



Woodrow Wilson
International
Center
for Scholars

*Middle East Program
Conflict Prevention Project*

Building a New Iraq

Ensuring Women's Rights



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This publication was produced by Wilson Center staff: Haleh Esfandiari, Director, Middle East Program; Anita Sharma, Former Director, Conflict Prevention Project; Jillian Frumkin, Associate, Middle East Program; Julia Bennett, Assistant, Conflict Prevention Project and Middle East Program.

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Cover Photo: An Iraqi woman makes a point during a forum organized by the Woman's Association for the Future of Iraq, Baghdad, March 2005. © AHMAD AL-RUBAYE/AFP/Getty Images

Photos by: David Hawxhurst (pages 16, 23); Julia Bennett (pages 14, 15, 18) and Jillian Frumkin (pages 3, 7, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31)

Introduction

Haleh Esfandiari, Director, Middle East Program
Anita Sharma, Former Director, Conflict Prevention Project

Despite ongoing daily violence, intimidation, and social pressure, Iraqi women voted in the parliamentary elections of January 30, 2005. Women did not go to the polls to further the agenda of one particular faction in Iraq, but in order to express their individual visions for the political, social, and legal future of their country. Secular and religious, veiled and unveiled Iraqi women from various societal strata and ethnic backgrounds share the unifying goals of full equality under the law and full integration in all aspects of daily life. They mobilized on election day to demonstrate that Iraq should not be ruled without the active participation of its women.

Iraqi voters chose between 111 party lists on election day. Based on the precedent set by Iraq's Transitional Administrative Law (TAL), which establishes that women hold a target of twenty-five percent of political positions, every third candidate on each party list was required to be a woman. All party lists complied with this standard. Therefore, eighty-seven women were among the 275 members elected to the Interim National Assembly (INA) on January 30, 2005. This statistic of thirty-one percent exceeds the twenty-five percent precedent set by the TAL. Yet, women occupy less than twenty-five percent of available positions at the ministerial level, as ambassadors, in the Constitutional Drafting Committee (CDC), and in the INA committees that are tasked with designing and implementing Iraq's democracy.

The permanent constitution of Iraq was drafted in August 2005 and, following a period of public debate, the draft of the constitution was presented to the Iraqi people in a referendum in October 2005. The constitution was ratified, and according to the constitution, the parliamentary elections planned for December 2005 will establish the permanent government of Iraq, which will take office by December 31, 2005.

The Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars ("Wilson Center") has been focusing on the substantial role Iraqi women can and should have in building a new Iraq. In pursuing this goal, the Middle East Program and Conflict Prevention Project at the Wilson Center started the Iraqi Women's Democracy Initiative in April 2003, which has consisted of a series of meetings in Washington, DC and workshops in the region. All of the Wilson Center's workshops and meetings aim to facilitate skills-building and leadership development for Iraqi women, so that they can be involved in all phases of reconstruction projects, peace building, and election processes. Additionally, public and private briefings enable the Wilson Center to expose the Washington, DC development and policy communities to the priorities of Iraqi women.

Since July 2004, the Wilson Center has organized four workshops held in Beirut, Lebanon, which have been funded by the United States Institute of Peace (USIP) and co-sponsored by the Centre for Women at the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA). International experts, trainers, and facilitators from Arabic-speaking countries played an integral role in leading the workshops, which were designed to ensure that participants received training in

leadership, network development, political activism, conflict resolution, and the applications of international conventions.

Workshop participants have included women from throughout Iraq and the diaspora who reflect a broad, balanced representation on the basis of ethnic, political, economic, geographic, age, and religious lines. Since the fall of Saddam Hussein, over one hundred Iraqi women have been part of one or more of the workshops arranged by the Wilson Center and its partners. The workshops were envisioned as “training of trainers,” with the aim that participants would return to Iraq and share their knowledge with other women activists. A number of workshop participants are utilizing the materials and information they gained in Beirut.

This publication describes related events in Washington, DC that the Wilson Center has organized with its colleagues, as well as each of the following workshops, outlining the priorities women have set during strategic planning sessions.

“Building a New Iraq: Women’s Role in the Political Process” July 11–13, 2004, Beirut, Lebanon. This workshop aimed to promote Iraqi women’s involvement in the January 2005 elections and facilitate their inclusion in post-conflict reconstruction. Among the twenty-eight Iraqi participants were the minister of labor and social affairs, a deputy minister of culture, and two women members of the Interim National Council (INC). Trainers focused on strategies for increasing women’s political participation in Iraq through expanded roles and responsibilities as community leaders; management skills for running effective NGOs; developing a plan for coordination and cooperation; and utilizing international mechanisms to assist women in peace building and post-conflict reconstruction. The workshop trained women in organization and mobilization tactics not only for succeeding in parliamentary campaigns but also for pursuing managerial positions in the government. Participants developed a plan of action for the six months then remaining before the January 2005 parliamentary elections.

“Building A New Iraq: Women’s Role in the Political Process On the Eve of the January 2005 Elections” December 13–16, 2004, Beirut, Lebanon. This workshop, a follow-up to the July 2004 workshop, was held just six weeks before the parliamentary elections and involved eighteen Iraqi participants, including the minister of state for women’s affairs and eight women running in the January 2005 elections. The workshop promoted gender issues not only as part of electoral platforms, but also as agendas for political parties as they campaign and mobilize for democratic reform and the rule of law beyond the January 2005 elections. Trainers presented strategies to emphasize the legitimate role of women as candidates, strengthen activities of women’s wings of political parties, and encourage women to become candidates. They also suggested outlets for involvement and mainstreaming gender-sensitivity in Iraq such as: assuming roles as commissioners and polling station officials; helping refugees and internally displaced persons register to vote; networking with NGOs and women leaders in government; interacting with the media to promote effective coverage of women candidates and issues of special concern to women; and encouraging women to vote and men to support this initiative. Participants discussed how elected women

should encourage, establish, and support programs to develop cross-party cooperation, networking, policymaking, and training of potential candidates.

“Building A New Iraq: Women’s Role in Drafting the Constitution” May 3–5, 2005, Beirut, Lebanon. This workshop, a follow-up to the December 2004 workshop, involved twenty-one women—including fifteen members of the Interim National Assembly (INA), three of whom were immediately thereafter named as members of the Constitutional Drafting Committee (CDC). The goal of the workshop was to expose participants to materials that will help them to make recommendations about the writing of the permanent Iraqi constitution, such that it addresses the needs and concerns of Iraqi women. The workshop was also intended to strengthen the capacity of women’s networks, including NGOs, to make recommendations to both women and men to incorporate gender-sensitive language and policy into the constitution. By reaching members of the INA and CDC, as well as leaders of civil society organizations and NGOs, trainers aimed to mobilize women to play an active and strong part in the debate on the future Iraqi constitution from both within and outside of the government.

“Building a New Iraq: How to Make the Constitution Work for Women” September 19–21, 2005, Beirut, Lebanon. This workshop, a follow-up to the May 2005 workshop, involved fifteen women parliamentarians selected for their expertise and activism, including two members of the Constitutional Drafting Committee (CDC), who were able to shed light on the process of putting together the draft constitution. The workshop focused on how to bring changes to the more restrictive articles of the constitution after it has been ratified and what roles participants could play in mobilizing other women to lobby parliament and parliamentarians to focus on a bill of rights for women and build a strong lobby for women across Iraq. Participants discussed the articles of the draft constitution that deal with women’s rights, citizenship, family, children’s rights, and personal status law.

To ensure that women are not marginalized and remain an active force in decision-making bodies, there is a great necessity for future similar workshops. Iraqi workshop and meeting participants consistently identify the need for conflict resolution training to address challenges to political participation in Iraq, as well as request follow-up workshops on influencing the implementation of Iraq’s constitution in a manner that is gender-sensitive and inclusive of Iraq’s diversity.

The Wilson Center and its many partners continue to facilitate this process and support Iraqi women in their progressive initiatives. For a complete list of Wilson Center partners, please consult the “List of Resources” in our previous publication, *Building a New Iraq: Women’s Role in Reconstruction*.



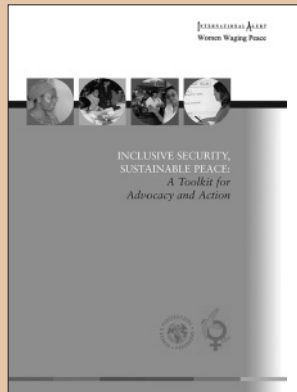
Anita Sharma (top, right), Former Director of the Conflict Prevention Project at the Wilson Center, facilitated a review of participants’ group work at the December 2004 workshop.

* * *

We would like to recognize Fatima Sbaity-Kassem and her staff at ESCWA, Judy Barsalou, Patricia Karam, and local staff of USIP, Rend Al-Rahim, Executive Director of Iraq Foundation and Iraqi Chief of Mission and Representative to the United States (November 2003–December 2004), and Wilson Center program staff Jillian Frumkin and Julia Bennett for their roles in making our workshops with Iraqi women possible and successful.

Inclusive Security, Sustainable Peace: A Toolkit for Advocacy and Action

Participants of the December 2004 and May 2005 workshops in Beirut, Lebanon received copies of *Inclusive Security, Sustainable Peace: A Toolkit for Advocacy and Action*. This resource, created by Inclusive Security: Women Waging Peace (Washington, DC), a program of Hunt Alternatives Fund, and International Alert (London, UK), highlights the role women can play as peace builders to prevent and recover from conflict.



tial distribution in November 2004. By May 2005, participants received copies of eight chapters translated in Arabic, including one on “Democracy and Governance.” Participants were instructed how to use the Toolkit to guide training sessions and stimulate discussion amongst colleagues in Iraq.

