judicial Council has established specialized courts for human rights matters in every appeal-court jurisdiction, including areas inhabited by minorities, in order to investigate these crimes, in addition to the investigative courts specialized in combating terrorism.

Article 7 and recommendation 40

155. The Ministry of Education made the decision to integrate human rights into the curriculum from the fifth year of primary school onwards, in coordination with the British Council, as part of educational capacity-building efforts. The Ministry's decision is irreversible, as the committee formed for the purpose is working to develop a mechanism for incorporating into the curriculum humanitarian principles, topics tailored to specific age groups, and academic and technical methods that help students absorb this information. While the Ministry of Education has already adopted the new curriculum, it needs to be developed and expanded in order to achieve its purpose. Meanwhile, in higher education, human rights are taught in all universities, usually in the early stages of university study and in a way that complements the process of embedding human rights principles and concepts, develops students' capabilities in this field, encourages peaceful coexistence and acceptance of others, and consolidates the concepts of equality and non-discrimination.

156. Through its Human Rights Division, the Ministry of Education protects the rights of minorities by promoting a spirit of tolerance and acceptance of others, which is also reflected in textbooks and school curricula, including those related to civic education, the Arabic language and Islamic education. The Ministry works with civil society organizations to carry out awareness-raising activities through the country's educational satellite channel, the media, and poster campaigns. It also holds workshops and meetings with civil society organizations and associations concerned with minority rights and incorporates the concept of those rights into school textbooks. Efforts to continue this work are ongoing.

157. The Ministry of Education and all related entities seek to preserve the country's variegated national identity and to support its diversity of religions and peoples through the activities of general directorates for Turkmen, Kurdish, Syriac and Christian studies. It makes arrangements for specialized supervisors to work in areas populated by these groups.

158. Using text and images, the values of ethnic, religious and cultural diversity and the fight against all forms of racial discrimination are integrated – directly or indirectly – into school curricula.

159. All educational curricula in Iraq reflect a civilized and humane perspective that opposes racial discrimination. The aim is to achieve equality and equal opportunities for all citizens, eliminate gaps affecting minorities and confessional groups, and create an educated, open-minded and aware generation that respects diversity and believes in the acceptance of others, in accordance with the principle of peaceful coexistence.

160. There are 197 Turkmen schools (standard and comprehensive) in Kirkuk Governorate comprising 50,402 male and female students. There are 14 specialized supervisors and 19 educational supervisors, making a total of 33 supervisors specialized in Turkmen studies. The Governorate also has future expansion plans.

161. The Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research has incorporated human rights curricula into university education, with human rights and democracy among the key subjects. Due weight is given to the opinion of the Committee of Deans of the Faculties of Law and Political Science concerning the curricula the contents of which take into account human rights laws, legislation and crimes against humanity. The curricula are updated by specialized committees, and the subjects are taught by degree-holders in law, political science, history and sociology. The proposed human rights curriculum has two main themes: human rights and democracy.

162. According to articles 17 and 18 of the Prisoners and Detainees Reform Act, prisoners have the right to education and to continue studying within the scope of internal security

requirements and available capabilities. This right is provided for in coordination with the Ministry of Education, which has opened general and vocational schools at all levels within correctional departments.

163. The authorities have been coordinating with international organizations and agencies and national organizations concerned with human rights and have incorporated their standards into curricula at various levels of education.

164. Using academic criteria untainted by extremism and intolerance, Kurdistan Region has prepared new curricula and issued new 29 textbooks aimed at preventing discrimination. The Region has also prepared a special curriculum focusing on knowledge of religions, which has been developed by experts from international universities in cooperation with the American organization International Research and Exchanges Board.

Recommendation 18 (a)

165. The Ministry of Migration and Displaced Persons has implemented a number of measures for the benefit of displaced families who have subsequently returned to their areas of residence. The measures can be summarized as follows:

- Issuing a decree for all returning displaced persons to be included in relief programmes for returnee families for a period of one year from the date of their return.
- Collecting information and data on returning displaced persons who had been living in camps so as to be able to include and prioritize them in future financial grants.
- Working in coordination with international organizations on the issue of return in order to achieve stability for returnees.
- Rolling out plans and programmes to address obstacles to the voluntary return of displaced families in coordination with security agencies, Governorate Operations Command and partners from international organizations and specialized agencies.
- Providing buses and lorries to transport displaced persons.
- Conducting a comprehensive survey of displaced families living in camps to determine their willingness to return voluntarily.

166. The challenges preventing the return of Yazidis and other groups to their areas of origin are being addressed and solutions are being sought, via coordination between the relevant authorities.

167. On 27 December 2022, the Council of Ministers decided to grant the ownership of residential plots and houses within the following residential complexes to Yazidi occupants: Khansour (Ta'mim), Dokri (Hatin), Burak (Yarmuk) and Kohbal (Andalus) in Al-Shamal province, Sinjar district; Tal Al-Qasab (Al-Baath) in Qayrawan province, Sinjar district; and Tal Aziz (Al-Qahtaniyah), Siba Sheikhdari (Al-Jazeera Complex) and Karzak (Al-Adnaniyah) in Al-Qahtaniya province, Ba'aj district.

168. As of 1 April 2023, the Ministry of Migration and Displaced Persons had recorded the return of 451,498 displaced persons, including 90,180 families who had been living in camps. It has closed 149 camps throughout Iraq and is currently working to secure the return of families living in the remaining 27 camps, of which one is located in Nineveh Governorate while the rest are in Kurdistan Region.

169. The national development plan (2018–2022) includes a goal, under the population and workforce theme, to secure the voluntary return of 100 per cent of displaced persons to their homes. The overall aim of the plan is to develop a general implementation framework for addressing the problems faced by displaced persons; facilitate their voluntary return to their areas of origin or find alternative solutions within specific timescales; contribute to their reintegration into society; and ensure that these processes are in line with the Sustainable Development Goals. To this end, the plan envisages monitoring numbers of displaced persons, identifying needs and obstacles and developing programmes to address displacement, estimate financial costs and distribute responsibilities among the relevant authorities.

170. The Facilities and Personnel Protection Service in Baghdad and the police directorates within the governorates ensure that all churches and places of worship of religious and ethnic minorities are adequately protected, in line with dedicated security plans. Security measures are also tightened during the Christmas and New Year holidays to prevent terrorists and outlaws from attacking and killing civilians and interfering with their religious rites. Stronger protection is being provided to Iraqi minorities within their areas of residence with increased vehicle and foot patrols, the presence of units, and a focus on deploying a wider range of divisions of the security forces on operations to protect residential neighbourhoods.

171. Following the liberation of areas previously under the control of Da'esh terrorist groups, the Government, with the support of local and community organizations, began reconstruction efforts in those areas by opening roads, clearing mines and the remnants of war, encouraging a gradual return to work in government offices and reopening police stations and health and medical centres, with the aim of supporting a return to normal life in those areas.

172. On 18 September 2022, the National Security Council decided to abrogate National Security Decree No. 31 of 2019, so that security checks would apply only to displaced persons outside Iraq, and not to internally displaced persons.

173. The Council of Ministers issued Administrative Order No. 40 of 2021, which envisages the formation of a supreme committee for the relief of displaced persons. The committee, which is headed by the Minister of Migration and Displaced Persons, provides assistance to displaced persons, monitors them in situations of emergency and seeks to resettle and reintegrate them when they return to their homes. The committee is also responsible for implementing the national plan for the return of displaced persons to their liberated areas of origin. The committee is made up of 16 governmental representatives, including the Deputy Secretary of the Council of Ministers; 11 ministerial representatives ranking no lower than undersecretary; the head of the Reconstruction Fund for Areas Affected by Terrorism; and representatives from the National Operations Centre, the Civil Defence Directorate, Joint Operations Command and the Department for Labour and Vocational Training in the Ministry of Labour.

174. Each within their own sector of responsibility in the liberated areas and elsewhere, the "military affairs for civil purposes" departments within operational commands and military divisions carry out activities aimed at building trust, community peace and coexistence. These activities include holding inter-tribal meetings; maintaining open communication by attending social events and visiting schools and orphanages; lending military engineering expertise by providing services to civilians during crises such as floods; and providing medical and therapeutic services on the ground during religious events. This helps consolidate the principles of reconciliation and a sense of social justice.

Recommendation 18 (b)

175. The Republic of Iraq adopts the principle of non-discrimination in all its legislation and regulations. The same principle is also enshrined in the Constitution – the country's supreme legal text – article 14 of which stipulates: "All Iraqis are equal before the law without discrimination on grounds of sex, race, nationality, origin, colour, religion, confession, belief, opinion or economic or social status." Articles 14–21 of the Constitution clearly state that such rights are to be protected and specify the legal mechanisms that are to give force to the constitutional provisions, particularly in the form of general laws to regulate the relevant rights. The provisions in question address such matters as equality before the law; the right to life, security and liberty; equality of opportunity; respect for individual privacy; the inviolability of the home; and the right to nationality, which cannot be rescinded or granted on bases other than those envisaged in the country's legal system prior to 2003. This is to ensure that citizenship is not granted in fulfilment of settlement policies that disrupt the demographic structure of Iraq. The same articles also address the independence of the judiciary; the principle that there can be no offence and no penalty save by law; the right to a defence; the presumption of innocence; equality before the courts; public trials; the right to

participate in political and public life; the right to asylum; the deportation of offenders; and other rights.

