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Iraq

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I. Introduction

1. The third national report of Iraq was reviewed in 2019. Iraq received 298 recommendations of which it supported 245, noted 48 and partially supported 5.
2. In June 2022, Iraq submitted its first midterm report regarding the implementation of the recommendations that had emerged from the third cycle of the universal periodic review. This was a voluntary undertaking that Iraq was careful to complete and submit on time.
3. Early legislative elections were held in November 2021 to select members of the Iraqi Council of Representatives. Then, in December 2023, legislative elections were held for the councils of governorates not incorporated into a region (annex 1).
4. The Republic of Iraq hereby submits its national report under the fourth cycle of the universal periodic review, outlining the progress that has been achieved in the field of human rights.

II. Methodology and process for drafting the report

5. *Preparation stage:* This stage focused on examining and analysing the concluding observations, identifying which bodies were to be responsible for implementing them and circulating them to the relevant authorities.
6. *Information-gathering stage:* This involved the collection, from the authorities concerned, of information regarding the implementation of the recommendations, in order to draft the report. The information received was reviewed and updated on an ongoing basis.
7. *Review and drafting stage:* During this stage, the information requested in the recommendations was integrated into a preliminary draft report and approved by the national committee for writing reports under international treaties.
8. *Approval stage:* The final draft of the report was submitted to the Council of Ministers where it was approved before being sent to the Committee.

Consultation process

9. The drafting of the report was a participatory process that involved outreach to the relevant authorities in ministries and non-ministerial bodies. Dialogue and meetings were held to discuss the wording of the final draft of the report.
10. In order to ensure coordination with civil society during the drafting stage, a consultative meeting was held with 21 Iraqi civil society organizations that also have consultative status with the United Nations. The meeting served to review the contents of the report and to receive feedback.

III. Developments in the normative framework for human rights

A. Laws

11. Numerous human rights-related laws were enacted during the reporting period (annex 2).
 - Health Insurance Act
 - Yazidi Female Survivors Act
 - Retirement and Social Security Act
 - Legal Aid Act
 - Act to amend the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act

B. Strategies

12. Iraq adopted numerous human rights-related strategies during the reporting period (annex 3).

- National strategy to combat terrorism 2021–2025
- National policy for the rehabilitation of communities following the liberation of cities from Da'esh terrorist groups
- National policy to prevent children and minors being recruited by terrorists 2024–2029
- National early childhood development strategy 2022–2031
- National strategy for Iraqi women 2023–2030
- National strategy for education and higher education 2022–2031

C. Government programme

13. The Government has presented its ministerial agenda, which includes a package of measures in areas such as social protection, combating unemployment, providing job opportunities, the issue of displaced persons, the reconstruction of liberated areas, combating corruption, reform of the finance and banking sector, education, population, development, human rights, the empowerment of women, legislation and political reform. The agenda has 23 areas of focus that cover all sectors and aspects of life that have a direct impact on citizens.

IV. Implementation framework for recommendations

14. The present report reviews the measures and best practices put in train by the Republic of Iraq to apply the recommendations it accepted, at the levels of legislation, implementation, policy and strategy, under the following categories:

- Cooperation with the United Nations human rights system
- Civil and political rights
- Economic, social and cultural rights
- Women and the elimination of discrimination against them
- National human rights institution
- National and local laws and legislation
- General recommendations

A. Cooperation with the United Nations human rights system

Accession to international treaties

Recommendations 15, 28 and 31

15. Reference is made to the mid-term report, which states as follows:

- Iraq submitted its eighth periodic report to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women in 2023.
- Iraq acceded to the International Labour Organization (ILO) Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87) as well as to ILO Conventions No. 183 of 2000, No. 184 of 2001 and No. 185 of 2003.

Implementation of the Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction

Recommendation 34

16. A committee headed by the Ministry of Justice has been formed to perform the functions of the central authority referred to in chapter II of the Convention. It considers the applications it receives and issues recommendations thereon.

National mechanism for the implementation of observations made by human rights treaty bodies

Recommendations 47, 59, 89 and 204

17. Under the powers envisaged in its rules of procedure, the Human Rights Department at the Ministry of Justice monitors the implementation of the international human rights obligations of Iraq. In partnership with the relevant authorities, the department drafts reports for submission to treaty and non-treaty bodies alike, and it cooperates with United Nations organizations.

18. The national committee for writing reports under international treaties – which is led by the Minister of Justice and has members representing the competent authorities – is responsible for completing the final draft of reports, submitting them for approval to the Council of Ministers then sending them to the relevant United Nations committees.

19. Human rights sections have been formed in all ministries and non-ministerial bodies to follow up on the implementation of international recommendations that fall within the mandate of the ministry or body concerned.

20. A central committee for special rapporteurs has been established, also led by the Minister of Justice and with members representing the competent authorities. Its job is to examine requests for visits to Iraq made by special rapporteurs and to make preparations to ensure the success of such visits.

21. Ministries and non-ministerial bodies work in close cooperation with United Nations agencies operating in Iraq to provide advice and implement joint programmes that fall within the mandate of the ministry or body concerned.

National plan for human rights

Recommendations 60, 64, 67, 74, 86 and 88

22. Reference is made to the mid-term report, which states as follows:

- The first and second annual reports on the implementation of the national plan for human rights have been issued and work is currently underway on the third report, which illustrates progress and achievement rates in the implementation of international recommendations.
- A follow-up section has been established inside the Human Rights Department. Its job is to oversee the implementation of government policies within the framework of the national human rights plan.
- Two national conferences on the national human rights plan were held under the patronage of the Prime Minister. The conferences were attended by directors and staff members of the executive, legislative and judicial branches as well as by United Nations agencies and civil society organizations active in the field of human rights.
- Training courses have been organized for staff of human rights sections in official bodies, in coordination with civil society organizations.

Accountability for grave human rights violations

Recommendations 160, 164 and 182

23. The Yazidi Female Survivors Act was promulgated to address the consequences of the crimes of the Da'esh terrorist organization and to provide financial and moral compensation to victims.

24. A directorate for the welfare of Yazidi female survivors has been set up as part of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. The directorate, which has its headquarters in the governorate of Nineveh, has opened a branch office in the district of Sinjar where it works to promote the welfare of persons covered by the provisions of the Act.

25. The Prime Minister decreed the formation of the following committees:

- A committee to work on the procedures for the crimes of the Da'esh terrorist organization to be included in the Memory of the World Programme run by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)
- A committee to identify DNA relating to the crimes that took place at Camp Speicher and Badush prison, as well as Yazidi and Turkmen victims
- A committee, headed by the Prime Minister's human rights advisor, responsible for searching for abducted persons covered by the provisions of the Female Survivors Act.

26. Twenty-five billion Iraqi dinars (ID) have been allocated in the 2023 budget to fund the Yazidi Female Survivors Act (annex 4).

27. A total of 2,070 survivors receive a monthly salary, while the committee that considers applications from survivors has approved 1,979 applications.

28. Two hundred and fifty land plots in Sinjar and 12 in Tall Afar have been distributed to persons covered by the Act.

29. The Iraqi Government cooperated with the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (UNITAD) throughout its mandate, and the State authorities strove to create optimal conditions for UNITAD to operate. Security Council resolution 2697 (2023) brought an end to the activities of UNITAD, and the results of its work were handed over to the Supreme Judicial Council.

30. Under the leadership of the Supreme Judicial Council, a national team has been formed to collect and document evidence to hold Da'esh criminals responsible for their actions. The team works to gather evidence and prepare dossiers related to the offences committed by Da'esh terrorist gangs, also with a view to preserving that material in a national archive then coordinating with other countries in investigating and prosecuting perpetrators and discovering their whereabouts via the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL).

B. Civil and political rights

National reconciliation

Recommendations 36, 38, 41, 165 and 196

31. The Government is in the process of establishing the Dar al-Salam Centre for Counselling and Reform, which works to promote values of citizenship and human rights, to ensure respect for the right to diversity, to disseminate tolerance and moderation, to preserve human dignity and social cohesion and to promote lasting security. The Centre organizes awareness-raising seminars to spread a spirit of tolerance and peaceful coexistence, with the participation of tribal elders, religious figures, security personnel and regional dignitaries.

32. A project has been launched under the title “Your equal in creation” with 32 meetings and seminars that seek to address and resolve problems between internally displaced persons and local residents, and to help displaced persons return to their areas of origin.

33. A conference on promoting community reconciliation has been held in the governorate of Nineveh with the participation of national figures, representatives of State institutions, tribal dignitaries and high-ranking security officials. Another conference on promoting community reconciliation in the governorate of Salah al-Din was held in coordination with Tikrit University.

34. A national network of “Women Mediators for Peace” has been set up, which seeks to enhance the effective involvement and influence of women in peacemaking processes at all levels. It also seeks to help women play an important and effective role in conflict resolution, peacemaking and decision-making. The network has developed a plan of action for 2023–2025 and identified criteria wherewith to select women mediators for peace in local networks at the governorate level.

