

## **Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women**

2 October 2014

### **Statement of the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on the situation of women and girls in Iraq and Syria**

The United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women is alarmed by the tragic situation of the civilian population in many parts of Iraq and Syria, and the persistence of large scale acts of violence committed by the so-called Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant and associated terrorist groups. In particular, the Committee is gravely concerned about the fate of thousands of women and girls subject to serious violations of their human rights including killings, sexual violence, slavery, forced marriages, displacement and abduction. Information received suggests that these violations may amount to crimes against humanity. The Committee is further concerned by the fate of certain ethnic and religious minorities in Iraq and Syria at the hands of terrorist groups.

In efforts to identify and to put an end to these widespread human rights violations and to prosecute and punish those responsible, the Committee recalls its February 2014 recommendations to Iraq, and its July 2014 recommendations to Syria, and urges the Government of Iraq and the Government of Syria, with assistance from the international community, to fully comply with their obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, including their obligation to exercise due diligence to prevent, investigate, punish and ensure redress for the acts of private individuals or entities that violate women's and girls' rights under the Convention. Importantly, the scope of these obligations in situations of conflict has been set out recently by the Committee in its General Recommendation No. 30 on "Women in Conflict Prevention, Conflict and Post-Conflict Situations".

Similarly, in line with General Recommendation No. 30, the Committee urges the Government of Iraq and the Government of Syria to ensure that women are fully integrated into all peacebuilding efforts.

While welcoming the efforts undertaken by the international community to restore peace in Iraq at the request of Iraqi Government, the Committee echoes the calls of many that humanitarian assistance, protection and accountability must be provided to the affected population. To this end, the Committee fully supports the decision of the United Nations Human Rights Council to send a mission to Iraq to investigate violations and abuses of international human rights law by these terrorist groups.

The Committee also calls upon to the so-called Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant and associated terrorist groups to commit themselves to abiding by international humanitarian law and human rights standards and to stop immediately the violence against the civilian population, in particular women and girls.

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