Much focus was placed on the “Justice, Governance, and Civil Society” section of the Toolkit, which includes a chapter about

The main goals of the Toolkit are to:

- overview critical information and strategies for addressing key peace and security issues;
- bridge the divide between the realities of peace activists in conflict, post-conflict, and transition areas, and the international practitioners and policymakers responsible for designing and implementing programs in these contexts;
- present issues in a user-friendly manner and demystify the “policy speak” and terminology used by the international community;
- describe how women are affected by and contribute to peacemaking, peace building, and security processes; and
- highlight practical examples of women’s contributions and offer concrete, feasible steps for fostering their empowerment.

The December 2004 workshop marked the first time that this Toolkit was in practical use since its ini-

“Constitutional Rights and Legislation.” Among the concepts introduced in the presentation of the Toolkit were: voter rights and good governance; personal empowerment and responsibility; creation of civic education programs; role of women in peace building, election processes, and every level of government; use of international conventions such as UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace, and security and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW); and strategic planning in the short, medium, and long term. Workshop participants were encouraged to adapt examples of women’s contributions to good governance in other countries to their specific situation in Iraq.

The complete Toolkit is available at www.womenwagingpeace.net/toolkit.asp.

Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars Iraqi Women's Democracy Initiative

History of Events

The following meetings and workshops were organized by the Wilson Center and its partners to support the role of women in Iraq's reconstruction. All events were held in Washington, DC, unless otherwise noted. For more information about any of these events, please visit our website at www.wilsoncenter.org/middleeast, and consult the publications *Building a New Iraq: Women's Role in Reconstruction* and *Winning the Peace: Women's Role in Post-Conflict Iraq* at www.wilsoncenter.org/middleeast/publications.

April 21–22, 2003

Winning the Peace: Women's Role in Post-Conflict Iraq

Co-sponsored with Inclusive Security: Women Waging Peace

May 29, 2003

The Status of Post-Conflict Reconstruction in Iraq: A View from the Field

Co-sponsored with Inclusive Security: Women Waging Peace

July 8, 2003

Empowering Women in Iraq: Defining a Blueprint for Moving Forward

Co-sponsored with Inclusive Security: Women Waging Peace

September 22, 2003

A Conversation with Songul Chapook, Member of the Iraqi Governing Council

Co-sponsored with Inclusive Security: Women Waging Peace

November 12–14, 2003

Building a New Iraq: Women's Role in Reconstruction

Co-sponsored with the American Bar Association-CEELI, Inclusive Security: Women Waging Peace, United States Institute of Peace, World Bank

February 26, 2004

Preparing for the Post-Post War Reconstruction in Iraq: What Has Been Accomplished and What Lies Ahead

March 12, 2004

Leaders from Iraq Discuss What Comes Next

Co-sponsored with Inclusive Security: Women Waging Peace

July 11–13, 2004 – Beirut, Lebanon**

Building a New Iraq: Women's Role in the Political Process

Co-sponsored with the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), and funded by the United States Institute of Peace

December 6, 2004**

Iraq Before the January 2005 Elections: A Presentation With Three Iraqi Ministers

Held as part of the Joseph and Alma Gildenhorn Middle East Forum

December 12–16, 2004 – Beirut, Lebanon**

Building a New Iraq: Women's Role in the Political Process On the Eve of the January 2005 Elections

Co-sponsored with the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), and funded by the United States Institute of Peace

December 22, 2004**

The Iraq Elections: Women to the Ballot Box

March 10, 2005**

Building Sustainable Peace in Iraq: An Informal Discussion with Iraqi Women Leaders

Co-sponsored with Inclusive Security: Women Waging Peace

May 3–5, 2005 – Beirut, Lebanon**

Building A New Iraq: Women's Role in Drafting the Constitution

Co-sponsored with the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), and funded by the United States Institute of Peace

** Featured in this publication in detail

Political Participation by Iraq's Women

Since the overthrow of Saddam Hussein's regime in April 2003, Iraqi women have mobilized to reclaim and expand their rights by demanding a role in leadership structures in Iraq.

In the aftermath of Operation Iraqi Freedom, the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) paid little attention to women's rights and representation in post-war planning. When Iraqi opposition groups met in Nasiriyah in April 2003 to discuss self-rule, only four women—all former exiles—were among the approximately 120 delegates.¹ Nonetheless, respect for diversity and the role of women were among the thirteen principles established for the creation of a new Iraqi government.²

Hundreds of women marched in Baghdad to demand women's inclusion in the Iraqi Governing Council (IGC), which was appointed by the CPA on July 13, 2003. Despite their efforts, only three of twenty-five IGC members were women: Songul Chapook, Rajaa Habib Khuzai, and Aqila al-Hashimi (who was assassinated in September 2003 and later replaced by Salma al-Khufaji). Women were not included in the nine-member rotating presidential council or the committee working on constitutional reform.³

The CPA announced the appointment of twenty-five ministries in September 2003. Only the ministry of municipalities and public works would be supervised by a woman: Nesreen Berwari.⁴ According to the U.S. State Department, the CPA approved a list of deputy ministers in April 2004. The list included seven women in the ministries of agriculture, culture, displacement and migration, electricity, environment, higher education, and transportation.⁵

On December 29, 2003, the Iraq Governing Council passed Resolution 137, which proposed to reverse Iraq's 1959 Personal Status Law by transferring critical provisions for marriage, divorce, and inheritance practices from civil administration to clerical administration under *shari'a*, or Islamic law. The measures of the IGC resulted in an unintended consequence—the galvanizing of a movement that united women from northern and southern Iraq, religious and secular traditions, and ethnicities including Sunni, Shiite, Kurd, Assyrian, and Turkomen. Women lobbied successfully for the retraction of Resolution 137 on February 27, 2004.

On March 8, 2004, the CPA adopted the Transitional Administrative Law (TAL) to serve as Iraq's interim constitution and precedent for future legislation. While women had petitioned for a forty percent quota of seats in the legislature, ultimately, the TAL stipulates a mandatory target of twenty-five percent participation by women at all levels of government. The TAL's inclusion of a quota system generated debate over the benefits and drawbacks of positive discrimination, but the gains in political representation Iraqi women have enjoyed subsequent to March 2004 reflect the quota's effectiveness as a preliminary step toward equality. Furthermore, the TAL makes an explicit provision that the rights of Iraqis should be determined and protected, regardless of gender. Two women were among eight appointed Iraqi members of the Independent Electoral Commission of Iraq (IECI), which was

established on March 31, 2004 to oversee the parliamentary elections of January 30, 2005.⁶

Sustained advocacy by women's groups became instrumental in achieving political gains and representation in the Iraqi Interim Government (IIG), established on June 1, 2004 and given full sovereignty by the CPA later in the month. The IIG achieved the twenty-five percent target for women's participation stipulated by the TAL. Women were appointed to lead six of thirty ministries: agriculture; displacement and migration; environment; labor and social affairs; public works; and (minister of state for) women.⁷

In June 2004, the Iraqi Association Al-Amal, Iraqi Women's Network, and Consulting Committee for Women's Affairs in Iraq held the "National Conference Enabling Women to Participate in Democracy" in Baghdad.⁸ More than 350 Iraqis attended the meeting that brought together women in government, civil society, and the private sector to create a series of recommendations for women's participation the democratic process. At the local level, women occupied six of thirty-seven seats on the Baghdad City Council; eighty-one served on neighborhood and district councils around the capital; and many were elected to district, local and municipal councils in most other regions of Iraq.⁹

More than 275 women organized to take part in the Iraqi National Conference that brought together over 1,100 delegates from August 15–18, 2004 to appoint Iraq's Interim National Council (INC), which would replace the IGC and serve as the legislature for Prime Minister Iyad Allawi's interim government until the January 30, 2005 elections. The INC was comprised of one hundred members—eighty-one newly selected and nineteen transferred from the defunct IGC. Once again, the membership of the INC reflected the twenty-five percent target for women's participation stipulated by the TAL.

As Iraq headed toward the formation of its first democratically elected government in January 2005, success in the electoral system was critical to women's visibility. The TAL's twenty-five percent target for women's participation was enlisted in preparations for the elections, and it was required that every third candidate on each of 111 party lists must be a woman. Thus, eighty-seven women were among the 275 members elected to the Interim National Assembly (INA) on January 30, 2005.¹⁰ This statistic of thirty-one percent exceeds the twenty-five percent precedent set by TAL.

Yet, women occupy less than twenty-five percent of available positions at the ministerial level, as ambassadors, in the Constitutional Drafting Committee (CDC), and in the twenty-five INA committees that are tasked with designing and implementing Iraq's democracy. Among the thirty cabinet members appointed at the recommendation of Prime Minister Ibrahim al-Jaafari are six women, who currently hold seven ministerial positions: civil society affairs; environment; human rights; migration and displacement; municipalities and public works; telecommunications; and (minister of state for) women.¹¹

The Constitutional Drafting Committee (CDC), announced on May 10, 2005, was originally comprised of fifty-five members, and the subsequent addition of Sunnis



Participants worked in small groups in December 2004 to discuss the January 2005 elections and determine avenues for women's participation in Iraq's new government.

brought its membership to seventy-one—at least nine of whom are women.¹² The permanent constitution of Iraq was drafted in August 2005 and, following a period of public debate, the draft of the constitution was presented to the Iraqi people in a referendum in October 2005. The constitution was ratified, and according to the constitution, the parliamentary elections planned for December 2005 will establish the permanent government of Iraq, which will take office by December 31, 2005.