Torture and enforced disappearance

Recommendations 37, 152, 158, 159, 169 and 172

35. Iraq has a national committee for missing persons – headed by the Ministry of Justice and with members from other competent authorities – which is working to implement the country’s international obligations with regard to missing persons. This question is the responsibility of the Human Rights Department at the Ministry of Justice which, in cooperation with other relevant authorities, is working to establish a national register of missing persons and to develop a search and investigation mechanism.

36. The Government of Iraq has submitted a bill on enforced disappearance to the Council of Representatives. In this way, enforced disappearance will be criminalized and punished in a distinct and independent law within a unified legal framework.

37. Iraq is in the process of drafting a law against torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment.

38. The Criminal Code includes clear provisions regarding offences that can be characterized as enforced disappearance and, in certain cases, envisages more severe penalties. The Code of Criminal Procedure states that no person may be arrested or detained except pursuant to an order issued by a judge or a competent court.

39. Cases of enforced disappearance in Kurdistan Region are dealt with under the Act on Persons Missing in Campaigns of Genocide against the People of Iraqi Kurdistan, as amended. The Act includes provision for giving victims’ families access to the truth and for establishing a committee on victims of enforced disappearance. Thirty-two cases of torture were referred to the courts in 2023.

40. All allegations of torture are investigated by the competent authorities. Victims undergo a forensic medical examination and, if a crime is shown to have taken place, the persons implicated are referred to the courts. Places of deprivation of liberty are kept under constant oversight by monitoring institutions.

Suppressed ministries

Recommendations 50 and 238

41. The issue of persons missing during the war has been transferred to the Ministry of Defence and the question of mass graves to the Martyrs’ Foundation, while responsibility for oversight and awareness raising has been handed to the Iraqi High Commission for Human Rights. These are the competent institutions in those fields.

42. Responsibility for following up on the international human rights obligations of Iraq and for writing treaty reports had been transferred to the Ministry of Justice. A human rights department has been created as part of the Ministry with rules of procedure to regulate its operations.

43. The National Directorate for Iraqi Women has been created as a department under the Secretariat of the Council of Ministers. Its purpose is that of a national mechanism acting on behalf of women in Iraq.

44. The Supreme Council for Women's Affairs is headed by the Prime Minister and its members include the female Ministers of Finance, of Communications and of Migration and Displaced Persons, as well as the Prime Minister's Advisor for Women's Affairs, the head of the National Directorate for Iraqi Women and other relevant authorities.

Protection of journalists

Recommendations 71, 177, 183, 186 and 195

45. The Government seeks to protect media workers via a national committee for the protection of journalists, which is headed by the Ministry of Justice and has members from other competent authorities. The committee, which acts as a focal point with UNESCO, submits regular annual reports on the basis of lists sent to Iraq.

46. The Council of Ministers has allocated ID 5 billion to the Journalists' Syndicate to cover the treatment expenses of Iraqi journalists who are elderly or sick and to provide them with social support. The sum also goes to pay for treatment and promote social solidarity for the families of journalists who have been killed in the line of duty.

47. The Federal Court issued a ruling rejecting an appeal to overturn the fourth amendment to the Act regulating the Journalists' Syndicate. The Court's reasoning was that the purpose of the amendment was to develop the Syndicate's audiovisual, print and electronic outlets and to enable journalists to perform their work freely.

48. A bill on freedom of expression and peaceful assembly has been drafted, and the Council of Representatives has completed the second reading of a bill on the right of access to information.

49. The Supreme Judicial Council has set up a special court to deal with publishing and media cases, and it has appointed 22 judges from across the country's appellate regions to work on criminal and civil cases and to receive complaints and lawsuits concerning journalists.

Preventing discrimination on grounds of religion or belief

Recommendations 95, 98 and 199

50. In enactment of the Constitution, bills to combat discrimination and hate speech and to promote the rights of minorities have been drafted and are undergoing legal review.

51. The programmes and activities of the Government of Iraq do not include any elements that uphold discrimination and persecution on grounds of religion or belief. For its part, the Federal Public Service Council advertises government jobs using only professional criteria based on competence and experience.

52. The Council of Ministers has approved the sale of 700 plots of land in the municipality of Qush exclusively to Christian citizens. In Sinjar, residential plots of land and homes are being sold to their Yazidi occupants, in accordance with Decree No. 364 of 2022.

53. The Council of Ministers has issued a decree granting ownership of residential land plots and homes in 11 residential complexes to their Yazidi occupants.

54. In the sale of plots of land belonging to Christians, the Government has abided by strict procedural norms, in coordination with the Endowments Bureau for Christian, Yazidi and Sabaean Mandaean Communities.

55. In areas of Kurdistan Region where Christians constitute a majority, land is allocated in their names only. Article 9 of the Act regulating the Ministry of Municipalities prohibits the registration of land belonging to minorities, and no one other than them has the right to dispose of it.

56. The Supreme Fatwa Committee of the Union of Islamic Scholars in Kurdistan issued a fatwa prohibiting the seizure of land or assets belonging to anyone from a religious minority. The fatwa also addressed the preservation of religious sites during war and conflicts.

Internal displacement

Recommendations 100, 133, 213, 229 and 297

57. The Council of Ministers has given its approval to recommendations made by a higher committee for the relief and support of displaced persons, which proposed allocating ID 4 million to each family returning from displacement, covering a total of 8,428 families. The recommendations also envisaged reconstructing liberated areas, providing compensation, reviewing contracts of marriage that were finalized outside the courts, running job programmes, providing facilitated loans and promoting mechanisms of national reconciliation. In addition, 91,416 families returning to their areas of residence received financial grants of ID 1.5 million.

58. As of the first half of 2024, compensation had been provided to 2,098 persons under the Female Survivors Acts, and 117,000 documents had been issued.

59. The return of displaced persons to their areas of residence continues, in accordance with the principle of voluntary return, and their basic needs are provided for. Some 14,933 returning families have been included in income-generating projects and provided with consumer durables, and 2,213,290 food rations have been distributed to returning families.

60. Efforts have been made to rehabilitate Iraqis in Hawl camp, and the Jad'ah community rehabilitation centre has been established. Of 2,448 returning families, 1,968 have been rehabilitated and have returned to their place of origin.

61. A national referral programme has been launched to support the voluntary return of Iraqis abroad.

62. Statistics on the number of returning and displaced families, as of 2024:

- As of 27 August 2024, there were 176,472 displaced families outside camps; inside Kurdistan Region, such families numbered 22,119
- As of 27 August 2024, there were 574,831 returnee families
- In all, 154 camps in Iraq have been closed
- A total of 13,718 tents and tarpaulins in camps for displaced families have been replaced

63. Projects for the empowerment of women:

- Income-generating projects have been run for 122 women in the governorate of Nineveh
- Vocational training has been imparted to 406 women in the district of Sinjar
- Four hundred survivors of sexual violence have rehabilitated and reintegrated into the community
- As a way of developing means of livelihood for 350 women living in the Jad'ah rehabilitation camp, they have received training in income generating activities.

64. Mental health services have been provided to persons affected by terrorist operations. In that regard, a psychiatric support unit for women and girls has been opened in Jad'ah camp and six psychiatrists have been assigned to provide counselling and advice. In addition, a team has been formed to conduct field visits to the camps and carry out a comprehensive mental health assessment of families (annex 5).

65. There are 1,009,788 displaced persons in Kurdistan Region, of whom 931,730 are internally displaced persons (30 per cent) living in camps.

- They are supplied with electricity and admitted to universities and colleges
- Classes in Arabic have been opened
- A total of 138 schools have been assigned, with 54 schools for returnees in the academic year 2022/23
- As of the academic year 2023/24, there are 48,893 displaced students in the Region.

Combating corruption

Recommendations 113, 114, 121 and 168

66. Iraq duly adopted its national integrity and anti-corruption strategy for 2021–2024. The third annual report of the strategy was issued in 2023.

67. During the first quarter of 2024, 1,422 corruption cases were handled, 413 arrest warrants were served and 1,186 cases were referred to the competent court. In addition, 85 requests were made for the return of wanted persons from abroad and 200 dossiers of assets of wanted persons were processed.

68. Between 2 January 2023 and 30 September 2023, cases involving financial or administrative corruption – not including Kurdistan Region – numbered 2,460 of which 1,964 were resolved (annex 6).

69. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs has taken a body of measures to prevent corruption:

- Creating a unified centre for information technology
- Establishing a social register in partnership with the World Bank as a way of sharing data between departments within the Ministry and with other ministries
- Coordinating with the Secretariat of the Council of Ministers (National Data Centre) for the free hosting of data regarding beneficiaries of the social protection system, in order to facilitate links with other institutions
- Creating the “My Umbrella” website at the Social Protection Commission
- Including social protection services as part of the online services available to citizens, and conducting a field survey of 3,537,032 households.

70. A national anti-corruption strategy for Kurdistan Region 2021–2025 has been approved. The strategy includes a comprehensive plan to achieve transparency and prevent the waste of public resources as well as the issuance of a first strategic report on combating corruption in the public sector.

