

# Guide of the Universal Periodic Review of Human Rights UPR Iraq experiment 2010 Report on the Situation on Child Rights

Iraqi Child Rights Network  
Report on the Situation on Child Rights in Iraq

## Content Summary:

1. The rights situation analysis/provisions in the Iraqi Constitution and legislations to fulfil child rights.
2. Measures of implementation.
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### 1. Children's Rights Environment in Iraq:

The Iraqi Child Rights Network has analysed the children's rights situation in Iraq. The following analysis is based on contributions from ICRN members across Iraq.

## Summary Comments:

- Despite the Iraqi government's focus on security rather than legislative reform some provisions were made in the International Compact with Iraq that would strengthen the rights environment for children. Realistically, however the government's lack of effective control over much of the country and prevailing attitudes of duty bearers make for an uphill struggle.
- There is a limited time frame through which to assess the current Iraqi government's approach to children. The most significant test to date has been the drafting of the Iraqi Constitution. Overall the Constitution covers many facets of child rights, as accepted internationally in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and thus affords basic protection to children. A lack of clarity and explicit reference however leaves it just short of enshrining basic child rights.
- Children's rights in Iraq are constrained by the lack of institutional capacity within the recently reconstituted ministries, particularly within the Ministries of Human Rights and Justice. There is an urgent need for human rights training, personnel and information technology resources, as well as technical support. Since becoming a State Party to the UNCRC (1994) and prior to the conflict in 2003, Iraq has not adequately created those institutions required to bring the changes obligated under its ratification. As a result, the Government of Iraq must invest efforts to bring domestic legislation in line with its international commitments, and must invest in promoting the principles and provisions of the UNCRC to those agents and stakeholders who bear responsibilities for implementation.

Below are some general issues pertaining to children in Iraq and the realisation of their rights. This includes commentary on the development of systems and structures that the government has obligations to put into place to ensure progress towards children's enjoyment of rights and the rights of all citizens. The promotion of human rights for all Iraqis is cross cutting in nature and will naturally enhance the plight of Iraqi children.

## General - Definition of the Child

Through Iraq's ratification of the UNCRC Iraq's children are subjects of a holistic range of rights recognised under international law. The drafting of a new Iraq constitution in 2006 should have been an opportunity to codify children's status as subjects of rights into Iraqi legislation publicly. Whilst many of the articles of the constitution do refer to international standards of child rights, the constitution falls short of making explicit

statements. For example, the constitution makes reference to child and youth 'affairs' rather than 'rights'. Furthermore, the Iraqi Constitution does not provide guidance around determining the age of up to which a citizen is considered a child. This is necessary in order to validate the protection which this constitution offers children. Laws must be clear on when children/young people can enter into marriage (Article 29 of the Iraqi constitution) without parental consent or when children/young people may begin to work legally (Article 22 of the Iraqi constitution) for example. It also does not set out the age up to which the state is held responsible for children in the context of education (Article 34 of the Iraqi constitution), health services (Article 30 and 31 of the Iraqi constitution) and orphans (Article 30 (second) of the Iraqi constitution). While acknowledging international standards of rights, the constitution and Iraqi legislation is too vague. Clear and concise legislation must be passed defining who is a child, and what rights and protections does that child have.

Various definitions of children and a variety of ages exist under Iraqi law:

- **Minors Protection Law number 78** issued in 1980 article 3 states (a child is the one who has not reached adulthood which is 18 years of age). According to this law children's inheritance rights are organised when they lose **one or both parents**.
- **Penal code**, article 66 states "Will be considered a juvenile if s/he has not completed 17 years of age when commits a crime"
- **Labour law number 71** in 1987 states "Juveniles are meant to be those persons who have not completed 18 years of age"

## 2. General Measures of Implementation

- a) **UNCRC's Article 42** requires States Parties to make the principles and provision of the Convention widely known, by appropriate and active means, to adults and children alike.

In order for children and their parents to know what is, or is not a right, and in order for their parents, professionals, and decision makers working with children to adopt the principles and standards of the UNCRC, programmes of general awareness and specific professional development are required.

The government has not conducted any awareness raising campaigns around the rights established for children by Iraq's ratification of the UNCRC in 1994. ICRN has found that there is little awareness of the principles of the CRC on the part of parents, professionals, and decision makers working with children in Iraq. This is especially the case regarding violence against children. Conversely, as an example, teachers and parents appear to have normalised the use of violence, especially as a means to discipline children. Many of them do not perceive it to be a problem. On the contrary, there is widespread belief that children need to be 'taught to be strong,' thus sanctioning the use of corporal punishment.