176. Article 2 (b) of the Constitution guarantees complete freedom of religious belief and practice for all individuals, including Christians, Yazidis and Sabeans. Article 3 of the Constitution affirms that Iraq is a country of multiple national identities, religions and confessional groups, which seeks to uphold the principles of equal citizenship, mutual understanding, social cohesion and civil peace. All minorities and religious sects are able to exercise their rights regarding marriage and related rituals, which are protected by law. Intermarriage between national minorities and religious sects is common in Iraq. The law, which protects the rights of all groups within Iraqi society, is enforced without exception or discrimination while special protection is provided for the rights of minorities, who are an integral part of Iraqi society. The Government is responsible for their safety and guarantees respect for the practice of their religious and social rites; it takes measures to protect the areas in which they live and to prevent attacks against them or violations of their rights. The army protects areas populated by minorities while the security services, each within its own sector of responsibility, perform their national duty to defend all Iraqis regardless of the religious or national group to which they belong, treating civilians in accordance with human rights standards and on the basis of the principle that terrorism has no religion. Once Iraq had been liberated from the presence of Da'esh terrorist groups, the Government began rebuilding and protecting places of worship, particularly those belonging to the country's religious minorities.

177. Since 2003, Iraq has pursued a cultural policy designed to enable all citizens to exercise their legitimate cultural rights, without discrimination. In that connection, article 35 of the Constitution reads: "The State is to promote cultural activities and institutions in a manner appropriate to the civilization and cultural history of Iraq and shall endeavour to pursue authentic Iraqi cultural trends."

178. The Council of Representatives has completed its second reading of a bill regarding freedom of expression, assembly and peaceful demonstration. The bill envisages a mechanism to guarantee freedom of expression across all media, as well as freedom of assembly and peaceful demonstration and the right to information, in a manner that does not prejudice public order or public morals.

179. The National Security Council has endorsed a national policy for community rehabilitation following the liberation of cities from Da'esh terrorist groups. The plan was drafted by the National Security Advisory's centre for joint planning, with input from stakeholders.

180. With regard to cultural rights, there are satellite channels, books and magazines available in the languages spoken by religious and national minorities, such as Turkmen, Assyrians and Syrians.

181. One of the purposes of the Commission for Guaranteeing the Rights of Regions and of Governorates not Incorporated into a Region – which is regulated by Act No. 16 of 2016 – is to elaborate plans and programmes to ensure that inhabitants of regions and of governorates not incorporated into a region can participate fairly in the administration of State institutions. Such plans and programmes are implemented in coordination with the competent federal government authorities, in accordance with criteria of professionalism, competence and equality of opportunity, and without discrimination as to sex, race, ethnicity, origin, colour, religion, confession, belief, opinion, or socioeconomic status.

182. The regional parliament of Kurdistan issued the Kurdistan Communities Protection Act No. 5 of 2015, article 3 (3) of which prohibits any religious, political or media incitement – be it individual or collective, direct or indirect – to hatred, violence, intimidation, exclusion or marginalization on national, ethnic, religious or linguistic grounds. For its part, article 3 (4) of the Act prohibits any action or policy that would alter the status quo in areas inhabited by a particular minority, and it forbids any form of ownership that is aimed at or leads to a demographic shift in the historical and cultural nature of a particular area, for whatever reason and under whatever pretext. Article 4 (2) of the same Act states that any minority group may exercise its fundamental rights and freedoms, on an equal footing with the majority, including freedom of thought, expression and the media; freedom of assembly and of association; and

freedom of religious belief and practice. The Government undertakes to support these freedoms equally for all groups, in accordance with the law.

183. In Kurdistan Region, under Decree No. 11 of 2007 issued by the parliament of Kurdistan, the name of the Ministry of Endowments and Islamic Affairs was changed to the Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs. The change was made because followers of religions other than Islam are present in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. Therefore, the Ministry for Endowments did not deal exclusively with one religion or with the religion of the majority of citizens of the Region, but with all religious communities residing there. The Ministry had previously covered three religions – Islam, Christianity and Yazidism – each represented by a directorate. Under Ministerial Decree No. 1910 of 9 July 2017, the Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs in the Kurdistan Regional Government created a directorate for religious coexistence and the Ministry now has directorates and representative offices for all religious minorities, the aim being to consolidate ties between different faiths.

184. In 2021, Pope Francis met with His Eminence Al-Sayyid Ali Al-Sistani. Pope Francis also visited various areas of Iraq, including the governorates of Dhi Qar and Mosul, and Kurdistan Region; in doing so, he promoted a message of peace among peoples and an end to hatred and racism.

185. The Supreme Yazidi Spiritual Council manages the religious and temporal affairs of the Yazidis. It includes the Office of the Baba Sheikh (the highest spiritual leader of the Yazidis), which oversees the social and religious affairs of the Yazidis.

186. As regards Yazidi religious sites, there are 27 shrines in Nineveh governorate (Sinjar/Bashiqa and Bahzani) and Dahuk governorate (Shekan/Sharya).

187. There are 11 religious institutions and places of worship belonging to the Mandaean community.

188. There are 13 officially recognized Christian institutions, and each denomination has its own subsidiary churches and monasteries.

Recommendation 18 (c)

189. The National Security Council has approved the national counter-terrorism strategy, which was drafted by the National Security Advisory, with input from stakeholders, for the years 2021–2025. The plan now incorporates a section on the recruitment of underage children by terrorist groups and the effect this has on military operations.

190. Approval has been given for Iraq to join joint counter-terrorism task forces in the Middle East and North Africa regions.

191. The Council of Representatives has completed its first reading of a bill, dated 5 September 2020, regarding an amendment to the Supreme Iraqi Criminal Tribunal Act No. 10 of 2005. The amendment includes a provision under which the Supreme Iraqi Criminal Tribunal is granted jurisdiction to try members of terrorist groups. This covers acts committed by Da'esh that amount to international crimes; i.e., genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes.

192. Under Administrative Orders No. 296 of 2019 and No. 219 of 2020, the latter having been amended by Administrative Order No. 451 of 11 November 2021, a national coordinating committee was formed with UNITAD. The purpose of the new committee is to act as a point of contact for the authorities in Iraq at the national and the sub-national levels in order to facilitate UNITAD operations. The committee holds regular meetings twice a month, in addition to extraordinary meetings, at which it discusses the work of Iraqi institutions and UNITAD as well as how to coordinate to implement programmes that are part of the UNITAD mandate. Part of that mandate is to provide redress for minorities and to highlight their sufferings at the hands of the Da'esh terrorist organization. In fact, UNITAD works alongside Iraqi authorities to gather evidence showing how members of Da'esh committed genocide and crimes against humanity against Yazidis in Sinjar and Christians, Shabaks and Turkmen in Mosul. This in no way affects victims' rights vis-à-vis other crimes such as those in Badush Prison, Camp Speicher or the Albu Nimr cemetery. UNITAD also

runs programmes to detect and exhume the remains of victims. Moreover – thanks to coordination between United Nations offices, Iraqi embassies abroad and UNITAD – proposals have been made for activities to raise awareness about the crimes committed by Da'esh against Iraqi minorities.

193. Iraq has cooperated effectively with UNITAD to investigate crimes committed by Da'esh since 10 June 2014. In that regard, Iraq provided the necessary facilities so that those investigations could be completed and the cases referred to the courts, in accordance with Security Council resolution 2379 (2017). The mandate of UNITAD is periodically extended, at the request of Iraq itself.

194. Da'esh groups committed crimes such as murder and abduction against minorities, including Yazidis and Christians, particularly women, and victims continue to suffer from psychological and physical problems. In the light of the State's responsibility under criminal law and its obligation to protect minorities against violence and terrorism, the Supreme Judicial Council has set up specialized courts in each appeal-court jurisdiction and given them a mandate to investigate crimes committed against minorities. In addition to this, there are specialized investigative counter-terrorism courts.

195. In order to document the crimes committed by Da'esh terrorists against Yazidis and other minorities, the Kurdistan Regional Government has recorded thousands of cases involving persons who were abducted. In all, 5,170 case files have been registered, of which 2,324 have come before the courts and 2,000 are still under investigation. A total of 2,916 persons have been registered as missing (1,860 males and 1,056 females), and cases have been brought regarding the existence of 60 mass graves and 65 mass grave sites in Kurdistan Region.

196. Psychosocial support has been provided to 2,234 victims (1,441 women and 793 men).

197. In cooperation with UNITAD and via the national coordinating committee, the Kurdistan Regional Government is working to create an archive of the crimes committed by Da'esh terrorists. A total of 73,912 pages of documents relating to those crimes have been placed in the archive, and a high-level ministerial committee has been formed, which is working to classify the actions of Da'esh as crimes of genocide.

Recommendation 18 (d)

198. The Prime Minister has given instructions to commence a review of the issue of torture in Iraqi prisons through the gathering of reports and complaints about persons who have suffered torture in any form or who have had confessions extracted under coercion. It is possible to submit complaints, accompanied by evidence, directly to the Prime Minister's human rights adviser by email. Another inbox has been set up for complaints to be addressed to the secretary of the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces.