71. The Kurdistan Regional Government has:

- Run an accounting project whereby salaries are disbursed electronically
- Run the KMFS project which serves to monitor unnecessary expenses
- Put in place an electronic system for managing border crossings, which is used by the Region’s General Directorate for Customs
- As of 3 November 2023, 498 corruption cases had been prosecuted, with convictions handed down against 97 defendants.

Combating terrorism

Recommendations 123, 124 and 145

72. Iraq is in the process of drafting a law on international offences to cover the crimes committed against Iraqis by Da’esh terrorist gangs. The law will include clear definitions of the terms “genocide”, “crimes against humanity” and “war crimes”.

73. Using information gathered via military intelligence, the security services carry out pre-emptive operations against cells of the Da’esh terrorist organization. In this way,

members of the organization have been arrested and brought before the Iraqi courts. The security services abide by strict norms to protect areas, ensure the safety of civilians and prevent the resurgence of the terrorist organization.

74. Criminal laws provide the legal framework regulating accountability for grave violations of international humanitarian law. Under the Yazidi Female Survivors Act, the crimes committed by the Da'esh terrorist organization against Iraqi minorities are characterized as crimes of genocide. The perpetrators of those offences are not covered by any general or specific amnesties and the concomitant penalties are not subject to a statute of limitations.

75. A national anti-terrorism strategy for 2021–2025 has been approved.

76. The National Security Council has approved a national policy for community rehabilitation following the liberation of cities from Da'esh terrorist groups.

77. A special judicial body has been formed to investigate terrorist crimes against Yazidis in the governorate of Nineveh. The body documents the offences that took place and seeks to combat impunity.

78. As of 31 March 2024, there were 123 terrorism cases in Kurdistan Region.

Right to demonstrate

Recommendations 156, 157, 161, 167, 173, 176, 181, 185, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 193, 194, 197, 198, 200, 201, 202, 203 and 205

79. The Government of Iraq has included freedom of opinion and expression and peaceful assembly as part of its ministerial agenda. A legal team has been formed to review the work of the investigative committees which had been created earlier to look into violations against demonstrators, compensation for victims and treatment for the injured.

80. The Supreme Judicial Council has directed judges at courts of inquiry to conduct investigations into anyone responsible for violations against the right of assembly. The Council has also ordered the immediate release of peaceful protesters who were in detention, and has worked to ensure that justice is achieved and that wrongdoers are brought before the courts to receive their just punishment.

81. The Ministry of the Interior has run 310 capacity-building workshops and seminars on how to interact with demonstrators and the media and how to promote human rights principles in detention centres. The Ministry has also announced that it will receive complaints involving abuse of press freedom or assault against journalists by Ministry staff and will take legal measures against those responsible.

82. The command structure of law enforcement has been reorganized and transformed into a body that constitutes a subsection of the Ministry of the Interior. Directives have been issued ordering all members of law enforcement to enrol in human rights training courses.

83. The duties of the security forces are limited to protecting the sites where demonstrations take place, to preventing clashes and to facilitating access by media outlets that hold authorization from the Media and Communications Commission.

84. The Government of Iraq has drafted a bill on freedom of expression and peaceful assembly. The bill is consistent with the Constitution and with international standards regarding the exercise of the right to assembly and expression of opinion.

85. Under the Non-Governmental Organizations Act, Iraqis have the right to form associations and civil society organizations. The Government of Iraq has taken steps to facilitate the registration process by setting up the “Ur” digital platform.

86. The Iraqi High Commission for Human Rights has taken a body of measures relating to freedom of expression:

- It has run 34 training workshops
- It has received no complaints concerning abuses or assault against the media

- It has conducted a number of training session for members of the security forces of the Ministry of Interior.

Prisons

Recommendations 140 and 184

87. Under the Prisoners and Detainees Reform Act, the Iraqi Department of Corrections works to ensure that full legal safeguards and human rights standards are duly applied in prisons, and that healthcare and adequate nutrition are available. The Department also coordinates with the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research regarding the education of detainees, and it organizes visits by inmates' families in accordance with prearranged schedules and provides telephone communication and correspondence. Lastly, it informs inmates' relatives and lawyers about their place of detention.

88. Correctional institutions are monitored by the Minister of Justice via regular field visits which serve to identify the most important problems and provide solutions. The visits are followed up with decrees intended to improve the situation inside prisons. Complaints boxes for inmates and detainees have been installed in all facilities run by of the Iraqi Department of Corrections.

89. The Ministry of Justice is working to address overcrowding by expanding existing prisons and building new ones that are in line with international standards. In addition to this, a bill on alternative penalties is in the process of being drafted, which will affect a number of convicted persons and help to reintegrate them into society.

90. Correctional facilities are inspected by a number of bodies identified in the Prisoners and Detainees Reform Act, namely the Council of Representatives, the Public Prosecution Service, the High Commission for Human Rights and the council of the governorate in which the prison or detention centre is located, as well as other legally authorized bodies.

91. The Iraqi Department of Corrections has developed its own training, rehabilitation and employment programme, and it has run a number of psychological rehabilitation courses. It has also issued instructions regarding the employment of detained persons in workshops and factories in facilities belonging to the Iraqi Department of Corrections and the Department of Juvenile Corrections, and in State-run projects.

92. A hospital has been opened inside the prison of Nasiriyah and work is currently underway to open hospitals inside the central prisons of Babil and Taji.

93. Weekly family visits have been organized for convicted prisoners and detainees in Kurdistan Region, in line with a schedule set by the prisons administration (annex 7).

Judiciary and fair trial

Recommendations 162, 163, 171, 175, 179 and 180

94. The judiciary, which is one of the main branches of authority in the country, enjoys complete independence under article 87 of the Constitution, which stipulates: "The judiciary has independent authority, exercised by courts of different kinds and levels which issue their judgments in accordance with the law." Article 88 of the Constitution reads: "Judges are independent and are subject to no authority other than that of the law. No authority may interfere in the courts or with the course of justice."

95. The courts decide on the matters that are brought before them on the basis of the laws and legislation in force. They work with great professionalism and issue their rulings without any influence or interference.

96. The Supreme Judicial Council has been raising awareness among judges by providing training on human rights, running workshops dealing with international crimes, promoting human rights standards and addressing issues related to counter-terrorism.

97. The Supreme Judicial Council supports studies and research on human rights by judges and prosecutors. Twenty-five such research papers were submitted in 2023.

98. Iraq has signed a number of judicial cooperation agreements (annex 8).
99. Human rights violations are dealt with in the light of the Constitution, national laws and international human rights law.
100. The Supreme Judicial Council has issued decrees for the formation of specialized human rights courts:
 - A court of inquiry for human rights-related complaints referred by the Office of the Public Prosecutor
 - A court of inquiry and a misdemeanour court for cases of domestic violence
 - A court for cases involving publishing and the media
 - A chamber to consider labour-related cases within the Court of Cassation.

Minority groups

Recommendations 192 and 281–291

101. The Government is careful to provide for the welfare of minorities, and its ministerial agenda focuses on “protecting the present and future of minority communities, who constitute an important part of the Iraqi people. The Government therefore guarantees their protection and works to combat and extirpate the drivers that cause some of them to emigrate outside Iraq, and it is to launch a construction project in specific areas, in both Sinjar and the Nineveh Plains.”
102. The security services are responsible for protecting the rights of minorities, preventing any encroachment on their lands, facilitating their return and providing them with assistance.
103. A bill on the protection of minorities has been drafted and is currently under legal review.
104. The Iraqi Government has been working to ensure the welfare of minorities, especially those covered by the Female Survivors Act, with a package of decrees concerning compensation and redress.
105. A governmental committee has been set up to draft a national strategy for managing social diversity in Iraq.
106. A number of places of worship have been rebuilt since the liberation of territories from the control of Da’esh terrorists, namely 4 Christian churches plus a further 2 where work is still ongoing, and 40 Yazidi shrines.
107. The return of displaced persons to their areas of origin has been facilitated. Survivors of the crimes committed by Da’esh have been provided with support in the form of small-scale income-generating projects.
108. The Prime Minister has directed that Turkmen should be adopted as the third language for official communications within the administrative boundaries of the governorate of Kirkuk.
109. The Ministry of Education has instructed that Christian schools should remain open on Saturdays and has exempted them from remaining open on Sundays. This is to accommodate the particular nature of teaching staff and students in Syriac schools.
110. The Council of Ministers decided to write off 50 per cent of the value of the land – of an area of 1,750 square metres – that was sold by the Ministry of Finance to the Endowments Bureau for Christian, Yazidi and Sabaeen Mandaean Communities. The Ministry has also approved the sale of 700 plots of land belonging to the municipality of Qush exclusively to Christian citizens resident in Qasabah.
111. In order to promote and protect the diversity of cultural expression in Iraq, especially that of its minority communities, Iraq acceded to the 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions.