As particularly effective organizers and advocates, women have contributed to political, social, and cultural change in Iraq. Local women's groups are committed to developing Iraqi civil society organizations, NGOs, and professional associations that promote education about and protection of women's rights. By October 2004, the U.S. government had financed the establishment of twenty-two women's centers throughout Iraq to offer computer and literacy classes, job skills, and access to information about health care and legal services. Nine centers are located in Baghdad, and eleven are dispersed regionally in Hillah, Al-Kut, Aqrah, Biara, Diwaniyah, Halabja, Karbala, Mosul, Najaf, Sulemaniyah, and Tawela.¹³ These centers enable women to gain knowledge and expertise in entrepreneurship, democracy education, political organization, leadership, and coalition building.

Women have demonstrated successfully that they can and should play a central role in the critical interchange between Iraq's civil society and political arenas, and their achievements indicate that they merit even greater recognition and inclusion. By rallying for the adoption and retraction of various legislations, women have influenced foundational positions on women's rights in Iraq. By being elected and appointed to governing bodies, women are empowered to bring about change within Iraq's leadership and facilitate democracy for Iraqi citizens. By mobilizing to influence the drafting and ratification of Iraq's permanent constitution, women will continue to be critical actors in the promotion of sustainable peace within Iraq.

Notes

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2. The United States Central Command. Press Statement: Visions of Freedom: 100 Iraqis Meet in Nasiriyah and Create Basis for New Government. April 15, 2003.
<http://www.state.gov/p/nea/rls/19714.htm>
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4. Ibid.
5. The Coalition Provisional Authority. Fact Sheet on Deputy Ministers.
www.cpa-iraq.org/government/dep_mins.html
6. Independent Electoral Commission of Iraq (IECI). The Composition of the Independent Electoral Commission of Iraq.
http://www.ieciraq.org/English/docs/3_COMPOSITION_OF_IECI.htm and UN News. UN announces establishment of Iraq's Independent Electoral Commission. June 4, 2004.
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8. Final Statement from The Nationalistic Conference Enabling Women in the Process of Democracy Baghdad. June 2004.
9. Office of the Senior Coordinator for International Women's Issues. U.S. Department of State. Fact Sheet: U.S. Commitment to Women in Iraq. August 3, 2004.
<http://www.state.gov/g/wi/rls/35165.hmt>
10. One woman parliamentarian, Lame'a Abed Khadawi, was assassinated on April 27, 2005.
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12. The New York Times. Q&A: Drafting Iraq's Constitution. June 24, 2005.
www.nytimes.com/cfr/international/slot3_062405.html?
13. U.S. Department of State. Fact Sheet. Iraq: Building a New Society. October 19, 2004.
<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2004&m=October&x=20041019184622cpataruk0.3498346&t=xarchives/xarchitem.html>

Women's Participation in Iraqi Governing Bodies

■ Coalition Forces Enter Iraq - March 20, 2003

■ Baghdad formally secured and Saddam Hussein overthrown - April 9, 2003

■ Coalition Provision Authority (CPA) established - April 16, 2003

Interim Governing Council (IGC) established - July 13, 2003

25 members - Three women

- Songul Chapook *
- Rajaa Habib Dhaher Khuzai *
- Salma al-Khufaji (replaced Aqila al-Hashimi, who was assassinated)

Ministries announced - September 1, 2003

25 ministers - One woman

- Municipalities and Public Works: Nesreen Berwari *

■ Resolution 137 announced - December 29, 2003

■ Resolution 137 overturned - February 27, 2004

■ Transitional Administrative Law (TAL) adopted - March 8, 2004

Stipulates 25% target for inclusion of women in government positions

Deputy Ministers approved by CPA - April 5, 2004

28 ministers - Seven women

- Agriculture: Sawsan Ali Magid Al-Sharifi
- Culture: Maysoun Salem Al-Damluji *
- Displacement and Migration: Hamdia Ahmed Najif
- Electricity: Baraka Mahdi Salih Al-Jiboori
- Environment: Manal Kamil Elyas Aziza
- High Education: Beriwan Abdul-Kareem Khailany
- Transportation: Mitha Al-Alami

Independent Electoral Commission of Iraq (IECI) established -

May 31, 2004

Eight Iraqi members - Two women

- Hondia Abbas Muhamad Al-Husseini
- Souad Mohammed Jalal Shalal al-Jabouri

Committee on Constitutional Reform established

24 members - No women

■ Iraqi Interim Government (IIG) - June 1, 2004

(Sovereignty from CPA June 28, 2004)

Council of 33 Ministers headed by Prime Minister Iyad Allawi

30 cabinet posts - Six women

- Agriculture - Sawsan Sherif
- Displacement and Migration - Pascale Isho Warda *
- Environment - Mishkat Mumi
- Labor and Social Affairs - Layla Abdul Latif *
- Public Works - Nesreen Berwari *
- Women (Minister of State for) - Narmin Othman *

Interim National Council (INC) established to replace IGC at

National Conference held August 15-18, 2004

100 Members - 81 newly selected; 19 selected from defunct IGC

25 women (25% target for women's participation achieved)

■ Iraqi Interim Government (IIG) - January 30, 2005 Elections

Council of 36 Ministers headed by Prime Minister Ibrahim al-Jaafari

32 Cabinet Posts: 17 Shiites, 8 Kurds, 6 Sunnis, 1 Christian

Six women hold seven cabinet posts

- Civil Society Affairs - Ala Habib Kadhem
- Environment - Narmin Othman *
- Human Rights (Acting) - Narmin Othman *
- Migration and Displacement - Suhaila Abed Jaafar
- Municipalities and Public Works - Nesreen Berwari *
- Telecommunications - Juwan Fouad Musum
- Women (Minister of State for) - Azhar Abdel Karim al-Sheikli *

Interim National Assembly (INA) elected to replace INC

275 Members of Parliament

- United Iraqi Alliance (48% of vote)
- Kurdistan Alliance list (26% of vote)
- Iraqi/Allawi list (14% of vote)

87 women (31%) * - 25% target for women's participation achieved

Constitutional Drafting Committee (CDC) announced - May 10, 2005

71 members - At least nine women, including:

- Najiha Al Amiri
- Eman al-Asadi Khalil *
- Akeela Al Dahan
- Itifat Al Fatlawi *
- Zahraa Hassan al-Hashimi *
- Maryam Al Raye
- Rajaa Habib Dhaher Khuzai *
- Munira Abdool Mohammad *

■ Draft of constitution completed - August 2005

■ Constitution ratified, after being presented to the Iraqi people in a referendum - October 15, 2005

■ Deadline to hold elections for the permanent Iraqi government - December 15, 2005

■ Deadline for permanent government to take office - December 31, 2005

* Wilson Center visitor or workshop participant. More than thirty INA members have attended Wilson Center workshops. See pages 32-38 for biographies.

Excerpts from the Transitional Administrative Law (TAL)

Adopted March 8, 2004

PREAMBLE

The people of Iraq, striving to reclaim their freedom, which was usurped by the previous tyrannical regime, rejecting violence and coercion in all their forms, and particularly when used as instruments of governance, have determined that they shall hereafter remain a free people governed under the rule of law.

These people, affirming today their respect for international law, especially having been amongst the founders of the United Nations, working to reclaim their legitimate place among nations, have endeavored at the same time to preserve the unity of their homeland in a spirit of fraternity and solidarity in order to draw the features of the future new Iraq, and to establish the mechanisms aiming, amongst other aims, to erase the effects of racist and sectarian policies and practices.

This Law is now established to govern the affairs of Iraq during the transitional period until a duly elected government, operating under a permanent and legitimate constitution achieving full democracy, shall come into being.

CHAPTER ONE: FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES

Article 1, section B: Gender-specific language shall apply equally to male and female.

Article 7, section A: Islam is the official religion of the State and is to be considered a source of legislation. No law that contradicts the universally agreed tenets of Islam, the principles of democracy, or the rights cited in Chapter Two of this Law may be enacted during the transitional period. This Law respects the Islamic identity of the majority of the Iraqi people and guarantees the full religious rights of all individuals to freedom of religious belief and practice.

CHAPTER TWO: FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS

Article 12: All Iraqis are equal in their rights without regard to gender, sect, opinion, belief, nationality, religion, or origin, and they are equal before the law. Discrimination against an Iraqi citizen on the basis of

his gender, nationality, religion, or origin is prohibited. Everyone has the right to life, liberty, and the security of his person. No one may be deprived of his life or liberty, except in accordance with legal procedures. All are equal before the courts.

Article 21: Neither the Iraqi Transitional Government nor the governments and administrations of the regions, governorates, and municipalities, nor local administrations may interfere with the right of the Iraqi people to develop the institutions of civil society, whether in cooperation with international civil society organizations or otherwise.

Article 23: The enumeration of the foregoing rights must not be interpreted to mean that they are the only rights enjoyed by the Iraqi people. They enjoy all the rights that befit a free people possessed of their human dignity, including the rights stipulated in international treaties and agreements, other instruments of international law that Iraq has signed and to which it has acceded, and others that are deemed binding upon it, and in the law of nations. Non-Iraqis within Iraq shall enjoy all human rights not inconsistent with their status as non-citizens.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE TRANSITIONAL LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Article 30, section C: The National Assembly shall be elected in accordance with an electoral law and a political parties law. The electoral law shall aim to achieve the goal of having women constitute no less than one-quarter of the members of the National Assembly and of having fair representation for all communities in Iraq, including the Turcomans, ChaldoAssyrians, and others.