199. The Council of Ministers issued the following instructions under Administrative Order No. 57, dated 1 December 2014:

- No person may be arrested or detained except under a warrant issued by a competent judge or a competent court, or in circumstances envisaged by the law, including articles 102 and 103 of the Code of Criminal Procedure.
- The authority that carries out the arrest or detention shall, within 24 hours, record the name of the detainee, the place of detention, the grounds for the detention and the legal provision applicable thereto in the manual and electronic versions of a central register created and administered by the Ministry of Justice.
- The Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of the Interior and the National Security Agency shall establish rules and procedures for officials to follow when entering information about detainees into the central register.
- No person may be arrested or detained by authorities other than those mentioned above.

- A person's arrest in circumstances other than those provided for in the present Order shall be deemed to constitute criminal abduction and false imprisonment, and the perpetrators shall be liable before the law.

200. The Iraqi Ministry of Defence is required to apply article 333 of the Criminal Code (Act No. 111 of 1969), as amended, to accused persons who are alleged to have committed torture or human rights violations. Under the Code, the accused must be sent before the ordinary criminal courts, if the offence was committed by a member of the military against a civilian.

201. The Human Rights Directorate of the Ministry of Defence monitors and seeks to prevent human rights violations involving members of the Iraqi armed forces. It sets up fact-finding panels to look into cases of torture, enforced disappearance and extrajudicial killings that may occur during military operations and provides complaints hotlines. It also focuses on awareness and education programmes to instil human rights principles in the Iraqi army and appoints rights officers to monitor violations in military teams and units.

202. The following directives have been issued to Office of the Army Chief-of-Staff to transmit to all its formations, to be followed during the course of liberation operations:

- Commanding officers must make their combatants aware of the obligation to abide by human rights principles during battle, and civilians in combat areas must be treated well and humanely irrespective of their religion, religious community or national identity.
- Human rights officers in military units and formations are to carry out their duties fully, to submit reports to their superiors and to train combatants in international humanitarian law.
- The lives of civilians must be preserved, security corridors opened to allow them to leave areas where battles are in progress and rules of engagement observed to protect infrastructure and private and public property.
- Respect must be shown and assistance offered to all persons and sites displaying international humanitarian symbols, such as the Red Cross or the Red Crescent, and to national and international humanitarian organizations.
- The use of unlawful methods (forced interrogation) to extract confessions is absolutely prohibited.
- Civilian detainees are to be transferred to the competent authority within 24 hours, in accordance with the Code of Criminal Procedure (Act No. 23 of 1971), as amended, and arbitrary detention is forbidden.
- Looting and any form of individual action (retaliation) against enemy corpses or prisoners is forbidden as is posting any such actions on social media; persons negligent in that regard are responsible before the law.
- Excessive firepower may not be used against targets.
- Medical services and treatment must continue to be made available to injured and ill civilians in combat areas.

203. The Ministry of the Interior has referred casefiles relating to a group of officers and other ranks to the Internal Security Forces Court for it to look into charges of torture. In some cases, the Court found against them and referred the files to the ordinary courts.

204. All allegations of torture and ill-treatment are investigated immediately, while precautionary and procedural measures are taken to prevent torture in all its forms. These measures include education, awareness-raising on the legal repercussions for persons responsible for torture and the formation of inspection committees to visit pretrial detention centres. The managers of such centres have been provided with official forms in which to record the medical examination of detainees before they are placed in detention. In addition, hotlines have been opened to receive torture-related complaints.

205. The Counter-Terrorism Service ensures that all its staff undergo continuous training to develop their investigative skills and abilities. To that end, they attend courses run in the Service's own Academy as well as in the Iraqi Judicial Institute and elsewhere.

206. Combatants are given lectures in the field on topics such as international humanitarian law and the protection of civilians. Furthermore, the subject of human rights has been included in the basic curricula of military colleges.

207. An anti-torture bill is still under consideration and discussion by the Secretariat of the Council of Ministers. The bill envisages that persons who have been subjected to torture or to cruel or inhuman treatment or punishment have the right to inform the Public Prosecution Service. It also stipulates that measures must be taken within a specified period to guarantee the rights of victims and envisages punishment for perpetrators of acts of torture. Article 37 (1) (c) of the Constitution prohibits all forms of psychological and physical torture and inhuman treatment and establishes that any confession made under coercion, threat or torture is invalid. Moreover, victims have the right to seek compensation for material and moral damages incurred, in accordance with the law. Current laws, also prohibit the use of torture in any form, as set forth in article 333 of the Criminal Code.

208. In accordance with the Criminal Code, legal action will be taken against any official entity that detains individuals or accused persons for a prolonged period of time without bringing charges or that delays the referral of such persons to the investigating authorities. Regular and unannounced visits can be made to all prisons and detention facilities by judges of the Public Prosecution Service, in order to ensure that there are no violations of the guarantees afforded to accused persons, in particular with respect to their appearance before a court within the time frames specified by law.

Recommendation 18 (e)

209. Within the framework of the Criminal Code, the Code of Criminal Procedure and the Prisoners and Detainees Reform Act, Iraqi law contains clear norms regarding compensation for crimes of torture and ill-treatment. Victims and their representatives can bring any complaints before the competent body or notify the supervisory authorities referenced in the Prisoners and Detainees Reform Act No. 14 of 2018, the High Commission for Human Rights Act and the Public Prosecution Service Act. Complainants can pursue compensation individually in separate lawsuits or together in the same lawsuit.

210. Iraq has enacted legislation under which citizens are able to access redress, compensation and rehabilitation. In fact, transitional justice laws include provision for granting appropriate compensation and concede certain privileges to persons who suffered harm as a result of the policies of the former dictatorship. Such measures extend for a specified period of time. Furthermore, Iraq treats victims of combat operations, military errors and terrorist activities in a way that ensures access to redress for all Iraqis, in accordance with Act No. 20 of 2009 concerning compensation for persons affected by military operations, military errors and terrorist activities, as amended. In this context, reference should also be made to Act No. 2 of 2020 which introduced a second amendment into Act No. 20 of 2009.

211. Article 4 (1) and (2) of the Yazidi Female Survivors Act aims to provide financial material and moral compensation for female survivors, as well as to guarantee them a decent life, rehabilitation, care and the means to reintegrate into society, and to prevent the violations against them from recurring. Article 5 (7) of the Act envisages searches for abducted Yazidi, Turkmen, Christian and Shabak men, women and children, whose fate remains unknown. Such searches are to be conducted in coordination with the competent authorities inside and outside Iraq and with the families of the victims. The Act also includes provision to address the legal status of victims and to provide benefits and compensation for them or their families, in line with the relevant laws. In addition to this, under article 10 (1), a committee is to be formed to consider applications from the survivors and from other groups covered by the provisions of the Act.

212. On the subject of compensation for victims, article 1 of the Code of Criminal Procedure states that any person who is the victim of an offence may bring a criminal case against the perpetrator of that offence. According to article 10, victims may seek compensation for the physical or moral harm they have suffered from any offence. In addition to this, article 3 of Act No. 20 of 2009 concerning compensation for persons affected by military operations, military errors and terrorist activities envisages the formation of a central committee, answerable to the Office of the Prime Minister, which considers applications for compensation for military operations and terrorist activities, from victims and their families.

213. A total of ID 678 billion has been allocated under Emergency Food Security and Development Act No. 2 of 2022. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs is responsible for providing social welfare protection and special needs coverage and must ensure that this support is distributed on the basis of the population sizes in the governorates. Funding in the amount of ID 25 billion has been provided pursuant to the Yazidi Female Survivors Act.

214. The judiciary takes effective action to address issues of impunity and reparations for victims, so as to ensure that all persons, including those who are most in need of care, have access to justice. It also takes the necessary steps to conduct confidential and comprehensive investigations into human rights violations and other forms of abuse. The judicial system is independent and autonomous, and Iraqi laws guarantee that all persons are able to access justice without any impediments. The investigations conducted by the judiciary into offences involving human rights violations and abuse are exemplary, and that quality is reflected in the rulings handed down by the Iraqi courts.

215. Field visits have been made to displaced families and survivors of Da'esh terrorist groups in Baghdad, the governorates and Kurdistan Region. In-kind assistance has been provided in coordination with humanitarian organizations, and psychological support has been offered to women in displaced persons camps.

216. Offices have been opened in the left-bank quarter of Mosul where liberated women can go to update their personal information. More than 12,000 beneficiaries have availed themselves of this service and have, as a consequence, received allowances that had been suspended since Da'esh occupied the Mosul Governorate.

217. The Social Protection Department has launched a subsidized income project for women whereby it provides them with training in domestic skills that generate an income to support their families. The project also provides an opportunity for widows and divorced women to discharge their responsibilities and meet their needs inside their homes. In this connection, 2,500 beneficiaries have been provided with kitchen utensils, sewing materials, domestic poultry or hairdressing and beauty products, in coordination with local and international organizations.

218. Psychological support centres have been established in seven governorates, where services are provided by social workers appointed by the Social Protection Department.

219. Victims are referred to hospital for treatment. If they show signs of physical injuries or of having suffered sexual assault, a medical report is annexed to the investigation file and is shown to the investigating judge so that the perpetrator can be summoned or arrested and to ensure that the offence does not go unpunished.