112. A committee has been formed to establish mechanisms for the implementation of ruling No. 65 of 2013 issued by the Federal Supreme Court. The ruling concerns the preservation of the identity of populations in different geographical areas of Iraq, including national, ethnic, religious and confessional identity. It also prohibits the acquisition of property for the purposes of demographic change.

113. The Sinjar and Nineveh Plain Reconstruction Fund has been established, its purpose being to achieve national development goals, provide and improve services to the areas covered by the Fund and address the causes and phenomena that led to the absence or poor quality of services in the first place.

Trafficking in persons

Recommendations 206–208

114. Iraq dedicates a great deal of energy to combating trafficking in persons. As part of the ministerial agenda of the current Government, a central committee for combating human trafficking has been formed and, thanks to its efforts, Iraq has been removed from the international watch list for trafficking in persons.

115. The Supreme Judicial Council has finalized a draft amendment to the Trafficking in Persons Act and sent it on to the Council of State for review before completion of legislative procedures.

116. Iraq has ratified the Arab Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children, supplementing the Arab Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.

117. Iraq cooperates with international organizations to combat human trafficking and it provides support and runs training and awareness-raising programmes that draw attention to the gravity of such offences.

118. The Ministry of Communications uses technology to identify victims and support investigations while a central committee oversees social media networks and monitor suspicious parties.

119. Acting on recommendations from the central committee for combating human trafficking, the Ministries of the Interior in the capital and in Kurdistan Region have intensified their cooperation and coordination.

120. A national plan has been adopted for the implementation of the anti-human trafficking strategy 2023–2026.

121. The “Aman” project has been developed, which aims to combat human trafficking over the coming three years. Its purpose is to cooperate and coordinate with the competent authorities with a view to reinforcing victim-protection mechanisms. Specifically, the project aims to:

- Assign specialized judges and officials to examine and investigate human trafficking cases
- Organize media campaigns to highlight the seriousness of trafficking and publicize the hotline which can be used to file reports and complaints
- Establish a system for managing statistical data, including statistics on arrests and prosecutions.

122. “Operation Flash-WEKA”, an initiative of INTERPOL, has been launched to crack down on migrant smuggling and human trafficking gangs. The Operation, which involves the participation of 44 countries, has resulted in 199 arrests.

123. Lectures for citizens and a media awareness-raising campaign have been organized on the Trafficking in Persons Act.

124. The 144 free hotline and the email human-ts@moi.gov.iq are available to receive complaints and reports.

125. The community police have also taken measures to combat human trafficking:

- Fifty-nine workshops and 1,433 awareness-raising campaigns
- Action to reduce begging, with 34 workshops, 731 awareness-raising campaigns and 6 tribal outreach sessions.

126. The National Directorate for Iraqi Women has adopted awareness-raising and rehabilitation plans for female victims, the aim being to reintegrate them into society and reduce the exploitation of domestic workers.

C. Economic, social and cultural rights

Cultural heritage

Recommendations 65, 70 and 235

127. A bill on the preservation of cultural heritage has been drafted and is currently under legal review.

128. Iraq has acceded to the UNESCO Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage, in order to protect such heritage in cooperation with other countries.

129. The Council of Ministers has stipulated that restoration projects on the Nineveh Wall and the Kirkuk Citadel – which are part of a larger project to restore and maintain the country's antiquities – should be tendered out to reliable specialized companies approved by UNESCO.

130. Investment in archaeological sites and religious shrines has been given priority status within the Government's programme as they constitute an important element of national production, a significant source of employment for Iraqi workers and an important driver of the economy.

131. There are 11,375 archaeological sites where, as of 2023, 24,000 artefacts had been recovered.

132. The Commission for Antiquities and Heritage is responsible for excavating and maintaining archaeological sites, which represent the country's heritage of civilization.

133. Increased awareness about the importance of cultural heritage achieved the following important results in 2023:

- Numbers of arrivals and tourist groups increased to 723,613
- A total of 3,101 jobs were created
- Twenty-four archaeological sites were restored
- Visits were received from 830 archaeologists (annex 9).

Eradicating poverty

Recommendations 69, 72, 75, 116, 212, 214, 215, 216, 217, 219, 222, 223 and 224

134. The purpose of the Social Fund for Development is to improve living conditions, create job opportunities and provide services in poor and marginalized communities. To this end, the Fund runs projects – 175 as of November 2023 – in a number of villages across the governorates of Iraq. The villages are chosen depending upon degree of deprivation and size of population, and the projects contribute to the stability of the targeted communities.

135. Persons covered by social protection in 2024 (special meals):

- Persons with disabilities and special needs: 49,484
- Orphans: 700
- Children with diabetes: 11,606

- Social research conducted on more than 2 million households
- Annual statements recorded for more than 1.9 million households
- Social protection allowance coverage for more than 60,000 displaced families
- Research conducted into social factors relating to cancer and kidney failure
- Research conducted on families displaced by climate migration.

136. A national strategy for nutrition for 2019–2023 has been developed and efforts are currently focusing on the development of a strategy for 2024–2030, the aim being to improve nutrition across Iraq.

137. The Ministry of Health has been working to implement a health-related national strategy to combat poverty. It has conducted several activities in that connection, including the construction of a number of primary healthcare centres.

(a) The year 2024 has been designated as the year for the advancement of primary healthcare;

(b) A number of projects to build primary healthcare centres have been completed.

138. A high-level committee for social protection has been set up in the capitals of governorates not incorporated into a region. The committee is responsible for monitoring and supervising the work of social protection departments.

139. The Social Protection Commission has taken the following action to address poverty and reduce its impact:

- Opening the way for online coverage for 2,734,031 households
- Providing the social protection allowance to 2,114,763 beneficiaries
- Providing free intensive healthcare to 51,728 beneficiaries
- Bringing 435,000 persons under the Health Insurance Act
- Distributing more than 120 food baskets
- Adding five points to the average for the children of persons covered by the social protection system
- Reducing college tuition fees by 50 per cent for the children of persons covered by the social protection allowance
- Setting up child protection units to monitor the needs of children under 18 of persons covered by the social protection allowance.

140. Services and programmes run by the Social Protection Commission:

- The “My Umbrella” platform, which provides online information for beneficiaries of social protection
- The “Arzaq” programme, under which beneficiaries of social protection have access to facilitated loans
- A platform to register and monitor attendance in schools by students who receive scholarships
- The “*Najik labeitak*” service to help persons with special needs and older persons conduct administrative transactions.

141. The Social Protection Commission has acted to facilitate matters for citizens, as follows:

- Writing off the debts of persons who – as a result of combining the social protection allowance with the martyr’s pension – exceeded the parameters of the social protection network
- Signing an agreement with the World Bank for a grant of \$40.2 million to support the social protection network and improve infrastructure

- Opening more than 320 branches in districts and subdistricts
- Introducing an online grievance system
- Processing more than 60,000 complaints from citizens.

142. A total of ID 470 billion has been disbursed to beneficiaries of social protection (annex 10).

- Statistics on the number of female beneficiaries of the Social Protection Commission, grouped by age, for May 2024

Group	0–9	10–20	21–30	31–40	41–50	51–60	61 and over
All governorates except Kurdistan Region	8 842	37 917	44 164	75 615	100 117	110 38	190 133

- Statistics on the number of male beneficiaries of the Social Protection Commission, grouped by age, for May 2024

Group	0–9	10–20	21–30	31–40	41–50	51–60	61 and over
All governorates except Kurdistan Region	7 617	31 328	223 417	465 376	414 757	265 826	151 358

Persons with disabilities and special needs

Recommendations 77 and 292–296

143. The Commission for the Care of Persons with Disabilities and Special Needs is responsible for meeting the needs of that category of persons across all areas of Iraq. It also oversees the implementation of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act and acts to promote the inclusion into society of persons covered by the provisions of the Act. In addition, the Commission develops plans and programmes aimed at addressing the causes of disability, it provides employment and educational opportunities and it seeks to guarantee the rights of persons with disabilities in a manner consistent with international treaties.

144. The administrative board of the Commission for the Care of Persons with Disabilities and Special Needs is headed by the Minister of Labour and Social Affairs and has members from the relevant authorities as well as from civil society groups and representatives of persons with disabilities and special needs themselves.

145. A national plan for persons with disabilities 2022–2024 has been drafted (annex 11).

146. A first amendment has been made to the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and Special Needs Act.

147. Financial allocations made to the Department of Persons with Disabilities and Special Needs in the year 2023/24 amounted to ID 714 billion. In 2024, 366,262 persons received a fifth payout for the salary of a full-time assistant with a total of ID 26,464,483,965 being disbursed.

148. Significant activities brought to fruition in 2024:

Significant activities brought to fruition in 2024

Allocating classroom places for persons with disabilities	783
Health insurance for persons with disabilities	259
Customizing cars	5 785
Habilitation courses for persons with disabilities	254
Families of persons with disabilities covered by the salary for a full-time assistant	1 155

149. Via their representatives on the administrative board of the Commission for the Care of Persons with Disabilities and Special Needs, persons with disabilities and special needs participate in the drafting and formulation of legislation. They also participate in decision-making processes, particularly with regard to the procedural measures taken by the Commission.