- b) *Ensuring legislative changes to bring the law into line with the CRC: developing and implementing a national plan of action, undertaking policy and legislative review, putting into place an inter-ministerial coordinating mechanism*

**Status of the UNCRC:** The current Iraqi constitution was adopted by referendum in November 2005. Article 8 of Iraqi constitution makes reference to the respect of its international obligations (i.e. in relation to children and their rights, its ratification of the UNCRC). When these are considered in tandem with Article 61 (fourth) of the Iraqi constitution, this should ensure that international human rights treaties of which Iraq is a state party are respected and through some mechanism made part of Iraqi Law. Article 60 (Fourth), Article 73 (b) and Article 80 (sixth) of the constitution also clarifies the procedure for ratification of international treaties.

Many of the Articles infer to international standards of child rights but there is an absence of clear guiding principles to direct the evolution of law and societal norms. Consequently, the articles may be misconstrued or manipulated. Initial references to principles such as protection of children, social, and health security, provision of education, and basic services among others, risk being applied partially, selectively, inequitably or conditionally, hampering the realisation of children's rights in Iraq.

Moreover, the Constitution of Iraq lacks a separate section defining children and minors in reference to the law. This weakens its ability to validate the protection it can offer to children and creates uncertainty over

issues including early marriage (Article 29 of the Iraqi constitution), legal working age (Article 22 of the Iraqi constitution), age up to which the State is responsible for children's education (Article 34 of the Iraqi constitution), health services (Article 30 and 31 of the Iraqi constitution), and orphans (Article 30 (second) of the Iraqi constitution).<sup>1</sup>

**Devolution:** Division of Federal and Regional responsibilities as they pertain to child rights in the Iraqi constitution require clarity. Whilst the situation is clear nationally, further stipulation is needed regarding the obligations of governorates to implement and ensure these international obligations. Article 110 (first) of the constitution outlines the formulation of foreign policy and ratification of international treaties, however there is no clear indication of the responsibilities of implementation of the treaties when there are local implications (as in the CRC which has local implications for service provision and realization of rights). This directly affects the provision of services to children<sup>2</sup>. For example, it is unclear how basic services, including the provision of health and education services will be delivered and how policy decisions such as the development of a national curriculum and its subsequent delivery will be provided for.

**Revision of Existing Laws:** It is often the case in Iraq that legislation exists to secure/support children's rights but mechanisms through which to report violations or hold duty bearers to account are lacking or are ineffective in the current climate of lack of rule of law. Although there is a clear need to draft and strengthen new legislation on a range of issues pertaining to children, in many cases, adequate legislation to uphold children's rights already exists. The problem is rather one of its implementation as processes through which to monitor and assess the situation for children. Mechanisms through which to hold those responsible for violating children's rights have not been put in place or 'actionised'.

At the present time there is no evidence as to the creation of a national plan of action for children, the undertaking of a policy and legislative review, or the creation of an inter-ministerial coordinating committee. No child impact assessment has been implemented to assess the impacts of policies, programmes, or projects on children's lives.

**Coordinating Mechanisms:** A children's panel exists at the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs headed by the Minister of Labour and Social Affairs and attended by representatives from the Ministries of Education, Foreign Affairs, Health, Culture, Human rights, Youth Sports, Justice, Environment and Planning.

**c) Mobilisation of resources "to the maximum extent available"**

Article 6 of the UNCRC requires states to make available resources to the maximum extent available, and Article 4 recommends the creation of institutional mechanisms to make this possible. There is no evidence that this implementation requirement has been met, but more practically since 2004, insecurity and institutional constraints have meant that Iraq has had problems spending revenue from its own natural resources. In 2005 UNICEF estimated that nearly half of national sectoral needs remained unfunded, meaning there was a lack of funds to rehabilitate schools, primary health care centres, and other basic services essential for ensuring children's survival and development. Capital spending in 2006 was less than half of the amount budgeted.<sup>3</sup>

Reversing these public investment trends requires improved security and stronger institutions responsible for implementing public investment. In May 2007, the government launched the International Compact with Iraq, a comprehensive outline of the national vision for security, political, and socio-economic reforms. The Compact aims to improve public resource management and strengthen institutions and governance. More recently there have been some improvements in budget allocations for government departments, which in 2007 reached almost double the levels of the previous year.<sup>4</sup>

Spending on subsidisation and in particular the Public Distribution System is one key area requiring reform. In 2005, the PDS alone accounted for 21 per cent of government revenue, representing a significant opportunity cost in terms of education and health care spending. There has been talk of reforming the current system however with rising poverty and such high levels of dependence on rations and subsidised goods, great care will need to be taken.<sup>5 6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Securing the future for Children in Iraq*. McHugh

<sup>2</sup> *Securing the future for Iraq's children*. McHugh.