Recommendation 18 (f)

220. A committee for dialogue and community peace has been formed as part of the Office of the Prime Minister. The committee, which is headed by the Advisor to the Prime Minister, implements and monitors its own global strategy in pursuit of just, comprehensive and acceptable national reconciliation as the optimal strategic choice and the best way to save Iraq. The parties that have contributed to the success of this mechanism include tribal and regional groups, civil society organizations and vocational bodies, each acting in its own sphere of competence, in addition to media institutions, technical and sporting bodies and the educational sector. The committee for dialogue and community peace has an office for women, which is staffed exclusively by women; it addresses all matters of concern to Iraqi women and seeks to promote them so that they can play a leading role in the project of

national reconciliation. The committee has underscored the importance of introducing school curricula on the culture of peace, tolerance and human rights and it has printed two booklets that have been distributed to school and university students – one entitled *Towards a Society of Dialogue and Non-Violence* and the other *We Tolerate to Live* – which serve to consolidate values of reconciliation, peace and tolerance in society. The committee has also been engaged in broad-ranging institutional efforts to deal with the most pressing issues, particularly those relating to the dissolved entities of the former regime. National reconciliation in Iraq is predicated on comprehensive settlement and universal security in exchange for inclusive participation, the settlement of crises by negotiation, painful concessions from all parties, peaceful conflict resolution and the repudiation of violence as a political card. The committee, in cooperation with the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) has reached out to all parties inside and outside the political process, both directly and through intermediaries, to find a preliminary understanding on which to build national reconciliation within the framework of the Constitution. These labours have given rise to a set of initial understandings and demands that will represent a basis for talks, to be augmented and developed in the course of negotiations. The most significant instruments used to achieve national reconciliation are:

- Television discussion programmes to educate people and raise awareness about the values of reconciliation
- School curricula
- General and specialized newspapers and magazines to promote tolerance, coexistence and reconciliation
- Reports and television coverage of reconciliation activities; also, cultural programmes and activities
- Government-sponsored seminars and conferences to promote inter-confessional dialogue, peaceful coexistence and national reconciliation

221. A national settlement initiative has been adopted in partnership with UNAMI. This is a community/national political settlement that aims to make Iraq a place of coexistence free from violence and subjugation. Ethnic, religious and community groups within Iraqi society are all participating in the initiative, under which all national stakeholders have reciprocal obligations and safeguards.

222. The restabilization project of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has contributed to a number of development projects in Iraq. As of 2021, 297 projects – in fields such as education, electricity, health, resettlement, municipalities, roads and bridges, and water – had been implemented in governorates that had been the scene of violent incidents (Anbar, Mosul, Salah al-Din, Kirkuk, Diyala). Also in 2021, a total of 291 projects in the same fields were being rolled out in governorates affected by the actions of Da'esh. In 2022, 335 projects were being implemented in the same governorates.

223. The Ministry of Planning, in cooperation with the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), is running a pilot programme for areas that are emerging from situations of conflict. The programme is being rolled out in three governorates (Nineveh, Salah al-Din and Anbar) and, in its first phase, is being implemented at the level of local institutions in the Hamdaniyah district of Nineveh Governorate via a series of workshops intended to evaluate institutional capacities. The underlying aim of the pilot programme is to consolidate the ability of local governance to face up to the multiple challenges caused after terrorist organizations occupied a number of Iraqi governorates. The intention is to raise the response capacity of relevant local institutions vis-à-vis the conditions and requirements for the return of displaced persons to liberated areas and, specifically, to ensure that such persons are able to return to their damaged former homes, to restore the social fabric and to provide basic services necessary to secure livelihoods and achieve peace and stability. At the same time, firm foundations are being laid from which to embark on the long path towards sustainable and equitable reconstruction and development.

224. A national plan has been drafted for the return of displaced persons to their liberated areas of origin. The plan aims to address the problems such persons face and to facilitate their voluntary return to their homes in a way that preserves their dignity, or to find alternative

solutions for those who are unable to return within specific timescales. It also aims to contribute to their development, reintegration into society, rehabilitation and empowerment.

225. As part of its second national plan under Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), the Ministry of Planning is running seeking to assess the needs of Christian, Sabeen Mandaean, Shabak and Yazidi families. To this end, in partnership with stakeholders, it is examining the conditions of religious minorities, particularly the most affected among them, taking due account of legislative and health-related issues, as well as humanitarian needs. A comprehensive report on the outcomes of the evaluation will be submitted to the Secretariat of the Council of Ministers.

226. Housing conditions for internally displaced persons are being improved through the reconstruction and restoration of destroyed homes. This task has been entrusted to the Ministry of Planning and is being funded by the Reconstruction Fund for Areas Affected by Terrorism.

227. Between 2016 and 2020, the Reconstruction Fund for Areas Affected by Terrorism Operations planned the following projects:

- Planned projects: 996
- Contracted projects: 975
- Completed projects: 842

228. The Iraqi Government permits all Iraqis, without discrimination, to join the armed forces, internal security forces and the National Intelligence Agency, all of which currently include personnel from the Christian, Yazidi and Sabeen Mandaean communities. The Government provides protection for minority places of worship, and police units have been assigned to protect facilities and public figures.

229. The Council of Ministers has issued a decree declaring the suffering of minority groups in Iraq – Yazidis, Turkmens, Christians, Shabak and others – at the hands of Da'esh terror groups as crimes of genocide. Moreover, in 2016 and 2017, the Council of Ministers decided to reinstate Christian staff working in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

230. Under Presidential Decree No. 33 of 2016, a commission made up of religious, community, tribal and political leaders was established to address problems arising from the presence of the Da'esh terrorist organization in the governorate of Nineveh and the resulting damage to the social fabric there. The commission proposes direct initiatives aimed at creating unity among the people of Nineveh and at overcoming the negative impact of the actions of Da'esh. The purpose is to encourage a return to normal social life, support security agencies in the governorate, build camps for displaced persons and enable officials to return to their posts.

231. In 2021, the Iraqi Government decided to repatriate Iraqi citizens from camps and holding centres in northern Syria. This was achieved between June 2021 and March 2022. With support from the United Nations – and under the supervision of the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq, the Resident Coordinator and the Humanitarian Coordinator – a joint study was conducted into the return of Iraqi citizens from Syria, the aim being to identify shortcomings, needs and priorities and thus support the Government of Iraq in the rehabilitation and reintegration of its citizens who have returned or are in the process of returning from north-east Syria.

232. Between February and April 2022, IOM, ICCT and the National Security Advisory held a series of round-table meetings to address the question of prosecutions as well as matters related to rehabilitation and reintegration. The purpose of the meetings was to facilitate technical cooperation and coordination between the Government of Iraq and the United Nations vis-a-vis the return of Iraqis from north-east Syria.

233. A sub-working group for technical cooperation has been created to facilitate coordination in two areas of the global framework in Iraq (recovery/development and security/accountability). The sub-working group, which is part of a technical working group, acts as the steering committee for a team that works with the Government of Iraq on the issue of returnees from Syria. The working groups have foregrounded the principle that any returns

to the country have to be voluntary and that they must be legally sound and take place in conditions of physical security. All cases have been dealt with in a manner consistent with human rights principles regarding age and gender, and with the participation of all stakeholders from the United Nations and the Iraqi Government.

Recommendation 20

234. On 28 July 2019, the Federal Supreme Court issued a ruling in which, at the request of the Iraqi parliament, it interpreted article 140 of the Constitution. According to the ruling, under article 140 of the 2005 Constitution of the Republic of Iraq, the executive is vested with the authority to take the action necessary to implement all provisions of article 58 of the State Transitional Administration Act, which provisions remain in force under article 143 of the Constitution. The purpose of this is to achieve the objectives set forth in article 58, which aim to bring justice to areas that suffered changes to their demographic make-up as a consequence of deportation, exile, forced displacement and resettlement. This is to be achieved by following the steps described in article 58 itself and, since part of those steps have not yet been put into effect, the process has not been completed and article 140 of the Constitution remains to be fully enforced. As concerns the deadline indicated in the article, it had been set for organizational and administrative purposes, and all concerned parties were urged to meet it without affecting the essence or goal of the steps. On this basis, the Federal Supreme Court ruled that article 140 of the Constitution of the Republic of Iraq remains in force at the current time and will do so until its provisions have been fulfilled and its objectives achieved, following the steps described in article 58 of the State Transitional Administration Act.

235. The Federal Government and the Kurdistan Regional Government have formed joint field committees to consolidate security and stability and to maintain territorial control in the liberated areas, particularly the Nineveh Plains. The Federal Police have been deployed to ensure security inside those areas while the borders are secured by the Iraqi armed forces and the Peshmerga.

236. As part of follow-up on the implementation of decisions regarding the Nineveh Plains taken by the Prime Minister in Bartalah in 2018, an announcement was made on 17 May 2018, in the presence of representatives of all the communities inhabiting the Plains and of the Director General of UNDP, that a council of elders would be formed for peace in the Nineveh Plains. It was also announced that local peace committees are being formed in Nineveh Governorate, Nineveh Plains and Sinjar district, with no community being marginalized. These are part of other efforts being made by the governmental and civil society organizations to build peace, peaceful coexistence and societal cohesion.