150. There is no institutionalized discrimination in the field of employment. Quite the contrary, the law contains specific provision to promote employment rights. In fact, article 16 (1) and (2) of the Act regulating the Commission for the Care of Persons with Disabilities and Special Needs envisages apportionments of 5 per cent of jobs in the public sector and 3 per cent in the mixed sector.

151. There are 4,281 schools offering special education and full inclusion affiliated with the Ministry of Education.

152. There are 18 centres and 2 hospitals specializing in medical rehabilitation, as well as 17 factories producing prosthetic limbs, all of which work to meet the needs of persons with disabilities. A total of 6,268 persons with disabilities registered in the disability statistical programme in 2023, and 3,208 assistive devices of all kinds were provided, including 510 support devices made of metal or plastic.

153. The salary for a full-time assistant has been increased to ID 250,000.

154. Noteworthy services provided to persons with disabilities and special needs up to 30 November 2023:

<i>Governorate</i>	<i>Service provided</i>	<i>Total</i>
All governorates with the exception of Kurdistan Region	Sabbatical leave	6 628
	Salary applicants	389 673
	School places	4 331
	Reduction in travel costs	1 383
	Health insurance	3 371
	Importation of cars	49 090
	Appointments	1 434
	Other	20 958
	Salary recipients	311 719

155. In Kurdistan Region, the law requires that 5 per cent of the workforce in public sector organizations be persons with disabilities or special needs. The number of staff with disabilities currently stands at 1,2068.

156. All persons with disabilities and special needs enjoy the right to education, health, employment in the public and private sectors and financial assistance.

157. The Region has established the Council for the Care and Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities and Special Needs, which is overseen by the Minister of Labour and Social Affairs and has members representing other relevant ministries.

158. Persons with disabilities and special needs receive a financial grant while 78,335 people are receiving a salary to pay for assistance.

159. State functionaries are granted leave, renewable on an annual basis, to support persons with disabilities. To date, 1,997 staff have been granted support leave on full salary.

160. More than 700 teachers of both sexes in the Ministry of Education in the Region have been granted leave to take care of persons with disabilities.

161. A female State functionary who is caring for a child with special needs, a disability or a terminal illness can, on the basis of the patient's medical certificate, be granted maternity leave.

162. The 444 hotline has been established to receive inquiries about the services available for persons with disabilities and special needs.

Sustainable development

Recommendations 111, 112, 118, 119, 120, 211, 218, 220 and 221

163. The Ministry of Planning monitors the operation of committees concerned with sustainable development, such as the standing committee on climate change in Iraq. It also oversees the results of the committees' work and issued a preliminary report in that regard in 2023.

164. A guidance manual has been issued concerning the monitoring, measurement and alignment system for the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.

165. A report is being drafted regarding a national standard for human security, to be adopted as a benchmark at the national level.

166. Strategies for urban development in Iraq are being adopted and the relevant data is being updated on a rolling basis.

167. A spatial development strategy for Iraq 2021–2023 has been developed, the purpose of which is to achieve balanced and sustainable spatial development in the urban and rural spheres in all governorates. The strategy has been circulated to ministries and governorates for them to use as a guide when drawing up annual plans.

168. A climate division has been set up in the Ministry of Health to monitor issues related to health and climate. Also, a national adaptation plan has been adopted to increase climate-change resilience in the health sector, and a national women's group has been formed for energy support and emissions reduction.

169. A national committee for sustainable development has been formed which approves programmes developed by the relevant authorities in pursuit of the Sustainable Development Goals

170. The first voluntary national review under the Sustainable Development Goals was issued in 2019 and the second in 2021. Work is currently underway on the third review for 2025.

171. The national development plan 2024–2028 has a number of goals:

- Fostering an enabling environment for the population in order to capitalize on demographic opportunities
- Achieving harmony and balance between demographic and economic indicators
- Ensuring positive interaction between population-related activities and environmental activities so as to enhance sustainability and facilitate transition to a green economy
- Rolling out the national population policy document 2023 with a view to bringing about quantitative and qualitative changes in people's lives and achieving sustainable development, justice and equality.

Water management

Recommendation 115

172. The Government's ministerial agenda contemplates the finalization of projects – particularly water and sanitation projects – that had stalled when around 70 per cent complete.

173. The Government is making great efforts and is holding consultations with upstream States with a view to safeguarding the water-related rights of Iraq. This includes a framework cooperation agreement between Iraq and Turkey.

174. The Ministry of Water Resources has begun a strategic study of water and land resources in Iraq 2015–2035. The Ministry continues to act to ensure the sustainable management and supply of water to beneficiaries.

175. Steps have been taken to promote modern irrigation technologies that will help to conserve available water resources and minimize losses.

176. The Ministry of Health is developing a human rights-based drought preparedness strategy:

- Developing a database of inhabitants and areas prone to drought or other crisis, including the volume of services to be provided
- Increasing health-related monitoring of hydric projects, water collection facilities and water plants, and following-up on the supply and storage of chlorine
- Maintaining water safety in community reservoirs and taking anti-pollution measures.

177. There are 203 drinking water production plants in all governorates, with the exception of Kurdistan Region, and there are 2,893 operational water collection facilities.

Child labour

Recommendations 117 and 209

178. The Retirement and Social Security Act provides extensive protection for the rights of workers in the private sector.

179. The Act for Income-Generating Microprojects was amended under Act No. 14 of 2023 to alter the amount of the interest-free loans available to jobseekers.

180. The capital of the Support Fund for Income-Generating Microprojects is to be increased by ID 1.2 trillion over three years so as to cover as many jobseekers as possible.

181. A vocational/technical training and education strategy has been developed, with 332,645 persons attending training courses.

182. In cooperation with ILO, experts and social stakeholders, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs is drawing up a national policy regarding the ILO Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111).

183. A committee has been formed to write a draft law on trade union freedoms that is consistent with the existing Constitution and with the relevant international treaties. The draft law was duly submitted to ILO, which made a number of technical comments.

184. A coordinating council involving all trade unions has been formed to regulate union activity. Moreover, Iraq has received a visit from an ILO mission on the question of trade union freedoms.

185. A committee has been created in the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs which periodically reviews the minimum wage, taking due account of economic conditions in the country and changes in the labour market.

186. Workers have the right to file complaints before the courts. They can also file complaints with the competent authorities at the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, which then refers the matter to committees which verify the complaints and take appropriate action. Employers found to be in violation are referred to the competent court.

187. Workers covered by social security, disaggregated by nationality and sex, as of 30 September 2023.

<i>Governorate</i>	<i>Iraqis</i>		<i>Arabs</i>		<i>Foreigners</i>	
	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
All governorates except Kurdistan Region	328 519	31 230	1 208	65	2 339	2 691

Right to health

Recommendations 225, 226 and 228

188. In 2023, the total expenditure of the Ministry of Health amounted to ID 9,219,057,591.

189. Primary healthcare programmes cover such things as pregnancy care, family planning and emergency obstetric care. Services are provided free of charge to beneficiaries such as pregnant women, women of reproductive age (15–49 years) and their spouses at primary healthcare centres and hospitals with maternity wards.

190. Healthcare services for children under 5 are provided free of charge at primary healthcare centres (both main centres and branch centres).

191. A programme has been adopted to combat vitamin A deficiency, and vitamin A doses are distributed to children under 5 at primary healthcare centres.

192. A programme has been adopted to treat children with severe acute malnutrition in rehabilitation wards that abide by the standards set by the World Health Organization (WHO).

193. Activities are carried out to build capacity among staff in healthcare institutions to enable them to provide advice on the nutrition of infants and newborn children.

194. Beneficiaries of healthcare programmes:

- Children under 5
- Pregnant women and women of childbearing age (15–49 years)
- Risk groups exposed to vaccine-preventable diseases:
 - Pilgrims and hospitality workers
 - Prison inmates and military personnel
 - Persons with immunodeficiency conditions, such as thalassemia and sickle cell anaemia
- Primary healthcare workers
- Persons aged 65 and older
- Persons with chronic conditions such as heart disease, asthma, diabetes, kidney disease, etc.

195. Under the national immunization programme, vaccinations are provided free of charge in all healthcare institutions. Budgets for subsections of the Department for Public Health, which is part of the Ministry of Health, are as follows:

- Mother, child and reproductive healthcare programme: ID 240,392,236
- Immunization programme: ID 1,623,330,065
- Family medicine programme: ID 66,085,060
- There are 888 family planning clinics and 94 mobile clinics.

196. A table showing the type of services provided, the number of institutions and the number of beneficiaries for 2022–2023 is to be found in annex 12.

197. A table showing primary healthcare centres divided by administrative authority and governorate is to be found in annex 13.

198. The lack of hospital beds in all governorates of Iraq is being addressed by efforts to build 16 100-bed hospitals across the country.

199. In coordination with the Ministry of Planning, projects are being conceived to establish 200-bed hospitals in the governorates of Basra, Karbala, Diyala, Salah al-Din and Babil.