<sup>3</sup> World Bank website, Iraq section.

<sup>4</sup> *Rekindling hope in a time of crisis*. UNICEF

<sup>5</sup> *Considering the future of the Iraqi public distribution system*. World Bank

**d) *Ensuring necessary human skills development takes place in line with the principles and provisions of the UNCRC***

Iraq has been set back many years in terms of human skills development. The conflict has resulted in a massive brain drain: skilled and educated professionals across key sectors of health and education fields have been targeted by militias and killed and displaced outside of the country or internally. While others fled out of lack of opportunity and security.

**e) *Creating the mechanisms for ongoing assessment of the realisation of rights***

The absence of rule of law and lack of mechanisms through which to implement legislation means it is very difficult to assess the realisation of rights. Child rights violations are neither reported nor followed up on. No agency has been able to conduct a comprehensive rights review since the outbreak of conflict in 2003. Data collected prior to this is both unreliable and, given the rapid evolution of conflict, out of date. Comprehensive and accurate data collection is severely impeded by the current security situation. There is a lack of systems and structures to monitor violations of children rights and ensure their protection.

Iraq last reported to the Committee on the Rights of the Child in 1998. Given the constraints this seems to have been a constructive interaction, although the constraints at the time were evident. In particular, the report submitted to the CR Committee was not able to report on Kurdish areas. No reports have been submitted by the current government. The current government has also failed to submit to the 2006 UN report on Violence on Children.

The International Compact states that information management capacity is to be improved. This would be an important first step towards monitoring and assessing the realisation of child rights in Iraq.

**f) *Creating the means whereby violations/non-realisation can be challenged***

Beyond the MOLSA Children's Panel referred to above, no provisions have yet been made to establish an independent ombudsman or children's commissioner office. The previously referred to children's panel is the only panel available. No other commissioner offices are available.

UNICEF has pointed out that "parents and communities in much of Iraq are unable to fulfil their responsibilities to their children. Few are in a position to lobby local, provincial, or national leaders to claim the support and services to which they are entitled. The central Government, which is usually primarily accountable for the rights of citizens, operates in one of the most violence ridden parts of Iraq, the capital Baghdad. Ministries, government facilities, and civil servants are themselves targets. Given the previously highly centralized nature of the regime, local and regional government lack the capacity for development in those parts of Iraq that are relatively quiet."<sup>7</sup>

**g) *Role of civil society***

Significant oil revenues have historically allowed Iraqi regimes to establish autonomy from society, un beholden to raising large amounts of tax from or from being influenced by domestic interest groups. Prior to 2003 Iraq civil society and participatory politics were largely under developed.

Today however, Iraq has a growing civil society with more than 2,500 registered NGOs. Over 250 newspapers and magazines have been launched since 2003.<sup>8</sup> This growth is highly positive and represents a trajectory that should be supported and continued.

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<sup>6</sup> In 1998 the Committee on the Rights of the Child expressed its concern that insufficient attention had been paid to allocating budgetary resources in favour of children "to the maximum extent ... available ... and, where needed, within the framework of international cooperation". It then recommend that Iraq prioritize budgetary allocation to ensure the protection of the economic, social and cultural rights of children, especially taking into account articles 2, 3 and 4 of the Convention, and particularly recommended that the elimination of disparities between urban and rural areas and between provinces.

<sup>7</sup> UNICEF Promoting the Rights of Children in Iraq p93

<sup>8</sup> DfiD country profile, retrieved <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/countries/asia/iraq-civil-society.asp> 17 August 2008.

More cause for optimism comes from the provision in the International Compact to enhance the role of civil society in policy design, oversight and monitoring as part of a review of legislative and regulatory frameworks, as well as the undertaking to strengthen the role of civil society and related legal framework that conform with international standards governing their organization and functioning.

In the absence of large scale UN and INGO operations, or as implementing bodies for these organisations which are operating remotely, civil society is filling a crucial capacity 'gap' to promote and ensure fulfilment of children's rights. Despite the risks, local actors maintain the will and capacity to assist and continue to provide aid and essential services in even the most difficult of circumstances. In the north of Iraq for example, it has been observed that NGOs have greater capacity to deliver directly as compared to the international community.