To view the Law of Administration for the State of Iraq for the Transitional Period (TAL) visit www.cpa-iraq.org/government/TAL.html

“Building a New Iraq: Women’s Role in the Political Process” Beirut, Lebanon July 11–13, 2004

From July 11–13, 2004, the Wilson Center and the Centre for Women at the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) jointly held the workshop, “**Building A New Iraq: Women’s Role in the Political Process**” in Beirut, Lebanon. This workshop was funded by a grant from the United States Institute of Peace.

Trainers were: Armen Balian, Lebanese Conflict Resolution Network (LCRN); Afaf Marei, Egyptian Association for Community Participation Enhancement (EASPE); Nehad Abul Qomsan, Egyptian Centre for Women’s Rights; and Sherrill Whittington, former head of the Gender Affairs Unit, United Nations Peacekeeping Mission in East Timor (UNTAET). Among the twenty-eight Iraqi participants were the minister of labor and social affairs, a deputy minister of culture, and two women members of the Interim National Council (INC).

The workshop provided a forum for discussion about ways to increase women’s political participation in Iraq; identify gaps in democracy promotion programs; discuss strategies for fostering empowerment; develop a plan for coordination and cooperation between donors, implementers, and individuals; and focus attention on priorities to facilitate the inclusion of women in post-conflict reconstruction.

The workshop aimed to develop participants’ capacities to analyze issues concerning political participation, roles and responsibilities of women leaders, team-building, preparation of campaign messages, and methods for relating to voters. Additionally, participants developed communication, presentation, and election campaign management skills.

Assessing Priorities

At the outset of the workshop, participants raised issues that were having a direct impact on the political processes in Iraq. There was a definite concern about how party programs and platforms would reflect women’s equality and participation, particularly given that political associations in Iraq change from one month to another, and fluidity and ambiguity present problems for continuity of agendas.

Primary considerations were the fact that Iraqi women had been isolated from the outside world and the lack of substantial numbers of women holding decision-making positions. Participants were concerned that the suffering of marginalized rural women should be taken into account, with a focus on their lack of access to education. Compounded by the fact that men in rural areas might forbid women to leave their houses to vote, lack of compulsory voting in Iraq and security issues were estimated to have an adverse impact on women’s capacity to participate.

A number of participants expressed the reality that the psychological consequences of terrorism and fundamentalism must be taken into account when preparing for elections in Iraq. The possibility that groups and parties might boycott elections—either out of ignorance or as an act of protest—was seen as an important consideration for strategic planning.

Participants suggested that if women were to vote in large numbers, dramatic change would be a possibility—as women would choose their government for their own purposes: a different vision from that of men of the new Iraq. Participants wanted to develop a mechanism to implement the twenty-five percent target established by the Transitional Administrative Law (TAL), entailing that one fourth of all electoral platforms and political parties would be composed of women.

Participants remarked that women's associations and NGOs are relatively new and require collaboration to establish a coordinated mechanism for change. Women's organizations need unity and organizational networking, resulting in cooperation toward achieving an action plan to deal with the “culture of refusal” in Iraq. Methods for facilitating democratic electoral processes with no outside interference, as well as full participation of women in the political process were regarded as crucial, along with an awareness of qualities specific to women's leadership.

Political Training

The workshop opened with training by **Afaf Marei** and **Nehad Abul Qomsan**, who involved participants in classifying levels of political participation, to illustrate the abstract concept of civil society and the role it plays in Iraq's political situation.

Specifically, participants discussed how to organize and promote one's candidacy while under the presence of coalition forces, and how to understand and utilize international and national mechanisms such as United Nations Security Council Resolution 1546, the Independent Electoral Commission of Iraq (IECI), the newly created Ministry of State for Women's Affairs, and the Transitional Administrative Law (TAL).

Communication skills, personal presentation, and image were examined by discussing the concept of communication and its elements, such as effective steps for running dialogues. Participants were familiarized with different types of voters, how to handle negative interactions, and how to earn voters' trust. Emphasis was given to the scientific approach and the skills required to design an election program, run election campaigns, and establish an operation room for a successful candidate. Trainers also discussed how to be proactive with limited resources, how to gain the skills of election campaign management, and how to develop election publicity tools and attract volunteers.

Participants designed a six-month plan to establish a campaign platform and effective communication with voters and political party members. The workshop encouraged the women to develop a national strategy to be incorporated into the ministries, provinces, and political parties. With elections less than six months away, trainers urged the women to continue with their action plans and support



Armen Balian conducted training on conflict resolution during the July 2004 and December 2004 workshops.

one another—even if they have different goals and objectives. One of the most important goals was to ensure that women were not only put in positions to be elected, but that qualified candidates fill those slots. Recent examples suggest that independent women candidates often fail, while women on party lists are more successful. This was considered to be a challenge for Iraqi women, who noted that a minority of women are involved with the major parties.

Working with the United Nations

Sherrill Whittington conducted a training session that provided an opportunity for participants to learn about international mechanisms to assist women in peace building efforts. Whittington noted that with the adoption of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, all actors involved in negotiating and implementing peace agreements and peacekeeping mandates must mainstream a gender perspective. By stressing the importance of ensuring protection of women's rights and the full involvement of women in all aspects of promoting and maintaining peace and security, actors can strengthen women's role in decision-making. The Resolution recommends specialized training for peacekeepers on the protection, special needs, and human rights of women and children, and urges greater representation of women at all levels of peacekeeping operations. Whittington suggested the Iraqi women use the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and UN Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1546 to garner UN support for political activities. Whittington urged the women to develop partnerships with the United Nations and international entities, Iraqi women's civil society organizations, and Iraqi political parties to support the goals of women for full and equal participation.

Conflict Resolution

Armen Balian conducted training on interpersonal conflict resolution skills, as well as introductory negotiation and problem solving techniques. The agenda was designed to provide participants a common vocabulary and shared understanding of key conflict resolution and negotiation principles, as well as the opportunity to engage in conflict resolution processes by practically testing new methodologies and techniques.

Participants honed their abilities to analyze and identify the underlying causes of conflict, understand their reactions, and respond more effectively. They discussed dealing with conflict assertively and constructively, to prevent conflicts from developing and escalating into potentially violent confrontations.

Group exercises examined personal experience with conflicts, definition of conflict and its structure, as well as types of conflict and the dynamics of conflict escalation. Training in collaborative problem-solving involved an introduction to principles and major factors of constructive confrontations, conflict role-play exercises, creative problem-solving, and an examination of the stages of a problem-solving process.

The role of women's rights organizations in conflict resolution was raised, as was the conflict between women's rights, organizations, and other parties in Iraq, and how women and organizations can protect themselves. Participants noted the necessity of examining psychological aspects of conflict, achieving resolution in a complex situation where both internal and external conflicts co-exist, and creating a culture of peace to overcome conflict.

United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) Centre for Women

Beirut, Lebanon

The Centre for Women was established on October 1, 2003, following ESCWA's adoption of Resolution 240 (XXII), which recognizes that a fundamental part of development is the empowerment of women. Despite significant advances towards equality, Arab women face some of the most challenging obstacles to empowerment and are hindered by factors such as political and economic instability, occupation, and war. Thus, the Centre for Women serves to constantly highlight the plight of women and to encourage United Nations member states to act decisively to integrate women in all aspects of the development process.

Under the direction of **Fatima Sbaity-Kassem**, the Centre for Women focuses on three main areas of empowerment: economic (poverty alleviation); social (gender roles and partnership in the family); and political (sharing in decision-making and political participation). The Centre concentrates its activities on sensitizing society to gender-related issues, monitoring developments and analyzing the situation of Arab women, and compiling country profiles; providing substantive support to member countries in formulating action-oriented measures and gender-sensitive legislation, policies, and strategies and in coordinating a common region-specific position vis-à-vis global issues of concern; raising awareness for gender issues through



Fatima Sbaity-Kassem, Director of the Women's Centre at ESCWA, spoke to workshop participants about the implementation of international conventions on women's rights.

reports, studies, conferences, and the media; providing technical assistance for institutional and capacity building of national machineries for women and NGOs; advocating a right-to-development approach for empowerment and advancement of Arab women in order to eliminate discrimination and reduce gender imbalances; and mainstreaming a gender perspective into development policies, programs, and projects as a tool for achieving gender equality.

To increase the impact of its work and benefit from the experience and specialization of other agencies and organizations, ESCWA cooperates with the United Nations Secretariat and its specialized bodies and agencies, as well as with international organizations, Arab regional and sub-regional agencies, government agencies, and civil society institutions in carrying out many of its activities. ESCWA recognizes that effective responses to regional needs entail building consensus on actions at the regional level and linking them to those envisioned at the country level, as well as to those of other regional organizations and donor agencies. ESCWA has deep ties with women in the region and is the coordinating body for the United Nations Iraq Task Force.

For more information, please visit www.escwa.org.lb.

Iraq Before the January 2005 Elections

Washington, DC

December 6, 2004



Nesreen Berwari, minister of municipalities and public works, spoke about Iraq's transition to stability.