200. Reproductive healthcare indicators for 2020–2022 are to be found in annex 14.

201. Number of primary healthcare sectors and centres in 2023.

<i>Indicator</i>	<i>2023</i>
Total number of primary healthcare centres	2 864
Number of primary healthcare centres (main centres)	1 361
Number of primary healthcare centres (branch centres)	1 503
Number of primary healthcare centres dealing with family health	197
Number of primary healthcare sectors	164

202. The Health Insurance Commission has been created, which aims to protect citizens against having to spend sums they cannot afford for healthcare services. This is achieved thanks to State assistance that covers both nationals and residents.

203. Family planning services are available in 83.6 per cent of principal healthcare centres, with beneficiaries numbering 162,152 in the first part of 2023.

204. There are 135 public hospitals in Kurdistan Region, some of which specialize in chronic diseases. These include 83 government-funded hospitals that provide free or subsidized healthcare services. The private healthcare sector has witnessed significant growth with the establishment of 52 hospitals specializing in different fields. Moreover, healthcare centres have been set up in various areas of Kurdistan Region, distributed geographically in such a way that 41 per cent of them are located in villages and remote areas, 32 per cent in district capitals, 11 per cent in subdistricts and only 16 per cent in cities.

Right to education

Recommendations 230–234 and 279

205. The Ministry of Education strives to implement the national strategy for education and to develop school curricula that include concepts such as human rights, human development, social justice and community building. To this end, it cooperates with organizations such as UNESCO, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the British Council.

206. A national committee for compulsory education has responsibility for boosting enrolments and reducing failure and dropout rates in schools. Its actions are underpinned by a "back to school" initiative launched by the Prime Minister. With support from UNICEF, tallies are taken of children who have dropped out of school and those who wish to return can do so. There is also the possibility of enrolling in online schooling free of charge, with the costs being met by the educational institution. This is a voluntary undertaking that aims to combat the phenomenon of school dropout.

207. Teams have been formed at the governorate level to monitor and follow up on any violations against teaching staff and students, and to disseminate a human rights culture among Ministry staff and students.

208. The budget of the Ministry of Education for the academic year 2023 stands as ID 11,764,763,130,000, while the financial allocations for the printing of textbooks in the same year is ID 159,399,476,000. The budget for 2024 stands at ID 12,976,324,850,000.

209. In coordination with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, a sum of ID 225 million has been allocated to provide students with scholarships.

210. The following measures have been taken through coordination between the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and the Mayoralty of Baghdad:

- A field survey has been conducted to capture the names, birth years and educational level of children who have dropped out of, or never enrolled in school
- Municipal departments have been instructed to monitor contractors to ensure that they do not employ children aged under 15, particularly during the school year, and that

primary education or its equivalent is the minimum education requirement for obtaining a job.

211. Work is ongoing to conclude a memorandum of understanding between the Ministry of Education and the World Food Programme (WFP) for the purpose of running a school-meals programme.

212. School healthcare services are provided free of charge in educational institutions and kindergartens. The services are also available in rural areas and for limited-income families. Vaccination and school-meals programmes are being run, particularly in the most marginalized areas of Iraq.

213. The Ministry of Education gathers data on efforts made to facilitate access to education for children with disabilities and special needs and internally displaced children. Those efforts include:

- Ensuring coverage in remote areas and continuing to expand special education and schools offering inclusive education
- Utilizing educational resources, including appropriate teaching aids and equipment
- There is a high-level ministerial committee for special education as well as an “inclusive education committee” in each school.

214. Services provided in remote and rural areas in the academic year 2023/24 are as follows:

- Number of schools: 12,458
- Number of admissions: 509,817
- Number of pupils enrolled: 3,388,495
- Number of teaching staff: 233,350

215. Overarching statistical data, disaggregated by level of schooling, for all forms of education (State-run, private and religious) in the academic year 2023/24:

<i>No. of schools</i>	<i>Pupils and students</i>	<i>Teaching staff</i>	<i>No. of divisions</i>	<i>No. of buildings</i>
31 692	11 638 085	679 507	335 760	21 673

216. Numbers of students enrolled in State-run schools in the academic year 2023/24:

<i>Level</i>	<i>No.</i>
Primary	6 691 689
Secondary	4 217 433
Vocational	101 730

217. Overarching statistical data, disaggregated by level of schooling, for State-run education in the academic year 2022/23:

<i>No. of schools</i>	<i>Pupils and students</i>	<i>Teaching staff</i>	<i>No. of divisions</i>	<i>No. of buildings</i>
26 985	10 635 305	466 681	297 066	17 950

218. Number of schools opened in the years 2021–2023:

<i>Level</i>	<i>Academic year</i>		<i>Increase</i>
	<i>2021/22</i>	<i>2022/23</i>	
Kindergarten	765	828	63
Primary	16 679	17 381	702
Secondary	7 656	8 412	756
Vocational	322	331	9
Institutes	24	33	9

219. Statistical data regarding adult education (literacy), male/female and urban/rural, including governorates of Kurdistan Region, in the academic year 2023/24:

<i>Ministry-affiliated centres</i>	<i>Basic level</i>	<i>Continuation level</i>	<i>Fifth grade</i>	<i>Sixth grade</i>	<i>No. of students enrolled</i>
1 229	22 683	29 579	9 468	13 800	75 530

- Total number of special education schools (rural, urban, boys, girls, mixed) in the academic year 2023/24:

<i>No. of schools with special education classes</i>	<i>No. of schools by environment</i>	<i>Teaching staff</i>	<i>No. of students from first to sixth grade</i>
1 382	1 382	1 790	15 552

220. In the academic year 2023, there were 16,296 students in special education, not counting those in inclusive education.

221. Information concerning the number of schools for displaced persons in Erbil, Dahuk and Sulaymaniyah in the academic year 2022/23 is shown in annex 15.

222. A total of 14,800 school bags have been distributed among vulnerable families, widows and orphans returning from displacement.

223. In the field of education:

- The net student enrolment for in higher education increased by 24 per cent in the academic year 2022/23
- Indicators relating to higher education constitute an important standard for gauging the quality and effectiveness of such education. They include:
 - The wastage and dropout indicator is an important parameter for assessing the quality of higher education as it reflects the percentage of students who drop out without obtaining a degree
 - Thirty-five training and employment divisions have been set up in State-run universities
 - Curricula focusing on the crimes of the Baath regime in Iraq and on democracy and human rights have been adopted in the form of modules taught at different levels of education and across all disciplines. They also cover the issue of terminology for peaceful coexistence
 - The Bologna Process has been adopted, which is an integrated educational itinerary that was implemented in four study programmes at technical universities in the academic year 2022/23. It has also been adopted for science and engineering subjects, beginning in the academic year 2023/24.
 - The internationalization of higher education has been identified as a priority to influence the course of education and development in the country.

224. In Kurdistan Region:

- In the academic year 2022/23, there were 1,936,018 students, including 362,295 students in villages and 10,466 students with disabilities at the primary level. Special needs teachers numbered 84 and the total number of schools in the Region was 7,370
- Between 2019 and 2023, 80 schools were built and 1,300 were reconstructed
- There are 20 State-run universities and 12 institutes. In the academic year 2023/24, there were 144,789 students in State-run universities and 30,357 in private universities.

Best interests of the child

Recommendations 209, 267, 268, 269, 271, 273–278 and 280

225. A national policy has been adopted to prevent children and minors being recruited by terrorists 2024–2029.

226. A monitoring and reporting committee was created to oversee the implementation of a joint Iraq–United Nations action plan to prevent the recruitment of children into the armed forces. All parts the plan have been implemented by the Government of Iraq.

227. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, Ms. Virginia Gamba, has visited Iraq to examine the efforts the country is making to implement its national plan on the issue covered by her mandate. She then issued a report for the Secretary-General in which she confirmed that Iraq was fulfilling its obligations to implement the plan.

228. Thanks to the efforts it has made towards the implementation of the national plan, Iraq has been removed from the list of countries that violate the rights of children, in the latest report issued by the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

229. A high-level monitoring and reporting committee has been established to prevent violations of children's rights in Iraq.

230. The National Security Advisory has drafted a national policy to address begging in Iraq 2024–2028.

231. In coordination with international and local organizations, a number of capacity-building courses and workshops have been run for persons who work in direct contact with juveniles.

232. The Child Welfare Commission has heled to raise awareness by organizing seminars and workshops about the protection of children's rights across all fields. The Commission participated in the workshops alongside teachers and ministerial staff who work with children, in coordination with certain international organizations and civil society groups. The subjects covered included violence against children, school meals, early childhood development and social protection for homeless children.

233. A child protection bill has been sent to the Council of Representatives where it has undergone its first reading. Several sessions have been held to discuss and finalize the bill so that it can be definitively adopted (annex 16).

234. A child protection policy for Kurdistan Region was approved in 2023. It includes programmes and other measures aimed at protecting children against violence and abuse.