#### **h) *International community***

**United Nations:** The 2003 bombings of the UN and ICRC headquarters in Baghdad had a devastating impact on the ability of international agencies to work and move freely within the country. While coordination during any emergency is a challenge, in Iraq the fact that most international humanitarian actors are currently based in neighbouring countries managing operations through local staff and partners has made it all the more difficult. This situation has undoubtedly contributed to the high level of fragmentation in the humanitarian response.

In 2007, the UN Security Council renewed UNAMI's mandate through UN Security Council Resolution 1770, expanding the UN role in Iraq<sup>9</sup>. This included providing advice, support to the Government and people of Iraq on advancing their inclusive, political dialogue and national reconciliation; the Government of Iraq and the Independent High Electoral Commission on the development of processes for holding elections and referenda and the Government of Iraq and the Parliament and Constitutional review and the implementation of constitutional provisions, as well as on the development of processes acceptable to the Government of Iraq to resolve disputed internal boundaries.

The UN has significant ability to mobilise national and local resources and more recent efforts to increase its presence and improve stakeholder coordination should be welcomed. In this regard, 2008 saw the first consolidated humanitarian appeal, and the appointment of a new Humanitarian Coordinator, a sign that coordination and UN presence is improving.

The Committee on the Rights of the Child last interacted with Iraq in 1998. It can be anticipated that a periodic report will be on the agenda as soon as there is the institutional capacity to undertake the data gathering and analysis needed.

#### **Bilateral donors and multi-lateral financial institutions:**

Room for humanitarian action in Iraq is very limited and organisations often have to remain incognito and hide any international affiliations. However, international and local NGOs are present across Iraq, especially in the North where there are an estimated 195 Iraqi NGOs addressing a wide array of humanitarian issues and roughly a dozen International NGOs and 'humanitarian reconstruction companies'.<sup>10</sup>

2008 has witnessed a substantial increase in humanitarian assistance in central and southern Iraq. Overall however, humanitarian assistance has not kept pace with the worsening crisis and most assistance has been provided by communities themselves. This has increased pressure on those communities and left gaps that can only be addressed by concerted action from agencies (local, national and international) with the necessary resources and expertise.<sup>11</sup>

UNICEF has pointed out that despite the difficult working conditions, international agencies and local communities have identified innovative ways to deal with the constraints. Total Official Development

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<sup>9</sup> [www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2007/sc9095.doc.htm](http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2007/sc9095.doc.htm)

<sup>10</sup> Consolidated Appeal 2008

<sup>11</sup> Humanitarian policy group

Assistance for 2006 was 8 487.83 million USD.<sup>12</sup> While Iraq has been receiving huge donor aid grants since 2003, little of this has been directed towards humanitarian action. Total amount of donor grants received by Iraq rose consistently from 2000, when it totalled 99.48 million USD to a massive 22,076.48 million USD in 2005. It then dropped again to 8,686 million USD in 2006, though this is still substantially more than Afghanistan (which received 2,896 million USD for 2006) and all other countries in the Middle East. Of this amount however only 167.9 million was earmarked for humanitarian aid (or 2 per cent of the total amount of aid for 2006) while another 1.4 million was for development food aid (or 0.02 per cent of the total amount of aid for 2006).<sup>13</sup>

The lion's share of total aid is coming from the United States, which accounted for 55 per cent of aid in 2006 (or 4781.8 million USD). By comparison, EC aid represented only 0.09 per cent of the total in 2006 and the UK 0.23 per cent of the total. Nothing was received from Arab agencies.<sup>14</sup> In 2008, UN OCHA reported that NGOs remained under funded in Iraq having received just 7 per cent – or one million USD - of their requested amount.<sup>15</sup>

The World Bank reengaged with Iraq in the summer of 2003. The International Reconstruction Fund Facility for Iraq (IRFFI) was subsequently endorsed at the Madrid Conference, in response to international requests to help donors channel their resources and coordinate their support for reconstruction and development activities in Iraq.

The International Compact developed in conjunction with the World Bank and the United Nations represents an opportunity for the government of Iraq to partner with the international community in its attempts to ensure successful development.