Three ministers of the Iraqi Interim Government, **Nesreen Berwari**, minister of municipalities and public works, **Louei Hatim Sultan al-Aris**, minister of transportation, and **Mamu Farhan Othman**, minister of state for civil society, and spoke at the Wilson Center about Iraq's preparations for the then upcoming January 2005 elections. This event was held as part of the Middle East Program's Joseph and Alma Gildenhorn Middle East Forum and co-sponsored by the Conflict Prevention Project.

Minister Berwari said that while the insurgency sustains the need for coalition forces to remain in Iraq, Iraqis are anticipating a scenario in which their own army could handle security duties. "If Iraq falls way to the insurgents, the whole international community will be in danger," she warned. The ministers encouraged the international community to maintain and increase its support for Iraq during this difficult transition to stability.

Minister al-Aris reported that his ministry was working aggressively to rebuild the infrastructure of Iraq's transportation network, and he cited plans to expand and improve air travel capabilities. He also projected that democracy will ultimately flourish in Iraq, but that democracy comes through experience rather than through osmosis.

Minister Farhan Othman observed that one of the greatest challenges to building a new Iraq is reminding the Iraqi people of their own greatness and talent. "We were victims of a tormented course of history," he said, and compared the challenges facing Iraqis after Saddam Hussein's brutal regime to those faced by Europeans at the end of the Middle Ages.

The ministers expressed their certainty that—however challenging—the current situation in Iraq is far better than the conditions that existed under the dictatorship of Saddam Hussein. They also shared optimism that the success of free and fair elections would be a vital step toward building Iraqi democracy.

“Building A New Iraq: Women’s Role in the Political Process On the Eve of the January 2005 Elections” Beirut, Lebanon December 13–16, 2004

From December 13–16, 2004, the Wilson Center and the Centre for Women at the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) jointly held the workshop, “**Building A New Iraq: Women’s Role in the Political Process On the Eve of the January 2005 Elections**” in Beirut, Lebanon. This workshop was funded by a grant from the United States Institute of Peace.

Trainers were: Armen Balian, Lebanon Conflict Resolution Network (LCRN); Afaf Marei, Egyptian Association for Community Participation Enhancement (EASPE); and Khalid Ali Omar, Hisham Mubarak Law Center, Cairo, Egypt. Of the eighteen women who participated in the workshop, eight were planning to run in the parliamentary elections of January 30, 2005.

As this workshop took place less than two months before the January 2005 elections, the participants established various objectives to increase Iraqi women’s participation in the electoral process and ensure that at least twenty-five percent female representation in the Interim National Assembly would be reached. These objectives included:

- Presenting strategies to undertake public campaigns, emphasize the legitimate role of women as candidates, strengthen activities of women’s wings of political parties, and encourage women to become candidates.
- Formulating and solidifying a credible election program that embraces gender issues and ensures the placement of women in the candidate lists, and that can contribute effectively to building a new and peaceful Iraq.
- Ensuring that party management and party policy committees are gender balanced and resolve to appoint women to decision-making roles.
- Discussing how elected women can encourage, establish, and support programs to develop cross-party cooperation, networking, policymaking, exchange of information and expertise, and training of potential candidates.
- Practicing dialogue skills to address different constituencies and improve the effectiveness of negotiations.
- Elaborating upon goals for women elected to government positions at the state and national levels, to ensure that elected women officials function effectively as legislators and prepare for re-election campaigns.

The workshop promoted not only women’s political participation in the nominations and elections, but also examined ways in which women can encour-



Trainers Afaf Marei of the Egyptian Association for Community Participation Enhancement (EASPE) and Khalid Ali Omar of the Hisham Mubarak Law Center in Cairo highlighted techniques for increased political participation.

age gender balance in election procedures. Outlets for involvement discussed with participants included: assuming roles as commissioners and polling station officials; helping refugees and internally displaced persons register to vote; and encouraging women to vote and men to support this initiative.

Conflict Resolution

The first two days of the workshop consisted of training by **Armen Balian**, who described the practice of conflict resolution as being governed by the principles of reconciling differences, examining the roots of the conflict—including all parties, and accepting the reality that reaching resolution requires substantial training and effort from each party.

Participants discussed a variety of mechanisms that can be successful in resolving conflict. They agreed that arbitration and mediation is the most widely used mechanism for reaching resolution in the Arab world, where tribal traditions are customarily employed in the face of conflicts. Some participants suggested that a shift toward more collective mechanisms such as negotiation would be positive for building a democratic Iraq. Participants discussed that conflict resolution must incorporate building trust among parties and articulating the core of the conflict through balanced testimony. Transparency in providing relevant information is critical for establishing a precedent of trust between parties.

Participants agreed that recognizing the competing interests and distractions of each opponent is prudent for affecting a winner-winner relationship between parties. Cooperative solutions between parties can be built upon common and complementary interests. Methods for obtaining knowledge of an opposing party's interests might include direct conversation between parties or between the mediator and opposing party; fostering confidentiality by disclosing one's own interests; empathizing with the opposing party to broaden contexts for considering interests; and conducting research or surveys about the opposing party's origin, behavior, and political orientation to better inform speculation about its potential interests.

As participants were at the outset of preparations for the upcoming parliamentary elections, the training incorporated many inter-group principles and coalition building examples, as well as political party and election cases. Participants were asked to consider the material presented to them in the context of case studies particular to their own lives and to Iraq. This method allowed for increased and enriched discussions and reinforced a sense of ownership of the workshop by the trainees.

Armen Balian observed that, "Being organizational leaders and political and social activists in constant deliberations and negotiations within and between their organizations, the participants interacted particularly strongly with the negotiation and problem-solving steps and techniques." While workshop participants came from diverse political organizations that were not necessarily allied, the group was able to transcend these affiliations to concentrate on common concerns and conflict situations.

Political Training

The final two days of the workshop consisted of political training by **Afaf Marei** and **Khalid Ali Omar**. When challenged to define the concept of political participation, participants emphasized the need for representation of all actors in society, regardless of gender or religious orientation; the implementation of the voice of the people; the necessity of establishing a constitution; the protection of freedom of movement; and the importance of pluralism. Participants agreed that each person in society should have a role and responsibility in political participation, such as being a candidate for the presidency, raising awareness about the election process, or establishing a civil society association.

Participants identified the following qualities as integral for Iraqi women to possess as they strive toward higher participation in their new government: experience and expertise; initiative; education; capacity to communicate; strong will; negotiation skills; credibility; and transparency. Through role-plays and written correspondence exercises, they explored the significance of culturally specific body language and the productivity of creating alliances with NGOs and voter constituencies.

Transparency, accountability, and efficiency in implementing policies, as well as a socially committed media and civil society groups that interact under official or unofficial regulations or that gather around certain topics are integral to the success of good governance. In preparing a successful election program, or contract between the candidates and the voters, participants concluded that it is crucial to identify problems faced by the population, accurately characterize the social and cultural orientation of voters, and implement plans with credibility and honesty.

Participants concluded that while it is necessary to personalize campaigns in order to achieve a voice that reflects the identity of the candidate, all candidates should work to address the entire nation of Iraq, since all regions would be participating in the January 2005 elections. Participants worked in small groups to identify students, unemployed youth, breadwinners of families, and former members of the now-dissolved Iraqi army as constituencies that might become target audiences for candidates.

Narmin Othman, current minister of environment and acting minister of human rights and then minister of state for women's affairs, traveled from Baghdad to Beirut to observe and contribute to the December 2004 workshop. The minister interacted with participants during the training sessions to share her expertise as a government official, provide advice about effective communication techniques for a variety of audiences, and offer her perspectives on how civil society and government can support each other to achieve common goals.

In addressing the participants, she said, "Iraqi women can do a lot to change Iraq. If you can only

train three trainers, this is good. If you can train one thousand, this is very good. You can change the mind-sets of your husbands and children. We should focus on the areas in Iraq that are witnessing conflicts, so that women can participate in political developments in these areas."

Minister Othman's full participation reiterated her receptivity to women's concerns and priorities and her commitment to achieving women's political participation in the new Iraq. Her presence was instrumental in mobilizing women across Iraq to participate in the elections and become more active in civil society.

Narmin Othman

Recommendations for Good Governance in Iraq

December 2004 Workshop

Participants agreed to adhere to principles for the promotion of democracy in Iraq.

They produced the following strategies for achieving continued political participation and good governance in Iraq:

1. Replace the physical occupation with the presence of international law, in order to foster an environment of freedom.
2. Balance against impending security threats by strengthening Iraqi security services and fostering economic stability.
3. Close borders to prevent intruders from derailing the January 2005 elections.
4. Obtain information about the candidates' backgrounds and proposals, as well as about parties that are emerging and proliferating in Iraq, in an effort to ensure the integrity of elected officials.
5. Improve communication and transportation systems so that the universal right to vote can be transformed into a practical reality, regardless of locale and economic status of individual Iraqis.
6. Form a committee of representatives from international organizations to study customs and traditions specific to Iraq, with the aim of developing a formula for democracy that will succeed in its diverse society.
7. Create more employment opportunities for Iraqi citizens, in order to respond effectively to joblessness and disenfranchisement.
8. Inform women about the role that they can play in constructing their new nation by undertaking education and employment and by becoming involved in the political process and elections.
9. Ensure that the permanent constitution recognizes and protects women's rights.

A Unified Campaign Platform: "Together, We Build Iraq"

December 2004 Workshop

Participants from a variety of ethnic and religious backgrounds agreed upon the slogan, "Together, we build Iraq," and focused their attention on common themes to establish the following objectives, which they referred to as "our dream."