237. In March 2018, the inhabitants of the Nineveh Plains signed a document of peaceful coexistence, affirming national unity, good will and a start to reconstruction. The document includes the following elements:

- It envisages the criminalization of sectarianism and racism, and it repudiates the violence used by Da'esh.
- It rejects hatred and bitterness in favour of social harmony and open-mindedness, and it aims to remove the influence of Da'esh from all aspects of daily life.
- It adopts a new form of group dynamics and seeks to modernize media and religious discourse across Nineveh, promoting the role of civil society and spreading a spirit of harmony and cooperation.
- It promotes joint action to ensure the right of all citizens to a free, decent, secure and stable life, as well as to compensation for harm suffered.
- It repudiates the crimes of forced displacement committed against the peoples of the Nineveh Plains – Christians, Shabaks, Yazidis, Turkmens, Yarsanis, Kurds and Arabs.
- It promotes the prompt enactment of laws and legislation to remove all traces of the Da'esh occupation and it envisages legislative and legal amendments to hold to account persons who used Da'esh as a cover to commit other crimes.

- It seeks the enforcement of laws and judicial rulings, and enjoins the use of reason in the resolution of individual transgressions, which is to be left to wise and judicious persons, while communal disputes are to be resolved by compromise and criminal cases are to be left to the judiciary and the local police, without any militarization of society.
- It entrusts administrative decision-making to local government institutions, local councils and heads of administrative delegations.

238. Iraq has rolled out a clear and simple strategy to restore stability to liberated areas and help them recover from the crisis. This includes a joint plan with relevant ministries to regenerate basic infrastructure, in cooperation with UNDP.

Recommendation 41

239. The Government ratified the International Labour Organization (ILO) Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87), making Iraq one of a group of countries to have ratified all eight fundamental ILO conventions. In all, Iraq has ratified 68 ILO conventions, including three of the four governance (priority) conventions.

240. On 5 December 2019, Iraq signed a document with ILO to promote decent work. The document envisages a body of activities aimed at creating a safe and decent working environment in the country.

241. The possibility of acceding to the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families is still under review because not all the standards enshrined in that instrument have yet been incorporated into national mechanisms or national legislation, particularly the Workers Retirement and Social Security Act, the Labour Code, the Trade Unions Act, the Social Protection Act and the regulations governing work by foreigners in Iraq. Thus, the committee responsible for drafting treaty body reports has recommended that Iraq does not accede to the Convention for the time being.

242. Iraq has not so far ratified the ILO Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189).

Recommendation 42

243. The Republic of Iraq adopts the principle of non-discrimination in all its legislation and regulations. The same principle is also enshrined in the Constitution – the country’s supreme legal text – article 14 of which stipulates: “All Iraqis are equal before the law without discrimination on grounds of sex, race, nationality, origin, colour, religion, confession, belief, opinion or economic or social status.” Articles 14–21 of the Constitution clearly state that such rights are to be protected and specify the legal mechanisms that are to give force to the constitutional provisions, particularly in the form of general laws to regulate the relevant rights. The provisions in question address such matters as equality before the law; the right to life, security and liberty; equality of opportunity; respect for individual privacy; the inviolability of the home; and the right to nationality, which cannot be rescinded or granted on bases other than those envisaged in the country’s legal system prior to 2003. This is to ensure that citizenship is not granted in fulfilment of settlement policies that disrupt the demographic structure of Iraq. The same articles also address the independence of the judiciary; the principle that there can be no offence and no penalty save by law; the right to a defence; the presumption of innocence; equality before the courts; public trials; the right to participate in political and public life; the right to asylum; the deportation of offenders; and other rights.

244. The Iraqi Constitution guarantees the rights of minorities, while national election laws guarantee their adequate representation by granting them their own quota in the Council of Representatives and local councils. In addition, Act No. 58 of 2018 has been approved which regulates and enlarges the minorities’ endowment office, changing its name to the Christian, Yazidi and Sabeen Mandaean Endowment Office. With regard to cultural rights, there are

satellite channels, books and magazines available in the languages spoken by ethnic and religious minorities, such as Kurds, Turkmen, Assyrians and Syrians.

245. Neither the Constitution nor domestic law contain any provisions that discriminate against particular groups on grounds of sexual orientation or gender. The law protects rights and freedoms while the courts investigate violations that any group may suffer and pursue offenders to ensure there is no impunity.

246. The authorities have drafted a strategy to combat violent extremism that leads to terrorism. The strategy is aimed at creating an environment that encourages moderate, open and tolerant thought and behaviour, and rejects violent and extremist ideas. It also aims to foster a national spirit that respects different cultures, while addressing shortcomings and gaps in anti-extremist legislation. The strategy has become an important factor at the institutional level and in society as a whole. A number of civil society organizations were involved in the drafting process and there are continuous efforts to develop and improve the strategy.

247. Official Languages Act No. 7 of 2014 was promulgated as an expression of respect for the ethnic and linguistic diversity of Iraq and to uphold the humanitarian dimension in the country's newly inaugurated era of federalism. The Act reflects the teachings of Islam, which enjoins respect for other languages, and it enables the communities of Iraq freely to express their wants and needs in their own mother tongue.

248. In Iraq it is forbidden to enact legislation that instigates religious hatred or that constitutes an incitement to discrimination, hostility and violence. Every effort is made to respect and protect religious sites, shrines and symbols, and additional measures are taken when those places are at risk of being defiled or vandalized. Moreover, domestic law guarantees the right of all persons to worship and to assemble in the context of a religion or a belief, to set up and administer premises necessary for that purpose and to write, publish and distribute printed material in that connection. Moreover, in line with international human rights law, domestic legislation fully respects and protects the freedom of individuals and groups to set up and administer religious, charitable or humanitarian institutions. Iraq also takes all necessary and appropriate measures in accordance with international human rights law to combat hatred, intolerance, acts of violence, intimidation and coercion motivated by fanaticism based on religion and incitement to hostility and violence. The Government is working hard alongside religious institutions to develop religious preaching in a way that univocally rejects sectarianism and discrimination.

249. The Iraqi Government permits all Iraqis, without discrimination, to join the armed forces, internal security forces and the National Intelligence Agency, all of which currently include personnel from the Christian, Yazidi and Sabean Mandaean communities. The Government provides protection for minority places of worship, and police units have been assigned to protect facilities and public figures.

250. The members of the Kurdistan parliament have voted through a new law that prohibits any religious or political incitement – be it individual or collective, direct or indirect – to hatred, violence, intimidation, exclusion or marginalization on national, ethnic, religious or linguistic grounds.

Recommendation 44

251. Stakeholders, including civil society organizations, are involved in an advisory capacity in the process of drafting reports of the Republic of Iraq. What is more, the national human rights plan was prepared with the involvement of the Iraqi High Commission for Human Rights and of three civil society organizations, while taking due account of the latter's geographical remit and areas of competence. These organizations continue to collaborate with the authorities and – by means of an online group that brings together representatives of governmental and non-governmental bodies – are given priority access to all information received by the secretariat that oversees the national human rights plan.

252. On 17 January 2022, the European Union Advisory Mission in Iraq hosted a civil society platform under the title "Upholding Cultural Rights through the Protection of Cultural

Heritage”, which brought together stakeholders from civil society and government as well as international partners.

253. Every effort is made to create an environment conducive to cooperation with partners in the implementation and follow-up of the national human rights plan (2021–2025). In order for the plan to reflect the views of all parties, the persons responsible for implementing it interact with the active, effective and specialized civil society stakeholders who are present on the ground in Iraq. The plan, in fact, includes mechanisms to promote an appropriate number of civil society organizations. That number that is not in any case fixed but changes with changing activities and needs. The plan also identifies certain organizations that have a long history of independent and professional operation, which it includes in a reference list for coordination, planning and implementation.

254. In Kurdistan Region, a total of 41 meetings were held with civil society organizations, specialists and experts in the field of human rights, in order to support the implementation programme of the Region’s own human rights plan (2021–2025). In addition to this, 21 workshops were held with international organizations, United Nations agencies and representatives of States, in order to address shortcomings and develop appropriate solutions for the various parts of the plan.

Recommendation 45

255. Iraq is continuing to study the possibility of acceding to international instruments, including United Nations human rights treaties, analysing mechanisms for their implementation at the national level and selecting the appropriate time for taking such decisions. Furthermore, Iraq has authorized its Independent High Commission for Human Rights to receive individual complaints and communications, a step that creates the conditions for studying the possibility of making the declaration.

Recommendation 46

256. At its twenty-ninth regular session held on 23 July 2019, the Council of Ministers approved the common core document of the Republic of Iraq, under Council Decree No. 257 of 2019. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has undertaken to send out the document to the relevant committees in Arab and international organizations. The authorities are currently in the course of updating the document to reflect the changes that have occurred in the field of legislation, policies and strategies since it was adopted in 2019.

Recommendation 47

257. An answer to the request for follow-up on the paragraphs in question was duly provided on time, in communication No. 2182/4/T/12 from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Human Rights Department), dated 2 December 2019.

Recommendation 49

258. On 9 April 2019, the Human Rights Department at the Ministry of Justice duly circulated the concluding observations to ministries and non-ministerial bodies as well as to independent organizations such as the Iraqi High Commission for Human Rights. The concluding observations were also posted on the Ministry’s website and stakeholders, such as civil society organizations, were invited to submit their views and comments thereon.