#### **The International Compact for Iraq**

The International Compact with Iraq was developed in 2007 by the Government of Iraq, in conjunction with the World Bank and the United Nations to guide and frame their relationship with the International Community. The stated objectives of the compact are;

- To realize the aspirations of the Iraqi people in establishing a unified, federal democratic state dominated by security and stability in which all citizens are enjoying equal rights and duties.
- To establish a prosperous economy with a diverse production base capable of providing the requirements of sustainable development based on market factors and to open to the world and integrate with regional economies in general and neighbouring countries in particular.
- To make Iraq an active member in regional and international organizations and capable of providing assistance to the poor and needy countries.
- To allow the private sector a leading role in economic activity, with a specified role for the government in regulating this activity and protecting it from the effects of foreign fluctuation.
- To protect the poor and vulnerable groups from deprivation and starvation and provide Iraqi citizens with proper standards of public social services.

The Compact also states that it aims to create a "mutually reinforcing dynamic of national consensus and international support" through the government's political and economic program thus restoring the Iraqi people's trust in the state and its ability to protect them and meet their basic needs. And to establish *a framework of mutual commitments that will support Iraq and strengthen its resolve to address critical reforms and policies* with the International Community.

To this end the Compact contains a number of pledges and provisions that if implemented would also improve the child right's environment in Iraq<sup>16</sup>.

<sup>12</sup> UNICEF Promoting the Rights of Children in Iraq p93

<sup>13</sup> All data from OECD database <http://stats.oecd.org/WBOS/Index.aspx?DatasetCode=TABLE2A>

<sup>14</sup> All data from OECD database <http://stats.oecd.org/WBOS/Index.aspx?DatasetCode=TABLE2A>

<sup>15</sup> Quarterly regional humanitarian funding update, April – June 2008, UN OCHA

### 3. UNCRRC's General Principles

Children's rights to enjoy their rights without discrimination (Art 2), to have their interests afforded a primary consideration, (Art3), to have their views taken into consideration in any decision making that affects them, (Art 12), and to resources to the maximum extent available for their survival and development (Art 6) are cross cutting, and general to the realisation of all other rights. Alongside the engagement with the Implementation Obligations established by Art 4 and 42, the way that a state responds to these rights is a good measure of its approach to children's rights in general as the rights reflect some of the more profound changes that many societies face in adjusting to interaction with children as subjects of rights.

**Discrimination** the obligation to ensure that children enjoy their rights without discrimination requires states to a) identify when discrimination happens through sensitisation and appropriate levels of disaggregation of monitoring information, and b) to act to counter the discrimination.

Many Iraqi children are presently denied their rights for reasons of ethnicity, gender, disability, and their, or their parents' religious beliefs (eg Instances of children being punished by teachers for the political affiliations of their parents have emerged). In particular, sectarian violence has had a devastating impact on the lives of Iraqi children and militias associated with the various sects remain largely outside the control of the Iraq government and armed forces. As a result millions have been displaced from previous mixed neighbourhoods, in fear for their lives because they belonged to a different sect.

There are significant constraints on effective monitoring of children's rights in Iraq – again as a result of insecurity, reduced institutional capacity and the need for effective implementation of national legislation and policies regarding protection of children's rights.

In policy the **International Compact** pledges to "reduce gender discrimination, increase participation of women in public life and economic activity. Increase women's participation in politics at decision making levels and their involvement in the democratization process" and sets forth a goal to strengthen legal and institutional protections consistent with international standards for especially vulnerable groups, such as minorities, internally displaced persons (IDP's), returnees, refugees, stateless persons, widows and disabled.

Recommendations ... the "principle" of non-discrimination itself is potentially one of the most immediate and profound challenges to children's enjoyment of their rights in Iraq. Any programming is bound to come up against discrimination as a factor in its work, it would be the case in any country, but probably more extremely so in Iraq than many. In general terms, acting to identify and mitigate against discriminatory tendencies can be a part of any programme intervention. Examples of good practice, deliberate inclusion in project design considerations all create replicable examples and at the very least start a conversation about what is and isn't acceptable. A more specific opportunity will present itself when the Iraq Government next engages with the Committee on the Rights of the Child. The next Child Rights Report for Iraq will demand disaggregated data. This will presumably not be available, or only available in limited areas (the UNICEF Child Rights report recommends generation and use of disaggregated data<sup>17</sup>). The development of the next CR Monitoring report may provide an opportunity for demonstrating local and national level tools to obtain and use disaggregated data.

#### *Best Interests*

... the obligation to ensure children's best interests are given a primary consideration in all decision making that affects them implies both an attitude change ... considering children's interests a higher priority than other interests, and a range of systems and capacities to ensure such decisions are made routinely. Being able to make decisions cognisant of children's interests requires decision makers to have access to knowledge of

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<sup>16</sup> The International Compact is a binding document. The Iraqi Government is working to implement it, with top priority going towards improving security and economic reforms as stated in the compact.