1. Remove the coalition military as soon as possible.
2. Restore stability and security in Iraq.
3. Promote unity among Iraqis.
4. Develop solutions for unemployment.
5. Uphold rights regardless of gender, race, and religion.
6. Ratify an Iraqi constitution that promotes the rule of law.
7. Ensure reconstruction of Iraq.
8. Guarantee women's rights at legal and practical levels, both in terms of rights and in terms of obligations.
9. Tackle the issue of Iraqi debts.
10. Establish freedom of expression.
11. Support professional and agricultural trade unions.
12. Promote the role of civil society in the new Iraq.

The Iraq Elections: Women to the Ballot Box

Washington, DC

December 22, 2004

This briefing, co-sponsored by the Middle East Program and the Conflict Prevention Project, discussed the challenges Iraqi women face as they engage in all stages of Iraq's political development and transition to democracy. Representatives from Iraqi women's groups, the United Nations, Washington-based organizations, and the U.S. government provided information about ongoing programmatic and training activities in Iraq.

Participants shared information about the concerns of Iraqi women, and about the organization and likelihood of success of the then upcoming elections. Iraqi women face numerous challenges as they engage in all stages of Iraq's political development and transition to democracy. Still, participants agreed that the opening of this political and civic space is fortuitous—and Iraqi women are poised and ready to seize the opportunity to be involved in the reconstruction process.

Denise Dauphinais, Deputy Director and General Manager of the Center for Transitional Justice Program and Post-Conflict Governance at the International Federation for Electoral Systems (IFES), explained that when Iraqis go to the polls, they would be voting for a party or coalition with a fixed rank order. Women candidates would occupy every third seat on each ranked list. Roughly 100,000 Iraqis were to organize and staff the election, and about 6,000 independent Iraqi monitors and hundreds of Iraqis from political parties and coalitions were trained to monitor the election. Contrary to other elections in conflict and post-conflict countries, the international oversight that did exist was located off-site in Amman, Jordan for security concerns.

Stuart Krusell, Deputy Director of Iraq Programs at the International Republican Institute (IRI), reported that IRI programming was encouraging the transparency and integrity of the Iraqi elections process by undertaking voter education and public polling. For instance, IRI televised the ballot ordering system and aired television spots to inform viewers about the upcoming elections. IRI is also focused on assisting women in obtaining civil society positions of leadership and governance, helping to develop the Iraqi constitution, and preparing for the inauguration of a permanent government in December 2005. Krusell emphasized that IRI is not doing this work itself, but is instead helping Iraqis take the lead in doing the work themselves.

Abdulwahab Alkebsi, Program Officer for the Middle East and North Africa at the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), attested that Iraqis were navigating through the complex process of elections. During his travels in Iraq, Alkebsi reported that women were among the most optimistic of Iraqi citizens and the most involved among women in other Arab countries. He said

that NED's funding is awarded to programming that aims to integrate women in local civil society organizations and political parties in Iraq.

Makram Ouais, Senior Program Officer for the Middle East and North Africa Region at the National Democratic Institute (NDI), observed that although Iraqi women are ahead of their Arab peers in terms of education and economic freedoms, the brutality of Saddam Hussein's regime and several wars has led to severe decline. Ouais had just returned from a workshop with women members of the Iraqi Interim Government, and he attested that the women were committed to the point of being willing to risk their lives. "You see the energy and hear the stories of the challenge in their daily lives," he said, "These women were heroes." Ouais projected that the confidence levels of women will continue to increase, as Iraqi citizens recognize that women are capable of holding office and should be included in the political process.

Maha Muna, Programme Manager and Officer in Charge for the Governance, Peace, and Security Unit at the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), reported that UNIFEM is working to support women's empowerment. She said that the January 30, 2005 elections would highlight women's opportunities to participate in the public sphere, and that UNIFEM was working specifically with the Minister of State for Women's Affairs and the Ministry of Public Works to support the education and mobilization of Iraqi women and ensure their participation in the parliamentary elections.

Charlie Ponticelli, Senior Coordinator for the Office of International Women's Issues at the U.S. Department of State, commented that, "this is a defining moment for those who have worked shoulder to shoulder with our Iraqi sisters." Ponticelli paid special recognition to the strength and resilience of Iraqi women, which is of great significance amidst the insurgency and unstable conditions in Iraq. Perhaps like the case of Afghanistan, in which everyone portended that violence and intimidation would keep voters—in particular women—from going to the polls, Ponticelli suggested that Iraqi women might prove the world wrong again.

Building Sustainable Peace in Iraq: An Informal Discussion with Iraqi Women Leaders

Washington, DC
March 10, 2005

This informal session was co-sponsored by the Middle East Program, the Conflict Prevention Project, and Inclusive Security: Women Waging Peace. **Haleh Esfandiari**, Director of the Middle East Program at the Wilson Center, and **Carla Koppell**, Deputy Director of Inclusive Security: Women Waging Peace, facilitated discussion between members of a visiting delegation of Iraqi women and leaders of Washington-based research centers and NGOs.

Attendees discussed the danger that the permanent Iraqi constitution might not meet Iraqis' expectations if it does not maintain the level of freedom for women that Iraqis have known in the past. The role of the international community in establishing a mechanism for monitoring the drafting of the constitution was also debated. Attendees discussed the concept of increasing advocacy for "equal rights" instead of "women's rights," the benefits of addressing individual human rights through a bill of rights, and the possibility of sponsoring active debates on television and radio about the repercussions of *shari'a*-based law.

Zakia Hakki, a member of the Interim National Assembly (INA) and Iraq's first female judge, noted that only eight female judges exist in the midst of 865 male judges in Iraq today (excluding in Kurdistan). Hakki described Iraqi women as "in the battlefield" regarding the permanent constitution, and she encouraged the greater participation of NGOs to ensure that, with time, all current decrees against human and women's rights are abolished not only on paper but also in practice.

Attendees also discussed how to ensure women's rights, given the conservative nature of many Iraqis in positions of power. One member of the delegation, also a member of the Women's Educational Society and the Iraqi Islamic Party, attested that many in her party have a progressive outlook on Islam and believe there can be harmony between modernism and Islam. She emphasized that the goal is not to force *shari'a* on Iraqis, but to make religion a matter of personal conviction. She highlighted the importance of raising awareness through education as a means of liberalizing the party's platform and clarifying the consequences of a legal system based on *shari'a*.

Narmin Othman, current minister of environment and acting minister of human rights and former minister of state for women's affairs, spoke about protecting women's rights in the constitution. She highlighted three methods of working toward this goal: 1) women members of the INA should be informed



Narmin Othman, current minister of environment and acting minister of human rights and former minister of state for women's affairs, spoke about protecting women's rights in the new Iraq.

about international conventions regarding women's rights through intensive leadership training courses, so that they can promote the application of these declarations and educate Iraqi citizens about human rights; 2) outlets for delivering messages to Iraqi decision-making bodies should be developed, so that all Iraqis can offer suggestions regarding the content of the permanent constitution; and 3) Iraqi women need male allies both inside and outside the INA to support their cause.

Minister Othman observed that a comprehensive campaign, such as that undertaken prior to the January 2005 elections, is needed to educate Iraqis about the importance of reaching goals through indirect influence, such as messages sent to the Constitutional Drafting Committee (CDC), and direct influence, such as expanding the capacity of the ever-growing number of women's NGOs. Minister Othman requested that workshops be designed and conducted to train trainers, focus on the meanings of international conventions, and conduct a word-by-word review of the draft of the constitution.

Members of the Iraqi delegation stressed the need for increased education, employment opportunities, and services such as healthcare, suggesting that the energy of women will only increase with greater security and stability in Iraq.

“Building A New Iraq: Women’s Role in Drafting the Constitution” Beirut, Lebanon May 3–5, 2005

From May 3–5, 2005, the Wilson Center and the Centre for Women at the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) jointly held the workshop, “**Building A New Iraq: Women’s Role in Drafting the Constitution**” in Beirut, Lebanon. This workshop was funded by a grant from the United States Institute of Peace.

Trainers and experts were: Farida Bennani, Faculty of Law, Qadi Ayad University, Marrakech, Morocco; Chibli Mallat, Professor of Law and Director, Centre for the Study of the European Union, Saint-Joseph University, Beirut, Lebanon; Fatima Sbaity-Kassem, Director, Centre for Women at ESCWA; and Rend Al-Rahim, Executive Director of Iraq Foundation, and Iraqi Chief of Mission and Representative to the United States (November 2003–December 2004). Of the twenty-one women who participated in the workshop, fifteen are current members of the Interim National Assembly (INA) and six are NGO representatives. In addition, three have since been named to the Constitutional Drafting Committee (CDC).

The goal of the workshop was to expose participants to materials that will help them to make recommendations about the writing of the permanent Iraqi constitution, such that it addresses the needs and concerns of Iraq’s women, and to strengthen the capacity of women’s networks and NGOs to make recommendations to both women and men to incorporate gender-sensitive language and policy into the constitution. Training sessions included discussions of overarching constitutional frameworks and concepts, the determination and incorporation of women’s priorities in the Iraqi constitution, and mechanisms for implementation of the collective needs of Iraqi women.

Constitutional Tenets and Frameworks

Farida Bennani began her discussion by explaining that the constitution is the fundamental source of laws that regulate social categories, determine rights of individuals within society, and become a methodology that gives citizens the right to participate in decision-making processes and regulates relationships between citizens and the state. She expressed that a constitution is the sole source of legislation, but that rights of the individual to question the constitution should be clearly stipulated within its text.