D. Elimination of discrimination against women

Implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

Recommendations 16 and 17

235. The competent authorities review proposed laws and legislation with a view to ensuring consistency with the international obligations of Iraq under the relevant human rights treaties, one of which is the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

236. In line with its ministerial agenda, the Government of Iraq is giving priority to providing support and safeguards for women and to ensuring that they have opportunities to work and to live dignified lives.

237. Women in Iraq have reached high-ranking positions in the State administration, including three ministerial posts in the current Government (annex 17).

238. The participation of women in political life is encouraged and, in fact, women head a number of committees at the national level. In addition to this, a high-level committee has been formed – chaired by the National Directorate for Iraqi Women – to support the political involvement of women in elections to provincial councils and to the Council of Representatives.

239. A plan has been adopted for the economic empowerment of women 2019–2024, and support has been given for women to enter the labour market. Other initiatives envisage financial inclusion and banking services for women, as well as the integration of women's needs into macroeconomic policies and development plans.

240. Efforts are also focusing on empowering women socially and enhancing the role they play by facilitating their access to education, justice and healthcare.

241. A number of strategies for women have been adopted, including the following:

- A plan for the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000)
- A national strategy for combating violence against women and girls 2018–2030
- A national strategy for Iraqi women 2023–2030.

Violence against women

Recommendations 40, 45, 46, 58, 61, 66, 68, 76, 79, 80, 81, 84, 90, 99, 105, 108, 138, 148, 151, 236, 249, 250, 253, 254, 255, 257, 260, 265 and 270

242. A national strategy has been launched to combat violence against women and girls with a working group to monitor and oversee its implementation. In addition to this, there are legal and institutional frameworks for the protection of women in public places and the work environment, as well as facilitated procedures for women to follow to file complaints and reports if they have suffered violence.

243. The Supreme Judicial Council has issued directives to facilitate access by victims of domestic violence to the competent investigative courts and to expedite legal proceedings against perpetrators.

244. Training courses have been organized with a view to promoting a culture of human rights among officers and other personnel working in the Family Protection Directorate and thus improve their handling of cases of domestic violence.

245. The National Directorate for Iraqi Women has adopted a unified approach in its understanding and management of the role the State must play in protecting women against violence, in which regard it acts on the basis of official statistics issued by the Supreme Judicial Council and by departments within the Ministry of the Interior.

246. Cooperation between, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and certain Iraqi governorates has resulted in the creation of five protection centres in as many governorates. The centres offer a place of safe refuge for women against violence.

247. Coordinating with its international partners, the Iraqi Ministry of Health has opened 85 welfare units in Iraqi hospitals to provide healthcare for female victims of violence.

248. A committee has been formed to monitor the situation of women detained in Iraqi correctional facilities. In cooperation with international partners, a road map has been drawn up to train staff who work in such facilities, as well as to provide courses for the female inmates to help them come to terms with their detention and to provide them with the skills they need to reintegrate into society. In this connection, a special code of conduct has been drafted.

249. Thirteen units to provide healthcare for female victims of violence have been opened in Iraqi hospitals.

250. The Directorate for Protecting Families and Children at the Ministry of the Interior runs the 139 hotline to receive domestic violence complaints from citizens. In addition, 16 family courts have been put back into operation (annex 18).

251. In 2023, 960 cases were recorded against persons who had committed violence against women, while 359 cases were recorded in 2024. All legal measures were taken against the perpetrators.

Sexual violence against women in conflict situations

Recommendations 53, 101, 102, 154, 174, 243, 245, 258, 261 and 262

252. The Yazidi Female Survivors Act, which was promulgated to provide support to survivors of conflict-related sexual violence, identifies such actions as crimes of genocide and crimes against humanity. Directive No. 4 of 2021 was issued to facilitate the implementation of the Act.

253. A directorate to oversee survivors' affairs has been set up under the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, and a committee has been formed to consider applications from groups covered by the provisions of the Act. A link has been created on the Ministry's website which survivors of mass killings and epurations of the Da'esh terrorist organization – including members of Yazidi, Christian, Turkmen and Shabak minorities as well as male minors – can use to apply to be considered for inclusion under the Act.

254. ID 25 billion have been allocated in the 2023 budget to fund the Yazidi Female Survivors Act.

255. A referral system has been put in place via which to provide psychosocial services and assistance to survivors.

256. A special electronic form has been produced for the registration of missing and abducted persons from the Yazidi, Christian, Shabak and Turkmen minorities, and a special committee has been established to conduct search and investigation procedures.

257. Statistics are being produced wherewith to calculate the number of survivors then provide them with the care and psychosocial rehabilitation they require to reintegrate into society, in accordance with the law.

258. Workshops and training courses have been held to raise awareness and build capacity among survivors in order to rehabilitate and reintegrate them into society, in line with international standards. A total of 32 such initiatives have been held for more than 250 participants. At the same time, 62 women have benefited from psychosocial support services under the referral system.

259. A second plan has been adopted for the period 2021–2024 which, in addition to covering the provisions of Security Council resolution 1325, envisages programmes for the implementation of the joint statement on combating conflict-related sexual violence against women and girls, signed by Iraq and the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

260. Special courses have been held in partnership with local and international organizations to train members of the committee and staff of the directorate and build their capacities and capabilities to deal with victims of sexual violence.

261. Programmes under the national strategy for Iraqi women 2023–2030 include legal measures to address the phenomenon of underage marriage, reduce the dropout rate of girls from school and provide training to build capacities and skills among girls.

262. The programmes and goals envisaged under the national strategy for combating violence against women and girls 2018–2030 aim to provide protection, prevent violence and support economic, social and political empowerment, while also building a positive social environment to counteract violence against women and girls.

263. The Ministry of Health and the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (UNITAD) have underwritten a programme to cooperate in the provision of psychological and medical support to children and women who suffered at the hands of Da'esh terrorist gangs and to support rehabilitation centres in Baghdad and liberated governorates.

264. Mental healthcare services have been provided to people affected by terrorist operations, as follows:

- Seminars have been held for psychologists and social workers in correctional facilities run by the Ministry of Justice on how to deal with inmates who have been exposed to terrorist ideology and rehabilitate and reintegrate them into society.
- A team made up of six psychologists and psychiatrists has been formed at the Nineveh health department. The team undertakes field visits to camps hosting families for the purpose of providing mental healthcare and psychosocial support to women and children.
- The psychological rehabilitation programme consists in renewed engagement, transformation of behaviour and the rejection of any form of violence, to be achieved by changing the ideas, attitudes, visions, and values associated with extremist ideology.

265. Two assistance centres (OSAC) were opened in 2022 in the governorates of Nineveh and Kirkuk. Operating in cooperation with UNFPA, the centres provide comprehensive medical, legal and psychological services to women and child survivors of the Da'esh terrorist organization.

266. Psychiatrists have been appointed to work in mental rehabilitation centres run by the Ministry of Labour in Shikhan and Sinjar, where they provide psychological support for Yazidi survivors.

267. In cooperation with the International Organization for Migration (IOM), workers in community development units have received training on the provision of primary psychological support and counselling to female survivors of violence. Sixty persons have received the training in Baghdad, Salah al-Din, Nineveh and Anbar.

268. In cooperation with IOM, a protocol has been drafted regarding the treatment of victims of violence or sexual assault, the provision of medical services and front-line psychological support and the drafting of the initial medical reports.

269. Doctors working in forensic clinics have undergone training courses on the clinical measures to be adopted when dealing with cases of violence or rape and on how to draft forensic medical documentation concerning survivors of sexual violence. The courses, which were organized by the Physicians for Human Rights organization, followed the procedures for documenting torture and sexual violence envisaged in the Istanbul Protocol. Seventy-five doctors were trained during 2023, and 30 forensic medical examiners attended courses on how to deal with cases of rape.

270. The Kurdistan Regional Government has documented cases relating to thousands of abductees. A total of 5,170 casefiles have been recorded, of which more than 2,324 have come before the courts, 2,000 cases remain under investigation and 2,916 persons have been

registered as missing. Cases have been brought relating to 60 mass graves and to 65 mass grave sites, and psychosocial support has been given to 2,677 victims.

Women's empowerment and gender equality

Recommendations 93, 94, 96, 97, 104, 106, 107, 237, 239, 240, 241, 242, 244, 246, 247, 248, 251, 252, 256, 259, 263, 264, 266 and 272

271. Iraq has embraced the principle of non-discrimination in all its legislation and procedures. This principle is also upheld in the Constitution where articles 14–21 clearly enjoin the protection of such rights. They also identify legal mechanisms for the enforcement of the constitutional provisions, notably through the enactment of laws.

272. All school curricula in Iraq reflect a civilized and humane vision that opposes racial discrimination and aims to achieve equality and equal opportunities for all citizens, eliminate gaps that disadvantage certain minorities and confessional groups, and create an educated, open-minded and aware generation that respects diversity and believes in acceptance of others, in accordance with the principle of peaceful coexistence.

273. The involvement of women in the judiciary and the prosecution services is being encouraged. In all, 122 women work as judges or prosecutors and there are 19 female students at the Judicial Institute.