<sup>17</sup> UNICEF Promoting the Rights of Children in Iraq p94

things that are good for, and bad for children. The 42 articles of the UNCRC's provide the normative framework to guide decision-making.

### ***Survival and Development***

In 1998, in the light of article 4 of the Convention, the Committee on the Rights of the Child expressed concern that insufficient attention had been paid to allocating budgetary resources in favour of children "to the maximum extent ... available ... and, where needed, within the framework of international cooperation". It recommended the State party to prioritize budgetary allocation to ensure the protection of the economic, social and cultural rights of children, especially taking into account articles 2, 3 and 4 of the Convention. Furthermore the CRC recommended that the state party seek to eliminate the disparities between urban and rural areas and between provinces.

The principle expressed in Article 6 is one relating to social and political priorities afforded to children. It places a clear obligation on the state to ensure that all children enjoy the holistic range of rights established by the UNCRC, not just to survive, but to develop, and to be recognised and treated as active participants in their own development. It is about reassessing the priorities afforded children relative to other priorities the state may have, and to bring to bear resources to the maximum extent available. In many countries this requires both a process of budget analysis, but also sometimes revisiting political ideologies to ensure that the state recognises its obligation to ensure, and not just to hope that prevailing ideologies will suffice.

To date there is no evidence that this reflection or budget analysis has taken place. In contrast it is appropriate to note that the early drafts of the Iraq Constitution, which guaranteed economic and social rights, were removed and replaced with provisions that created an environment in which private institutions would provide for education and health services.

Achieving prioritisation of children and the enjoyment of their rights is probably one of the biggest challenges to overcome. There are many competing claims for prioritisation - children need to be elevated higher up the agenda in a constructive and persuasive way.

### ***Right to be heard and to participate***

There is an absence of policies and mechanisms that guarantee the participation of children and its implementation. Children's issues are not given priority because government has other priorities. Government employees with responsibility to care for children in social welfare and schools are unqualified to facilitate children participation.

At the community level the prevailing culture is that of adult domination and control. In almost all circumstances the expectation is that adults take decisions and children have to follow.

There is inefficiency of CSOs and mass media concerning community awareness related to the importance of the role of children and their participation.

## **5. Recommendations:**

The Iraqi Child Rights Network sees the following recommendations as key priority in order for Iraq to be on the right track with the implementation of its international commitments to the CRC.

1. Create the institutional mechanisms to implement Iraq's international obligations towards respecting and protecting child rights.
2. There is an urgent need for human rights training, personnel and information technology resources, as well as technical support. Since becoming a State Party to the UNCRC (1994) and prior to the conflict in 2003, Iraq has not adequately created those institutions required to bring about the changes obligated under its ratification.



3. In line with the CRC's General Principles, it is recommended that efforts be made to ensure that the principles and provisions of the convention are widely known throughout society. In that regard it is recommended that systematic training and retaining programs on the rights of the child, as well as in the areas of international human rights law, be organized for professional groups working with and for children.
4. Although there is a clear need to draft and strengthen new legislation on a range of issues pertaining to children, in many cases, adequate legislation to uphold children's rights already exists. It is recommended that plans for implementation of those legislations are made. Processes through which to monitor and assess the situation for children, as well as mechanisms through which to hold those responsible for violating children's rights must be put in place.
5. Develop the national plan of action for children, the undertaking of a policy and legislative review, or the creation of an inter-ministerial coordinating committee.
6. Implement child impact assessment to assess the impacts of policies, programmes or projects on children's lives.
7. Make available resources to the maximum extent possible.
8. Iraq must be on track with periodic reporting to the Committee of Child Rights in Geneva. The state must create the mechanisms for children, parents, and Iraqi CSOs contribution to the development of those reports.

**Report Prepared by the Iraqi Child Rights Network (ICRN)**

The Iraqi Child Rights Network is a national level alliance of non-governmental organizations and child rights activists established in June 2007. The Network is guided by international human rights commitments, especially the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child to which Iraq is a state party (ratified June 15, 1994).

Save the Children Alliance, UNICEF and a number of other International NGOs have supported the establishment and development of ICRN. The Network includes 56 members from Iraqi Civil Society organizations representing 17 governorates in Iraq. It is a non-profitable specialized institution in the field of protecting Iraqi child rights.

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