Bennani led a discussion about the primacy of the constitution as compared with civil or state laws, and whether the constitution should be the only text that previews the protection of women’s rights. As the supreme law, the constitution should be a guideline for women’s rights. Thus, any laws that violate



Participants worked in small groups to determine a set of common goals for women in Iraq.

those guidelines will be considered unconstitutional.

Participants discussed the option of the constitution establishing the right of all citizens to choose their own religion and be treated equally according to the law, leaving it a choice as to whether by *shari'a* or other law. Participants were also concerned about the implementation and protection of any written laws, and they discussed whether the constitution could stipulate a mechanism to protect women's rights—perhaps one that would maintain that no tradition or cultural aspect can have preference over the constitution.

nism to protect women's rights—perhaps one that would maintain that no tradition or cultural aspect can have preference over the constitution.

Fatima Sbaity-Kassem conducted a review of international policies and conventions, highlighted legal texts that regulate women's rights worldwide, and demonstrated how women's issues have moved from being neglected to being at the core of international attention. Legal texts discussed included the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention of Political Rights of Women (1952), and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), which has been signed by seventeen Arab countries with a number of reservations. Sbaity-Kassem also gave an overview of major resolutions regarding women's rights that have been approved by the General Assembly of the United Nations (UN) and noted that the UN's increased focus and political will on advancing women's rights is evidenced in having ordained ESCWA's Centre for Women in 2003. In 2000, among eight critical global targets enumerated in the Millennium Development Goals, promoting gender equality and empowering women was listed as priority three. Sbaity-Kassem expressed that the fact that women were not added as an annex to another document is a key evolution.

Constitutional Rights and Provisions

Chibli Mallat led a discussion about the means available to protect Iraqis and their rights, especially in the aftermath of decades of inability to protect any Iraqi citizen from violations of rights. He emphasized that constitutions are ineffective if rights can be violated and articles remain only words on paper. Participants talked about constitutional lifespan, debating if or how regular reviews and amendments to the document might occur. Mallat suggested that Iraqis might create a constitutional court in which every citizen can make a claim, but which includes filters whereby lower courts decide if a case continues to a higher court. Participants agreed that the power to make claims would give the Iraqi people confidence in their new system.

Rend Al-Rahim and Chibli Mallat briefed participants on the structure and development of the Transitional Administrative Law (TAL), in terms of how it addresses women's issues. Al-Rahim indicated that the TAL is a provisional doc-

ument, created only in principle, and many articles have not translated to laws and remain ineffective. Yet, in the absence of a more effective replacement, Iraqi citizens have no choice but to accept the TAL's provisions until the permanent constitution is ratified. Al-Rahim explained the difficulty of making post-script amendments to a constitution and asked participants if the principle regarding gender equality should be included in the constitution as quantitative, such as in the form of quotas for women's participation in public institutions.

Mallat described the TAL's inclusion of a quota for women's participation as a great victory, unprecedented and unmatched in other countries in history. He suggested the women be very clear about implementing quotas in future legislation, perhaps using the Islamic expression for "legal share," since "quota" is not an Arabic word. He proposed one alternative of offering women a proportion of seats of power equal to their proportion of the population. He also advised participants to name the specific conventions to which they seek Iraq's adherence, in order to ensure that international conventions are not adopted haphazardly. Participants discussed including an innovative article in their constitution that stipulates that there can be no change to articles pertaining to human rights or gender equality.

Discussion of Shari'a and Family Law

Bennani, herself Moroccan, described the challenge Moroccan women faced in trying to change the civil status law before adopting the new family code in 2004. She described how, initially, women's associations fought separately to show that they were pioneers in tackling this debate. Ultimately, they banded together to collectively change four articles in the law. She described how women asked people to sign petitions to change the civil status law, using negotiation skills to persuade men to sign the petition and to urge Islamists to participate in an integrated social development plan for women.

Participants discussed the fact that equality *before* the law does not mean equality *in* the law; the potential effect on the lives of private citizens and families if civil status laws go against the spirit of the constitution; how international instruments related to social and economic rights can be incorporated; and the nature of gender rights as discussed in the *shari'a*. Participants also considered the fact that family rather than the individual is the primary unit within Iraqi culture, and they debated how the Iraqi constitution could incorporate this norm, especially given Iraq's current status as a war society that includes many widows and orphans.

Bennani indicated that in the case of many Arab countries, jurisprudence is the human understanding, or interpretation, of *shari'a* according to one's own sect. Bennani differentiated between Islam as *the* source or *a* source of legislation for the Iraqi constitution. Workshop participant and INA member Zakia Hakki noted that the Qu'ran was made to protect women and that women



Farida Bennani (center) continued a discussion about women's civil rights with participants at lunch during the May 2005 workshop.

involved in the constitution writing process are capable of preserving this protection by avoiding the repercussions of *shari'a*-based law.

Mechanisms for Public Debate

Noting that the constitution forms the basis of citizenship, Al-Rahim explained that there is currently no mechanism for dialogue between civil society and the drafters of the constitution, and she emphasized the importance of reaching all sections of the Iraqi population, especially those that do not belong to political parties. Participants also felt that they needed to reach out to men—both those who do and do not support their goals. They also stressed the significance of including religious dignitaries and legal experts in the Constitutional Drafting Committee (CDC).



Chibli Mallat answered participants' questions about constitutional frameworks during an informal discussion.

Participants discussed mechanisms for reaching the Iraqi public to stimulate debate about the content of the constitution. They suggested that Iraqi farmers, house-

wives, and students should be surveyed about their opinions and addressed directly, and that elite decision-makers employ media to reach the population. They also recommended increased regularity of meetings organized by NGOs and civil society organizations, the inclusion of municipal councils in reaching out to the people, and the formation of small teams of legal experts and religious dignitaries who could engage Iraqis and ensure their involvement in drafting the constitution by reporting their findings to the Interim National Assembly.

The trainers outlined the following objectives for participants: to work towards a common women's vision of the constitution; to identify the key issues that the constitution should focus on without leaving loopholes for lawyers or judges; to include women in the process of drafting the constitution; and to engage women as part of the social debate to influence others through dialogue, for the rights of women and more broadly. Mallat impressed upon participants that ministries and a constitutional court in Iraq could be presided over by a woman, suggesting that women surpass their status, as did Jalal Talabani, a Kurd, when he became president.

The women were determined to stand as a unified bloc for women's collective needs in Iraq, perhaps through an inter-party women's caucus drawing on women from within and outside of the INA, which would have regular bi-monthly meetings to solidify strategies for action. Workshop participant and INA member Suaad Hamid Al-Iwabi Lafta said, "We need to start studying ourselves, whatever we have learned, and then we need to educate others just as we were educated. We need to transmit this knowledge. We need to reach for the majority, the civil society, and through them we can make our voice be heard amongst our sisters in our country. Thanks to the civil society, we won't be imprisoned in Baghdad; we will reach everyone in Iraq."

Creating A Plan of Action for Iraqi Women

May 2005 Workshop

Participants of the May 2005 workshop created the following list of items to be considered by the Constitutional Drafting Committee (CDC):

1. Guaranteeing a mother's right to pass citizenship on to her children.
2. Increasing and expanding the existing quota system in the National Assembly, the executive and legislative branches of government, ministries, and all leadership positions.
3. Ensuring equality for women *before* and *in* the law for women.
4. Adhering to international conventions regarding women's rights, human rights, and children's rights.
5. Condemning use of violence against women and installing preventive measures in the law.
6. Creating a bill of rights for women as an addendum to the constitution.

Participants disagreed on the following points:

1. The quantitative percentages of quotas.
2. Whether Islam should be the governing principle/main source of legislation of the constitution.
3. If and how to separate state and religion within the constitution and other legal documents.

A final plan of action was determined:

1. Building coalitions and alliances among Iraqi women. This might take the form of an inter-parliamentary committee for women, and/or a committee of members of the parliament and NGO representatives, to coordinate raising awareness and advocating the common goals of women.



Rend Al-Rahim led a review of the conclusions developed during group work. Following this process, participants determined a plan of action for women to increase their rights and participation in Iraq.

2. Forming a committee to coordinate all forthcoming activities in Baghdad.
3. Creating a communication network for outreach to civil society organizations and for enhancing existing women's networks.
4. Ensuring that women members of the INA are part of the Constitutional Drafting Committee (CDC).
5. Employing media (radio broadcasts, television roundtable debates, newspaper articles, Internet forums) to focus on women's issues and spread awareness campaigns throughout Iraq to create a popular wave of support for women's demands.
6. Reaching out to religious men and experts in Islamic law during the constitutional drafting process.

“Building A New Iraq: How to Make the Constitution Work for Women”

Beirut, Lebanon

September 19–21, 2005

From September 19–21, 2005, the Wilson Center and the Centre for Women at the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) jointly held the workshop, “*Building A New Iraq: How to Make the Constitution Work for Women*” in Beirut, Lebanon. This workshop was funded by a grant from the United States Institute of Peace.