III. Groups most in need of care

A. Women

259. A second plan for the economic empowerment of women has been rolled out, which is being spearheaded by the Ministry of Planning in partnership with a number of stakeholders and in coordination with the World Bank. The plan envisages activities intended to support women's empowerment, increase their involvement in the private sector, overcome the obstacles they face and support sustainable economic growth in the country. To this end, the Ministry of Planning is focusing on three of the seven areas of focus of the second national plan for the economic empowerment of women in Iraq (2021–2022), as follows:

- Comprehensive activities in the areas of the law and the media
- Data and know-how
- Gender-responsive budgeting

260. Efforts are being made to launch an Iraqi national anti-suicide strategy.

261. A national strategy for Iraqi women is being prepared.

262. Centres to protect women from domestic violence have been opened in Diwaniyah, Anbar and Dhi Qar and efforts are being made to open new centres in other governorates.

263. The authorities are working to tackle the issue of suicides among girls in displacement camps and in other areas, to understand the reasons and causes of the phenomenon and to address and prevent it. To that end, a committee was formed under Administrative Order No. 4 of 2021 which is contributing to a suicide-prevention strategy.

264. Efforts to enact a law on protection against domestic violence are being speeded up. The law is currently still before the Council of Representatives where a working group has been formed to follow up and to raise awareness, with a view to accelerating the process of enactment. The working group is coordinating with other committees of the Council of Representatives, as well as with stakeholders and UNAMI, to address the obstacles hindering ratification of the law.

265. The code of professional conduct of the internal security forces is being amended and made more gender sensitive with the inclusion of a chapter on women and social justice.

266. The code of professional conduct of the Media and Communications Commission is also being amended and made more gender sensitive.

267. Units for the protection of families and children from domestic violence are being reinforced with the deployment of female investigating officers: four on the Karkh side of Baghdad and four on the Rusafah side. The deployment is part of a plan of the Directorate for Protecting Families and Children from Domestic Violence to increase the number of female investigators, to allocate posts (both officers and civilian functionaries) in the Directorate to women and to involve women in training and development courses on domestic and gender-based violence. The plan also aims to build the capacities and skills of female staff and to help them overcome the obstacles faced by women working in the Ministry of the Interior. The Directorate seeks to create amenable conditions for female staff in the Ministry and to accept and process applications from women. This task is undertaken by the women's affairs section of the Directorate as well as by women's affairs sections in the Directorate for Police in the Governorates, the Directorate for Traffic and the Directorate for the Protection of Facilities and Public Figures.

268. In coordination with the Directorate for Training and Habilitation and civil society organizations, the Directorate for Protecting Families and Children from Domestic Violence has developed a plan to train its staff on the bill on protection against domestic violence, once the bill has been enacted by the Council of Representatives. Another plan is also being prepared with a view to increasing the admission of female officers with higher degrees (doctorates and masters) and bachelor's degrees (in psychology, sociology and law) to

departments for protecting families and children from domestic violence in Baghdad and the governorates, in order to enhance the competence of the departments in these areas.

269. A high-level committee for the advancement of rural women has been formed to provide a unified view of issues affecting such women and to come up with plans and programmes to meet their needs.

270. The process whereby divorced women receive payments from the enforcement departments of the Ministry of Justice is being automated, also as a way of facilitating their interaction with those departments.

271. Increased efforts are being made to adopt gender-responsive budgeting, and article 28 (6) of the 2020 State Budget Act stipulates that all ministries are required to adopt gender-responsive programmes. That approach was upheld in Decree No. 177 of 2021, which stresses the importance of such programmes, and work is ongoing in coordination with the World Bank to adopt them at the level of government.

272. The implementation plan for the World Bank's "Mashreq" initiative is being reviewed and reformulated in order to make it more responsive to the real needs of Iraqi women. The aim is to produce tangible results that serve women, particularly female heads of household who have no source of income, and that provide them with appropriate tools to join the labour market or enter into business.

273. In the framework of the second national plan under Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), on women, peace and security, the Central Bank has instructed all banks to allocate 25 per cent of facilitated loans to female heads of household, widows and female survivors of conflict, in order to support their investment projects. In addition, the Ministry of Labour has issued 8,052 loans for integrated projects to small- and medium-sized enterprises through the Support Fund for Income-Generating Microprojects and 1,490 loans under the Poverty Reduction Strategy.

274. Iraq is participating in the "Khadija" network for women's economic empowerment in the Arab region, an initiative launched by the League of Arab States. The aim of the initiative is to support the empowerment of women in marginalized areas, as well as in areas of asylum and displacement, by creating a working environment that is safer for women. The network serves as a platform for the exchange of knowledge and experience, and it provides an opportunity for partnership and dialogue between different stakeholders operating in the field of women's economic empowerment.

275. The table below shows the number of complaints of domestic violence received via the hotline.

<i>Year</i>	<i>No. of calls</i>	<i>Legal guidance</i>
2018	7 249	2 417
2019	9 667	4 235
2020	13 231	9 486
2021	7 200	3 600

276. In the whole of Iraq, a total of 70,572 girls aged under 10 are covered by social protection.

277. In the whole of Iraq, a total of 12,980 girls and women aged between 10 and 20 are covered by social protection.

278. In the whole of Iraq, a total of 24,837 women aged between 21 and 30 are covered by social protection.

279. In the whole of Iraq, a total of 48,448 women aged between 31 and 40 are covered by social protection.

280. In the whole of Iraq, a total of 66,994 women aged between 41 and 50 are covered by social protection.

281. In the whole of Iraq, a total of 71,178 women aged between 51 and 60 are covered by social protection.

282. In the whole of Iraq, a total of 130,483 women aged over 60 are covered by social protection.

283. The total number of girls and women covered by social protection at the end of 2021 stood at 425,492.

B. Children

284. The Council of Representatives has completed its first reading of a child protection bill, which aims to safeguard children's rights and to improve their situation in the country. The bill also specifies the means to be used for the protection of those rights and for the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which Iraq ratified under Act No. 3 of 1994.

285. Administrative Order No. 86 of 2021 envisages the formation of a supreme national committee to monitor, report and follow up on the violation or deprivation of children's rights as a result of the armed conflict.

286. Via the Child Welfare Commission, which is part of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Iraq has approved the action plan for its child protection policy (2022–2025). The plan takes a holistic approach to address children's rights across all fields. This includes protective environments, empowerment and building capacity in institutions that deal with children. The plan receives broad support from government agencies, the private sector and civil society organizations.

287. In 2013, Iraq acceded to the Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction, which aims to protect children internationally from the harmful effects of their wrongful removal or retention and to establish procedures to ensure their prompt return to the State of their habitual residence, as well as to secure protection for rights of access. Under Administrative Order No. 14 of 2021, a central committee was formed to implement the Hague Convention, which assumes the functions of the "Central Authority" envisaged in chapter II of the Convention.

288. Regulation No. 7 of 2017 regarding care homes for victims of human trafficking states that a care home for victims of human trafficking is to be opened in Baghdad, linked to the Social Protection Department of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. The Minister of Labour may also establish care homes for human trafficking victims in other governorates. The home is responsible for the welfare of trafficking victims, their social, psychological and physical rehabilitation and their reintegration into society. To that end, it adopts a number of reintegration procedures and provides educational opportunities and vocational training. It also facilitates residency procedures for non-Iraqi victims. The home has a number of different centres: one for children under the age of 12, one each for boys and girls between the ages of 12 and 18 and one each for male and female adults.

289. Over the next 10 years, the child protection policy aims to improve the protective environment for children in Iraq and to achieve the following results:

- Provide protection for children within a legislative framework that fully guarantees their rights and meets their needs, in line with international standards.
- Ensure safe living conditions for children within supportive families and communities that protect their rights and promote their development, so that they can realize their full potential.
- Help children to present and discuss the issues that affect them, and to propose solutions.
- Ensure that children and families receive adequate support before any risk arises, in order to enhance their safety; this is achieved thanks to early intervention against risks such as neglect, exploitation or abuse.

- Provide children who have been subjected to violence, abuse or exploitation with the support and care they need to restore their well-being and to reintegrate them into their communities.
- Ensure that children affected by conflict and forced displacement can enjoy a safe and supportive living environment, within their own families and communities.
- Establish a comprehensive monitoring and data collection system on child protection issues, which intersects with and contributes to all outcomes.
- Develop follow-up, implementation and evaluation mechanisms.

290. In cooperation with the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and Child Helpline International, the Child Welfare Commission has set up two child helplines in Iraq. The helplines constitute one of the monitoring and reporting mechanisms envisaged in the child protection policy in Iraq.

291. A shelter (safe house) has been opened where women and child victims can access humanitarian services. The shelter is staffed by social workers and psychiatrists who provide support to residents, undertake case studies and provide education and technical training, with a view to reintegrating them into society.

C. Persons with disabilities

292. During the ninth session of its second legislative term (year I), held on 8 November 2022, the Council of Representatives completed its second reading of a bill to amend the Persons with Disabilities and Special Needs Act No. 13 of 2013.

293. A total of 183,110 persons with disabilities – 39.8 per cent female and 60.2 per cent male – receive a grant for a full-time assistant. This is in addition to other initiatives, listed in the following table:

<i>Initiative</i>	<i>No.</i>
Allocation of seats to enable persons with disabilities to study	723
Health insurance for persons with disabilities	367
Allocation of a customized vehicle	11 964
Habilitation courses for persons with disabilities	180

294. The national plan for persons with disabilities (2022–2024) was drafted by the Commission for the Care of Persons with Disabilities and Special Needs, which is part of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. The plan – which is aimed at persons with disabilities of both sexes and of different age groups – includes provision for sports festivals and workshops that are intended to stimulate the role of the media and thus disseminate an awareness of disability issues. The plan also envisages follow-up on the goals of the national development plan (subsection on human and social development for persons with disabilities) and on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (2020–2030) relevant to persons with disabilities, as well as inclusive education and special educational units.

