



The Iraqi Women Network statement

On International Women's Day, March 8th

As global women movement celebrates International Women's Day on March 8th, while everyone is silent listening to the anthem of freedom and peace, and what has been achieved in progress toward full substantive equality in rights, Iraqi women celebrate this day while they are either internally displaced, refugees, abducted, or as slaves and victims of sexual and physical and community violence, with extreme deterioration of their rights under a scene of growing projects and plans devoted to persecution and the violation of their dignity and degrade of their humanity, with alarming practices of exclusion and marginalization of women in decision-making places, which can be Inferred from the content of the Political Parties Law (No. 36) for 2015, which lacked the inclusion of Women Quota representation at the founding of the party and leadership structures.

March 8th comes this year, with mounting concern, towards serious challenges that faces the country, given the weakness of the State and its institutions, and the escalation of the armed conflict among multiple groups, with the resurgence of violent extremism and terrorism through Daesh (ISIS) control of vast areas of Iraq, corruption and religious and political sectarianism at the State institutions and society levels, and absence of trust between the parties in the political process with the lack of national vision and concept of community reconciliation and social cohesion, as the protest movement widens among our people.

The advancement of current status of Iraqi women, requires a national vision within the frame of comprehensive reform of economy and the political process, a concept vision that believes in the importance of investing in women positive potential and participation in decision-making and in building peace and security, fighting terrorism and extremism, on the basis of equality and equal opportunities within the constitutional framework, and securing necessary resources for the implementation of the National Strategy for the advancement of Women, the National Action Plan (NAP) for the implementation of SCR No. 1325, which the Iraqi Government ratified both in 2014.

On the International Women's Day, and in the name of women movement, we would like hereby to present our stance and suggestions to handle the current situation, and **to strengthen the role of women in building a State of equal citizenship:**

1. As a priority in the reform of the political process, it requires the development of an **inclusive peacebuilding strategy**, addressing all crises and conflicts, based on comprehensive political dialogue to rebuild State institutions on the base of equal citizenship, where national reconciliation and social cohesion are one of the essential pillars of this National Strategy, through provision of the necessary means for transitional justice, to achieve Equity, Equality, Justice, Security, and preparing the legal

environment, an independent and effective judiciary system, and impartial law enforcement institutions. It requires opening cooperation and coordination with civil society organizations (CSOs) to achieve conscious monitoring by the community in the implementation of the comprehensive reform of the political process.

2. The need for Plans and effective mechanisms of monitoring and include sufficient resources to address the problems of internally displaced persons, forced displacement, and the sustainability of Humanitarian Aids and providing basic needs, and to provide a secure environment near their places of temporary residence to encourage and ensure their return and rebuild their devastated areas, ensuring the preservation of these areas' demographic diversity, with providing required needs for the implementation of the Emergency Plan for Resolution 1325, ratified by the Government last May 2015.
3. "Government of Technocrats" is not a magic wand to solve the political and economic crisis and worsening security, unless associated with actions and decisive measures against the policy of balance and quota compromises that is rooted now in the State structure, legislation, and ending abuse and discrimination and the exclusion of competent women in formations of successive Governments and in political negotiations.
4. Revision of the Constitution, laws and regulations, and the structure of State institutions to identify structural violence and exclusion rooted in Iraqi legislation and institutions inherited from the former regime as Penal Code and Resolutions by dissolved Revolutionary Command Council and the Anti-terrorism law, to modify/cancel and the enactment of new laws aimed at combating violence, extremism and segregation, and promote the concepts of human rights, equal opportunities, diversity and social cohesion.
5. The Formation of the National Commission for Women's Empowerment, consisting of representatives of of Government, Parliament and High Judicial Council, and civil society organizations, media and relevant research centers and studies, that works on follow-up and monitoring of the implementation of national policies to improve the status of women in Iraq, as well as raising social awareness of women's rights, and the importance of their participation and empowerment politically, economically, culturally and socially. We have an integrated project on this matter taking into account the difficult financial situation of the country.

Finally, we pay tribute to all our sisters enduring and being steadfast under control of ISIS terrorists group, to martyr fighters who fought for national freedom and their families, and all women striving for their security and safety of their families and struggling for dignity, freedom, equality and social justice.

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