274. Statistics on women in the government sector are to be found in annex 19.

275. Iraq has adopted a body of measures to support and enhance the role of Iraqi women. This is in line with a government programme that lays emphasis on empowering and promoting women, as enshrined in the Constitution and the law, protecting them and providing job opportunities. The programme also envisages social protection programmes to provide a decent living for widows and divorced women.

276. The national strategy for Iraqi women 2023–2030 acts as a strategic framework for government action to advance the role and status of Iraqi women. The strategy focuses on a number of areas:

- Promoting the political involvement and empowerment of Iraqi women and their engagement in peacemaking
- Empowering Iraqi women economically
- Empowering Iraqi women socially
- Protecting women and using legal and institutional frameworks to combat violence against them.

277. A number of professional codes of conduct are being amended so as to make them more responsive to the needs of women and girls. The work – which is being conducted by a committee headed by the National Directorate for Iraqi Women and with members from the relevant authorities – is already well advanced.

278. Support is given for the involvement of women in politics and decision-making. Ninety-six women have sat successfully for membership of the Council of Representatives, and Iraq is among the States in which women hold a leading place in the legislature: second in the Arab world and sixty-fifth globally.

279. A high-level committee has been formed to support the political engagement of women in elections.

280. In coordination with international partners, a plan has been adopted for the economic empowerment of women 2019–2024. The aim is to boost women's participation in the labour market by 5 per cent a year.

E. National human rights institution

High Commission for Human Rights

Recommendations 35, 39, 43, 51, 52, 54, 56, 63, 83, 91 and 92

281. The Act regulating the High Commission for Human Rights envisages highly transparent mechanisms for the selection of commissioners.

282. The Federal Supreme Court, called to consider the constitutionality of article 2 (1) of the Act regulating the High Commission for Human Rights, reached the conclusion that it did effectively violate article 102 of the Constitution. The Court therefore issued a ruling declaring the unconstitutionality of articles 2 (1), 12 (5) and 16 (4) of Act No. 53 of 2008 regulating the High Commission for Human Rights.

283. The Iraqi High Commission for Human Rights has been given the highest rating – category A status – which the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) awards to national institutions that are active and effective at the national, regional and international levels.

284. In 2023, the operational budget of the High Commission for Human Rights stood at ID 32,213,599,000, while its total expenditure was ID 35,453,599,000.

285. The Legal Aid Act No. 7 aims to disseminate values of justice and legality and to assist persons who do not have the financial wherewithal to pay the costs of litigation and legal advice. The Act envisages an important role for the High Commission for Human Rights, which is to establish a legal aid centre in its own headquarters.

286. The Independent Human Rights Commission has been established in Kurdistan Region with a well-defined mandate, tasks and operational budget. The Commission plays a significant role in protecting and monitoring human rights, training citizens in that regard, improving the legal and humanitarian situation of detainees and convicts, and responding to the needs of displaced persons and refugees in the Region.

Education and training

Recommendations 48, 49, 55, 57, 62, 73, 82, 85 and 134

287. A national policy has been adopted that seeks to protect civilians in times both of conflict and of peace, to guarantee their rights and provide legal safeguards, as well as to train law enforcement agencies to deal with civilians in accordance with international humanitarian law and international human rights law (annex 20).

288. The Judicial Development Institute held eight workshops in 2023 to train judges on human rights-related issues. In addition, 25 research papers on the promotion of human rights were submitted by judges and prosecutors.

289. The Ministry of Defence has rolled out a plan for education and training, which involves:

- Lectures and the drafting of a code of conduct for military personnel, in peace and in war
- A plan of action for the dissemination and application of international humanitarian law.

290. Human rights education has been integrated into school curricula in a comprehensive and inclusive manner; i.e., covering all matters related to human rights and human development, and avoiding any text or images that might marginalize particular groups or minorities.

291. The Legal Department of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs has drafted an annual plan for 2023 which envisages 19 different activities intended to disseminate a culture of human rights, including seminars, workshops and training courses.

292. A code of conduct regarding the treatment of citizens in accordance with human rights standards has been drafted for the internal security forces at the Ministry of the Interior.

293. A number of courses and workshops have been held for officials and staff of the Ministry of the Interior to consolidate human rights concepts in their treatment of citizens.

294. A human rights unit has been set up as part of the Popular Mobilization Forces, and members of the Forces have followed training programmes on international humanitarian law and international human rights law.

F. Laws and legislation

Harmonizing legislation with international obligations

Recommendations 29, 42, 44 and 87

295. The competent bodies are working to harmonize the relevant provisions of draft laws to align them with international treaties.

296. Iraq is in the process of drafting a law on international offences to cover the crimes committed against Iraqis by Da'esh terrorist gangs. The law will include clear definitions of the terms "genocide", "crimes against humanity" and "war crimes".

297. The Council of State has reviewed the draft of the new Iraqi Criminal Code, taking due account of recommendations made by human rights committees. The Code was submitted to the Council of Ministers on 5 April 2023.

298. The National Directorate for Iraqi Women has developed a database on legal texts in the Iraqi legislative system that discriminate against women. For its part, the Supreme Judicial Council has formed a committee made up of experienced retired judges which, since 2017, has been reviewing current legislation with a view to amending or abrogating texts that discriminate against women and girls.

Death penalty

Recommendation 132

299. The death penalty in Iraq is applicable only to extremely serious crimes that threaten the foundations and stability of society, coexistence and the right to life of all citizens.

300. Article 73 of the draft Iraqi Criminal Code states that the death penalty is not to be enforced against persons who, at the time of committing an offence, were over 18 but under 20. In such cases, the death penalty is to be replaced by a term of life imprisonment, unless the court deems that the circumstances of the convicted person and the crime do not merit leniency, or if the law stipulates otherwise.

301. Iraqi law envisages several channels of appeal against death sentences. Prosecutors, moreover, have the authority to examine cases and appeal against rulings, while sentences of death are subject to appeal as a matter of course.

G. General recommendations

Mines

Recommendations 78, 130 and 227

302. The most significant goals of the national mine action strategy 2023–2028 are as follows:

- Releasing safe land that can be used effectively for reconstruction, resettlement and development
- Raising awareness about the dangers of munitions and explosive materials

- Assisting victims
- Sharing information to promote ownership, communication, coordination and collaboration at the national level.

303. The Iraqi Government provides redress for victims of terrorist operations and military errors, including victims of mines, in accordance with the Compensation for Victims Act No. 20 of 2009, as amended.

304. Area in square metres of contamination by mines and remnants of war, as of 1 July 2024.

<i>All governorates with the exception of Kurdistan Region</i>	<i>Open</i>	<i>Closed</i>	<i>Work ongoing</i>
	2 068 209 636	4 106 160 860	459 524 469

305. Area in square metres of contamination by mines and remnants of war currently remaining, as of 1 July 2024.

<i>All governorates with the exception of Kurdistan Region</i>	<i>Cluster munitions</i>	<i>Battlefields</i>	<i>Remnants of war</i>	<i>Explosive devices</i>	<i>Minefields</i>
Total	208 458 950	430 831 448	470 286 067	307 660 065	1 110 407 575

306. Risk reduction activities, disaggregated by type of activity, as of 1 July 2024.

<i>All governorates with the exception of Kurdistan Region</i>	<i>Clearance</i>	<i>Non-technical surveys</i>	<i>Work advanced</i>	<i>Technical surveys</i>
Total	1 402 971 834	20 679 284 748	276 470 574	978 876 247

307. Areas where work has been completed, between 2020 and 2023.

<i>Governorate</i>	<i>Areas excluded following non-technical surveys</i>	<i>Cleared areas</i>	<i>Areas reduced following technical surveys</i>
All governorates with the exception of Kurdistan Region	24 364	1 298 262 720	124 518 774.5

308. Awareness-raising campaigns and beneficiaries, as of 1 July 2024.

<i>Governorate</i>	<i>No. of awareness-raising campaigns</i>	<i>No. of beneficiaries</i>
All governorates with the exception of Kurdistan Region	42 283	4 280 322

309. Area in square metres of danger zones since the beginning of the mine programme until 16 December 2023.

<i>Governorate</i>	<i>Active</i>	<i>Expired</i>	<i>Work in progress</i>
Total for all governorates with the exception of Kurdistan Region	2 053 542 462	3 930 021 797	482 207 021

310. The counter-explosives division of the Ministry of the Interior held 45 specialized courses on explosives in the course of 2023, attended by 618 staff.

Migrant workers*Recommendation 298*

311. Labour laws provide legal protection for workers, protect pension rights and respect other basic rights and principles, in accordance with international treaties.

312. The Labour Code applies to all workers or persons of equivalent status. Foreigners can work only after they have obtained a work permit.

313. Under the Labour Code, all workers have the right of recourse to the courts, and places of work are subject to inspection by specialized bodies.

314. A total of 296 complaints have been received from workers, of which 179 have been addressed and 8 have been referred to the labour tribunal.