295. The government programme for 2021 and 2022 increases financial allocations for persons with disabilities and special needs. The aim is to increase the total number of beneficiaries to 650,000 by the end of 2025.

296. In 2021, the Commission ran a government-sponsored training and habilitation programme which benefited 180 persons with disabilities in the governorates of Diyala, Kirkuk, Wasit, Maysan and Baghdad.

297. Facilitated “community habilitation” loans have been granted to help persons with disabilities and special needs open small-scale income-generating projects, thereby contributing to their economic empowerment and integration into society.

298. Clear and workable official provisions that reflect national standards on the right to education are being amended to accommodate the right of students with disabilities and

special educational needs. At the same time, laws are being updated to bring them into line with the international instruments that Iraq has ratified. In addition to this, guidelines have been developed on the right of students with disabilities to enrol in education and be admitted to school, and on the support that must be available to them inside educational establishments. Workshops have been held to raise awareness and build capacities among persons responsible for drafting policies on inclusion and equality in education.

299. The Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research provides all possible facilities to support students with disabilities and special needs. This includes tuition fee exemptions for wheelchair-users or blind persons who enrol in evening classes. They are also provided with access to further study that is appropriate to their state of health. Students who are blind, moreover, have the possibility of being tested orally on certain subjects such as computing and statistics.

300. The Human Rights Department at the Ministry of Education is responsible for raising community awareness about disability and about the differences between persons with disabilities. It also seeks to create an environment that fosters and promotes inclusive community-based education and that reduces negative stereotypes against persons with disabilities. To this end, the Ministry has developed awareness-raising programmes that – with the assistance of schoolteachers – aim to encourage cooperation between students with disabilities and their peers without disabilities. The programmes are also aimed at educating families and communities about the need to recognize disability and about the importance of involving children with disabilities and their parents in decisions that affect them.

301. In Kurdistan Region, special telephones have been distributed to deafblind persons, and teachers in State-run schools are receiving training in that regard.

302. The Independent High Electoral Commission in Kurdistan Region provides facilities to help ensure that persons with special needs are able to enter polling stations and cast their votes. To that end, the Commission as well as its operational and media departments issue instructions at the start of the electoral process.

IV. Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic

A. Measures taken by the Government of Iraq to tackle COVID-19

303. The Government introduced a state of “public health emergency” that allowed it to issue decrees and apply exceptional measures to reduce the spread of novel coronavirus. These steps were considered necessary to protect human rights, including the right to life and the right to health.

304. The High-level Committee for National Health and Safety, headed by the Prime Minister, was established under Administrative Order No. 97 of 2020. Its purpose was to promote the preventive measures being put in place by the Government, control public health and raise awareness about COVID-19.

305. Via this Committee, the Government issued several decrees the aim of which was to preserve the health and safety of citizens and to contain the spread of the virus, as explained in the following paragraphs.

(a) Free services

306. The offices of the Ministry of Communications (Postal Service) in Baghdad and the governorates provided free services to citizens, including home deliveries, government subsidies, food baskets, medical subsidies, etc. These helped to ensure that Iraqi citizens were able to live decently and survive in their own homes while under lockdown and until the end of the pandemic.

(b) Partial lockdown

307. A lockdown was imposed to protect citizens against the disease, in line with WHO recommendation. However, the restrictions did not cover:

- The movement of foodstuffs or of agricultural goods and produce, bread and other vital necessities.
- The movement of tankers transporting oil and gas derivatives or petrol, or of bicycles selling cooking gas cylinders.
- Chemists, health centres and private hospitals.
- The security services, institutions providing basic services to citizens, authorized media outlets and diplomats.

308. The Ministry of the Interior monitors rises in the price of foodstuffs and takes legal action against anyone violating the law.

309. With the exception of the security services, institutions providing basic services to citizens and authorized media outlets, official working hours were suspended in ministries and in governmental and non-governmental bodies.

(c) Return of Iraqis abroad

310. In dealing with Iraqis returning from abroad, the nations of the world were divided into two groups according to whether the infection rate in a particular country was high or low. On that basis, health authorities at border crossing points tested returnees then took appropriate measures to ensure their health and well-being.

311. Health screening centres were set up at airports and border crossing points.

312. Persons arriving in Iraq – both Iraqis and non-Iraqis, without exception – were required to submit a negative PCR test that had been carried out not more than 72 hours before boarding a plane or entering Iraq via a land crossing or seaport.

313. Migrant children or child travellers, under the age of 10, were exempt from the requirement to present a PCR test, if accompanied by their parents.

314. The Iraqi armed forces remain on hand to provide assistance to persons arriving at border crossing points. Buildings have been made available as have – if necessary – special aircraft, with the approval of the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces.

315. Special flights were laid on to transport Iraqis from abroad, in line with priorities set by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Health.

(d) Measures and proposals

316. The payment of instalments due for residential plots that were sold or leased to citizens who are not public-sector workers was postponed.

317. Tenants of commercial, industrial or other properties that belong to government institutions were exempted from their rent instalments.

318. Payment deadlines – on rents, servitude or sale – for final demands that coincided with the lockdown were extended.

319. The deadline for payment of sale fees for residential plots that were sold to citizens who are not public-sector workers was extended.

320. Occupants and tenants of commercial, industrial or other properties that belong to government institutions or third parties were exempted from payment for cleaning services.

321. Payment of fees for advertising or for practising a business or profession was postponed.

(e) Support for low-income citizens

322. Emergency grants were allocated to families who were affected by the lockdown and none of whose members received a government subsidy; according to an initial estimate the grant – of ID 30,000 per person – was given to 10 million persons for a period of two months.

323. A mechanism approved by the Ministerial Council for the Economy has been adopted to calculate the number of beneficiaries and distribute grants through a universally available

mobile phone app. The grant is administered by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs while the Central Bank has opened an account known as the “social solidarity account” in order to finance the project with contributions from the Government and donors.

(f) Supplying foodstuffs and agricultural and medical goods for the market

324. Funding was provided for urgent contracts signed by the Ministry of Health and the Environment, particularly for respiratory devices and for protective equipment for medical staff.

325. The Ministry of Health and the Environment dealt with local private-sector industries with a view to benefiting from their production capabilities to manufacture equipment to protect against coronavirus.

326. The Border Crossings Commission facilitated the entry of materials emanating from the private sector that are used in the manufacture of sterilizers.

327. A special counter was opened for donations for the purchase of the preventive medical devices and supplies required by health professionals.

328. Approval was given for the entry of chlorine across all border crossing points.

(g) Facilitating procedures for the entry of goods

329. Customs duties were waived on goods distributed via ration cards and on other basic foodstuffs, as well as on sterilization materials, medical equipment and supplies, and all items used to combat coronavirus.

330. Commercial attachés and Iraqi embassies in countries of origin of shipments assisted importers and completed formalities online, so as to avoid any delay.

331. In order to facilitate entry procedures, documentation could be approved online.

332. The movement between governorates and within cities of lorries and refrigerated trucks for the transport of foodstuffs, agricultural produce and health-care and veterinary products was facilitated, as was the return of those vehicles once they had discharged their cargo.

333. In addition to the rapid test, returning Iraqis also underwent clinical examinations. If they showed no symptoms and their test results were negative, they were required to remain in home quarantine for 14 days, under monitoring by the relevant health department. If they showed symptoms or their test results were positive, they were referred to hospital for the necessary treatment.

(h) Support for the Ministry of Health to combat coronavirus

334. Preventive measures to contain the spread of COVID-19 included requiring staff and persons using public services to wear masks, banning gatherings, maintaining physical distancing, providing handwashing and sterilization products, reducing face-to-face transactions and using modern technology to undertake dealings remotely.

335. Governors were required not to issue any directives that would counteract measures (as recommended by the Ministry of Health and approved by the High-level Committee for National Health and Safety) in place in governorates to limit the spread of COVID-19.

336. The Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research implemented the directives of the High-level Committee for National Health and Safety regarding opening hours for schools and colleges (both State-run and private). No exceptions to the rules regarding the number of working days were granted for institutions of any level. All obligatory instructions and guidelines regarding opening times were circulated by the Ministry of Health, and schools that failed to respect them risked closure.

337. Media outlets intensified their awareness-raising campaigns regarding the preventive measures to be taken in schools and colleges. They also explained which days institutions were to be open for each level of education, as approved by the High-level Committee for

National Health and Safety. The media outlets relayed only accurate information from reliable sources and did not relay information from other sources.

338. Suitable locations for quarantine were identified.

339. A field hospital (the Peace Hospital) was set up on the grounds of the Baghdad international fair, with several large wards containing beds and medical equipment to take in and treat people infected with coronavirus.

340. The Ministry of Health and the Environment was the sole body authorized to announce the official number of coronavirus infections in Iraq.

341. The Ministry of Finance was responsible for making financial allocations to the Ministry of Health.

342. Medical staff required by the Ministry of Health were engaged either by appointment or on contract.

343. A bill is being prepared to grant pensions to the families of health-care professionals who died while seeking to combat coronavirus.

