



**United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq
(UNAMI)**

بعثة الأمم المتحدة لمساعدة العراق

Press Release

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For Immediate Release

**Iraq: Better Security, but Human Rights Remains of Concern -
UN Report**

BAGHDAD/GENEVA, 8 July 2010 – The latest report by the United Nations on the human rights situation in Iraq shows further improvements in security, but warns that the overall human rights situation in the country remains a matter of concern. The study, covering the second half of 2009, was prepared by the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) and the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).

The UN report notes with deep concern the high rate of indiscriminate and targeted attacks, notably at place of worship, especially churches and mosques, and against ethnic groups that claimed hundreds of lives from 1 July to 31 December 2009. It also documents ongoing violence and targeted assassinations against government officials, high profile figures and journalists.

At least 4,068 civilians were killed and 15,935 injured in Iraq in 2009, according to figures provided to UNAMI by the Government of Iraq. While the number of civilian deaths decreased slightly in the second half of the year, the number of injured civilians rose dramatically, with 9,747 civilians injured during attacks, compared with 6,188 during the first six months.

Attacks deliberately targeting religious and ethnic groups continue unabated. UNAMI received reports of targeted killings, abductions, extortion and other violent attacks targeting Christians. The reporting period also saw several targeted attacks against the Shabak, a mainly Shiite minority.

The UN report also describes attacks against civilians at places of worship, with accounts of mosques and churches being targeted, mostly with improvised explosive devices. Between 1 July and 31 December, insurgents carried out five bomb attacks against Shia mosques and similar attacks on at least 11 churches.

Targeted assassinations against government officials and high profile figures continued throughout the reported period. These include judges, tribal leaders, ministers, provincial council members, persons affiliated with political entities and other key prominent civilians, as well as senior ranking security officials.

UNAMI also received reports of killings, bomb attacks, and abductions of journalists by unknown groups. Four journalists were deliberately targeted and killed in relation to their work and media workers continue to be subjected to arbitrary arrest and detention, harassment and censorship.

The UN report also draws attention to the human rights situation in prisons and places of detention in Iraq, as well as the fact that over 12,000 prisoners were facing executions in the country, as of 31 December 2009.

While recognizing various reform efforts by the Government, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay said that “continuing allegations of ill-treatment and torture in detention facilities in addition to poor conditions of detention remain of concern. I urge the Government of Iraq to investigate all such allegations and bring those responsible to justice, otherwise these practices will continue to tarnish Iraq’s recovery.”

The UN report indicates that 93 people, including three women, were executed during the second half of the year, compared to 31 (one woman) in the first six months. “This is a dramatic and alarming increase,” Pillay said. She noted that under international law, the death penalty is only permitted in very limited circumstances, namely for the most serious crimes, and only after trial and appeal proceedings that scrupulously respect all the principles of due process.

(*) Check the full report:

http://www.uniraq.org/documents/UNAMI_Human_Rights_Report16_EN.pdf

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The United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq works for the promotion and protection of human rights and the rule of law in close collaboration with the Government of Iraq and non-governmental sectors. UNAMI monitors the human rights situation in Iraq and assists, especially through its capacity-building activities, in the rehabilitation and reconstruction of state and civil society institutions. It collaborates closely with local human rights groups and seeks to maintain direct contact with victims and witnesses of human rights violations.

UNAMI reports:

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Countries/MENARegion/Pages/UNAMIHRReports.aspx>

OHCHR Country Page – Iraq:

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Countries/MENARegion/Pages/IOIndex.aspx>

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