344. The Ministry of Health allowed certain accredited private laboratories to conduct tests to detect coronavirus.

345. Using ministry approved protocols, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs are negotiating with the authorities in countries that have announced possible treatments for coronavirus so that Iraq can obtain medicines and medical supplies to tackle the disease and reduce the number of deaths.

346. A protocol was put in place for the burial of persons who died of coronavirus.

(i) Support for staff in health-care institutions

347. Staff of the Ministry of Health who had contact with persons infected with coronavirus received support in the form of residential land plots, in accordance with priorities determined by the Ministry.

348. The Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research allocated post-graduate study places to the “white army”, outside the quotas for the 2020/21 academic year. The purpose of this initiative was to support medical, nursing and auxiliary staff in the Ministry of Health as a mark of appreciation for their efforts and sacrifices in the face of the global health pandemic.

(j) Coronavirus relief campaign by non-governmental organizations

349. Beginning in March 2020, the Department for Non-Governmental Organizations launched a national campaign for such groups under the slogan “Giving is Iraqi”. A total of 885 organizations participated, most of them local-level groups assisting in the distribution of food, medical aid and sterilizers to those in society whose livelihoods had been most severely affected by the precautionary measures taken against COVID-19. In addition to this, and as a national duty, awareness-raising campaigns were rolled out to draw attention to the dangers of the disease. In all, more than 11,000 different campaigns were run, covering 18 governorates and 2,000 locations, and reaching in excess of 4.3 million citizens.

350. On 2 March 2021, the Ministry of Health announced the arrival of coronavirus vaccines. The first to be vaccinated – in the Medical City Hospital in Baghdad and in health institutions across the governorates – were the members of the “white army” (health professionals) and other priority groups. The Minister of Health made it clear that the vaccines were to be distributed fairly, safely and free of charge so as to be available to all eligible citizens who wished to be vaccinated and who filled in the relevant online form. The Minister also stressed that the vaccine was safe, effective and globally approved.

(k) Measures taken to ease the coronavirus pandemic restrictions

351. Meeting on 22 November 2022, the Council of Ministers decided to:

- Repeal its own Decree No. 79 of 2020 and Administrative Order No. 97 of 2020, issued by the Office of the Prime Minister, regarding the formation of the High-level Committee for National Health and Safety.
- Repeal Administrative Order No. 13 of 2020 regarding the formation of a high-level advisory committee associated with the High-level Committee for National Health and Safety.
- Repeal Administrative Order No. 217 of 2020, issued by the Office of the Prime Minister, regarding the formation of a committee to reinforce government efforts towards prevention, control and awareness-raising.
- Make the Ministry of Health responsible for enforcing articles 45–57 of the Public Health Act No. 89 of 1981, which concern communicable diseases.

352. In line with the measures taken by most States to lift pandemic-related restrictions and precautionary measures, the following provisions were introduced under Council of Ministers Decree No. 307 of 2022. For its part, the Iraqi Ministry of Health continues to monitor the epidemiological situation vis-à-vis COVID-19 in Iraq and throughout the world:

- As of 1 December 2022, persons entering or leaving Iraq – whether Iraqis or foreigners – are no longer required to be in possession of a COVID-19 vaccination certificate.
- Mask-wearing in all open and closed facilities, including places of worship, mosques, restaurants, concert halls, etc., is optional, except for health-care institutions.
- All ministries and non-ministerial bodies as well as departments and non-governmental organizations have been made aware of the need to urge their staff to get vaccinated against COVID-19. The vaccine, which is available at health centres in Baghdad and the governorates, has demonstrated its effectiveness in reducing infections as well as in lowering the rate of complications and deaths.

B. Measures taken by the Ministry of Justice for inmates and detainees in Ministry-run prisons

353. The Ministry of Justice took a body of legal measures in the face of the pandemic:

- (a) Forming a crisis cell in the Ministry, headed by the Minister, to implement the decisions of the committee envisaged in Administrative Order No. 55 of 2020.
- (b) Opening a command headquarters.
- (c) Supporting the Department for Non-Governmental Organizations in the Secretariat of the Council of Ministers to run a national campaign to address the effects of the pandemic.
- (d) Determining requirements in quarantine locations.

354. The Ministry of Justice also took a body of preventive and health measures in the face of the pandemic:

- (a) The Minister of Justice chaired the meetings of a central committee set up to monitor preventive measures inside prisons. The committee – the members of which included the Undersecretary of the Ministry, the Director of the Iraqi Department of Corrections, the Director of the Department of Juvenile Corrections and the head of the Human Rights Department – discussed a series of recommendations, including a proposal to tighten the prevention measures in place to limit the spread of the virus in prisons affiliated to the Iraqi Department of Corrections and the Department of Juvenile Corrections. Another proposal was to use the ministerial representative on the crisis cell to strengthen cooperation between the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Health and thus keep them both updated on the

latest developments in the fight against COVID-19. For its part, the Ministry of Health was responsible for announcing the number of persons infected.

(b) The Minister of Justice issued a series of decrees regarding the operation of the two Departments of Corrections as they worked to contain the epidemic. The decrees covered the following issues:

- Changing the working hours of staff of the two Departments of Corrections to 14 days on and 7 days off.
- Monitoring staff to ensure that they did not enter their workplace without first checking their body temperature and applying sterilizer.
- Sterilizing and spraying all areas inside prisons.
- Forbidding entry to prisons by unauthorized persons.
- Dividing Iraq into 6 areas (crisis cells), each headed by assistants to the Director, who coordinated with governors.
- Accelerating the process of conditional release, in coordination with the Supreme Judicial Council.
- Forming a crisis cell to combat propaganda and to oversee the psychological rehabilitation of inmates.
- Coordinating fully with the Ministry of Health in any emergency.
- Ensuring adequate stocks of medical supplies, clothing and sterilization materials.
- Coordinating with international organizations, including the International Committee of the Red Cross, regarding the provision of health assistance.
- Ensuring that inmates were able to maintain constant contact with their families via email.
- Increasing the number of hours dedicated to watching television and recreational activities.
- Increasing the number of hours inmates spent in the sun and open air.
- Providing masks and gloves and distributing them to inmates and staff.

(c) In order to promote and protect human rights in prisons, the Minister of Justice made visits to the headquarters of the Iraqi Department of Corrections and the Department of Juvenile Corrections, as well as to prisons themselves to see prisoners' accommodation and to monitor their state of health and the services and food available to them.

(d) Lists of inmates in prisons belonging to the Ministry of Justice who were covered by the special amnesty were sent to the Secretariat of the Council of Ministers. The lists contained the names of 950 inmates in the Iraqi Department of Corrections with a copy of the rulings against them handed down by the competent courts, as well as the names of 57 inmates in the Department of Juvenile Corrections.

(e) A number of detainees were released on the strength of orders issued by investigating judges. The aim of this was to limit the spread of the novel coronavirus by alleviating prison overcrowding and strengthening preventive measures.

355. Measures put in place by the Iraqi Department of Corrections and the Department of Juvenile Corrections:

- Forming a crisis cell to implement preventive measures.
- Checking body temperature of all staff and inmates, isolating suspected cases of infection and periodically examining incoming staff.
- Designating rooms and halls inside prisons as areas in which suspected cases of infection could be isolated as quickly as possible; these areas were equipped with basic medical supplies and respirators (oxygen bottles).

- Refusing to admit detainees or convicted persons from any other detention authority.
- Applying safety standards strictly and to the letter (wearing masks and gloves, and social distancing between staff and inmates).
- Installing sanitization devices at the entrances to correctional departments.
- Increasing the number of hours inmates spent in the sun and open air.
- Running workshops on the production of masks within the Iraqi Department of Corrections.
- Equipping Baladiyahat prison with 100 beds for emergency cases.
- Establishing a rotation for staff meals.
- Providing health units inside prisons with medicines and health supplies, and with sufficient staff for the number of inmates.
- Suspending in-person family visits and replacing them with telephone contact or videocalls via Internet and social networking sites.
- Granting leave, as a precautionary measure, in cases of infection, contact or suspected infection.
- Cleaning, sanitizing and insulating inmates' clothing and bed linen.
- Expediting procedures to release persons covered by laws governing conditional release and persons who have completed their sentence.
- Coordinating with the two health departments in Baghdad (in Karkh and Rusafah) for the appointment of doctors to undertake periodic examinations to determine the state of health of juveniles in detention.
- Designating isolation areas for infected juveniles and providing them with the necessary health care and treatment, in coordination with the Ministry of Health.
- Striving to reduce the number of new incarcerations and expediting the release of certain categories of juvenile.

356. Measures put in place by the Human Rights Department at the Ministry of Justice:

(a) Monitoring the rights of inmates and detainees in the Iraqi Department of Corrections and the Department of Juvenile Corrections, in line with the international treaties recognized under the Constitution of Iraq.

(b) Sending a team from the Human Rights Department to visit the Iraqi Department of Corrections to oversee the precautionary measures being applied to protect inmates against infection; 20 such visits were made in 2020 and 14 in 2021.

(c) Undertaking visits to the youth rehabilitation section of the Department of Juvenile Corrections, to check on the health-care situation there and to reinforce preventive measures; a total of eight visits were made to the Department of Juvenile Corrections in 2020.