Trainers were: Armen Balian, Lebanon Conflict Resolution Network (LCRN); Farida Bennani, Faculty of Law, Qadi Ayad University, Marrakech, Morocco; Fatima Sbaity-Kassem, Director, Centre for Women at ESCWA; and Haleh Esfandiari, Director, Middle East Program, Woodrow Wilson Center. Fifteen of the sixteen participants are members of the Interim National Assembly (INA), two were members of the Constitutional Drafting Committee (CDC), and the former minister of agriculture was also in attendance. Each

participant brought expertise from Interim National Assembly committees ranging from foreign relations and finance to education and civil society. Participants were hand-picked for their high level of activity and involvement in women’s issues in Iraq, as well as their diversity—they came from various political parties and regions including Baghdad, Basra, Karbala, Kirkuk, Mosul, Najaf, and Sulemaniyah.

The workshop was held within one month of the October 15, 2005 referendum, during which the constitution was approved.

Thus, participants were able to have concrete discussions about specific constitutional articles, to create plans of action about the implementation of the articles, and to consider what legislation might be created to complement articles, such that the laws will address women’s needs. The goals of this workshop were:

- To prepare participants—especially the women members of the Constitutional Drafting Committee (CDC), Interim National Assembly (INA), and civil society organizations—to continue pushing for and playing an active and strong part in the debate on the Iraqi constitution from both within and outside of parliament.
- To expose participants to progressive regional and international constitutions, which will help them to make recommendations regarding the writing and interpretation of the Iraqi constitution, such that it addresses the needs and concerns of Iraqi women.



Participants conducted personal conflict response style assessments before a session on collaborative problem solving.

- To strengthen the capacity of NGO activist networks to make recommendations both to women and men to incorporate gender-sensitive language and policy in the constitution; and to strengthen the role of NGOs in educating Iraqis about the constitutional clauses as they are drafted and reviewed.

The Constitution and Women's Constitutional Rights

Farida Bennani held sessions that included debate on the relevance of a national constitution and its function as the highest national law, with a focus on articles pertaining to women's rights as written in the draft that was put to national referendum on October 15, 2005. Participants considered potential contradictions between specific articles, which could threaten the security of women's rights by serving as a basis for future legislation of civil status codes. They also discussed the role of international conventions in guiding legislation in Iraq, as well as principles of citizenship. Group work was conducted to stimulate cross-party discussions about the potential ramifications for women in different provinces of Iraq, who strive to maintain or achieve desired personal law status based on the precedents outlined in the constitution.

Conflict Resolution and Collaborative Problem-Solving

Armen Balian conducted interactive sessions that brought women together, stirring debate about discrimination, inclusion, and right of choice. Topics included an introduction to principles of the conflict resolution field; comparative personal experiences with conflict; the dynamics of conflict escalation; an individual self-assessment and application of conflict response styles; and negotiation role plays to determine constructive and collaborative problem-solving skills. Participants agreed that a methodological approach of interfering with conflict is necessary for successful resolution, and that anyone who is part of a problem should also be part of the solution. They also analyzed their own methods of approaching conflict, focusing on their individual experiences with the current situation in Iraq.



Participants in the September 2005 workshop worked in small groups to discuss how women's rights would be addressed under the new constitution.

Iraqi Participants' Biographies

This list includes Iraqi women who participated in workshops in Beirut, Lebanon between July 2004 and May 2005. Many of these women have changed titles or affiliations since their participation; we have attempted to update this information when possible.

For an additional list of women who have participated in our programming since April 2003, please consult the biographical sections of our publications *Winning the Peace* and *Building a New Iraq: Women's Role in Reconstruction* at www.wilsoncenter.org/middleeast/publications.

- **Building a New Iraq: Women's Role in the Political Process, July 2004**
- **Building a New Iraq: Women's Role in the Political Process On the Eve of the January 2005 Elections, December 2004**
- ▲ **Building a New Iraq: Women's Role in Drafting the Constitution, May 2005**

Ansam T. Abayachi, Director, NGO Center, Ministry of Planning and Development ●

Azhar A. AbdAlhadi, Thyquar, Iraq ■

Isam Abdullatif, Assistant to Minister, Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs ●

Kamela Ahmad Ibrahim holds a bachelor's degree in Educational and Psychological Sciences. She is a member of the Kurdistan Democratic Party, the Kurdistan Civil Rights Organization, the Kurdistan Human Rights Organization, and the Kurdistan Women's Union. She is a member of the Iraqi Interim National Assembly. ▲

Eman Al-Asadi Khalil holds bachelor's degrees in Nursing and Law, a diploma in Anesthesiology, and a master's degree in International Law and International Relations. She is currently pursuing her doctorate in International Law, while working as an assistant professor at Al Mustansiriya University. She works as a criminal lawyer in the Central Criminal Court in Baghdad. She is a member of the Human Rights Organization and is President of the committee investigating Saddam Hussein's crimes. In addition, she is President of the Dialogue for Democracy for an Iraqi women's organization and a member of the Arab Jurists Union, the Executive Committee for the Conference of Scholars and Iraqi Elites, the Iraqi Interim National Assembly, and the Constitutional Drafting Committee. ▲

Fawzia Abdul Al-Attia is a Professor of Sociology at the University of Baghdad. She is Chairperson of the Iraqi Sociologists Union and a member of the League of University Lecturers, the Administrative Committee of the Independent Iraqi Women's Group, the Supreme Committee and Women's Committee for the Preparation of the Iraqi National Congress, and the trustees of the Iraqi Independent Women's Group. ▲ ●

Kareema Muhsin Al-Assadi, Program Assistant, World Food Programme ●

Maysoon Al-Damluji, former Deputy Minister of Culture; Chair, Iraqi Independent Women's Group ●

Amal Kashif Al-Ghatta, a pharmacist, worked as head of division in the Ministry of Health on drug issues. She has been a member of the Union's Council for two consecutive sessions. In 2003, she established the Islamic Institution for Woman and Child, and the Oum Al Jawad (Amgwad) Institution for Orphans. She is a member of the Iraqi Interim National Assembly. ● ■ ▲

Zahraa Hassan Al-Hashimi graduated in 1987 as an Electrical Engineer from the University of Mosul. She is Director of the Al Mustafa Girls' Union. She has worked with humanitarian organizations to support orphans as well as cultural programming on the national channel. She is a member of the Iraqi Women Organization, and the Iraqi National Association. She was nominated by the United Coalition list and is a member of the Iraqi Interim National Assembly and the Constitutional Drafting Committee. ▲

Haifa Al-Kadi, Manager, Alalawiyah Art Centre ●

Wafaa Al-Khaldy, Teacher, Organization of Human Rights ●

Shatha Naji Hussain Al Maidne is a founding member of the Iraqi Women's Network and Vice President of the Iraqi Organization for Supporting Families of Martyrs and Missing. She held a conference on the importance of the constitution, as well as seminars on the elections. She is Vice President of the Women for Peace Organization. ● ■ ▲

Zanna M. A. Al Rawanduzi, Ministry of Municipalities and Public Works ●

Asmaa Ibrahim Al-Shaboot is a member of the Iraqi Interim National Assembly and a Professor of Mathematics in the School of Sciences, Al Nahrayn University. She has made various contributions to civil society organizations related to women's rights. She is a member of the Islam and Democracy Organization. ▲

Balsam Al-Shahiri, Reporting Officer, RTI/Democracy Dialogue Activity ●

Raghad al-Shadidi received her bachelor's degree in 1997 from the Islamic Sciences Institute, University of Baghdad. She has been working with civil society organizations. Previously, she worked as a teacher. Currently, she is a member

of the General Secretariat of the Iraqi Women Organization in Baghdad and a member of the Iraqi Interim National Assembly. ▲

Safana Hadi Ali Al-Salloom, Representative, Dawn Society for Children (D.S.C.), Baghdad, Iraq ■

Zainab Al-Suwaij, originally from Basra, is the co-founder and Executive Director of the American Islamic Congress (AIC), which provides a voice for moderate Muslims in the U.S. to oppose the forces of extremism in the Muslim-American community. She has led AIC's endeavors in Iraq since the liberation, including: the Iraqi Women's Education Institute (IWEI), a partnership with the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies (FDD) and the Independent Women's Forum (IWF), which included co-organizing and co-chairing the Iraqi Women Leaders' Conference, a five day international conference held at the Dead Sea, Jordan in April 2005, bringing 150 Iraqi women leaders for advanced leadership and democracy training and workshops; the Iraqi America Freedom Alliance, a collaborative project with FDD; and the Revitalization of Iraqi School & Stabilization of Education (RISE) Program. She also co-founded the Iraqi Women Higher Council, which serves as an umbrella organization to assist small Iraqi women's organizations in establishing themselves and realizing their goals. She has also worked as a teaching fellow at Yale University. ● ▲

Kholod Al-Ubaydi, Executive Director, Ministry of Planning ●

Avian Rahim Ali, Secretary, Tamouz Union for Social Development ●

Ebtisam L. Aziz, Kirkuk, Iraq ■

Narmin Othman Barzinjy is the Minister of State for Environment and acting Minister of Human Rights for the Iraqi Interim National Assembly. She was formerly the Minister of State for Women's Affairs, as well as the former Minister of Education for Sulemaniyah, former advisor to the Ministry of Justice, and a former Minister of Social Affairs in the Provisional Regional Government of Kurdistan. She was a member of the Conference Advisory Steering Committee for the "Voice of the Women of Iraq Conference" (organized with the support of the Coalition Provisional Authority) on July 9, 2003. Prior to her positions in government, she was an educator for eight years and a former member of the Peshmerga. She spent several years living outside of Iraq, including in Syria and Sweden. In 1992, she became the manager of the Kurdistan Save the Children office in Irbil and also served as manager of the Youth Activity Center in Sulemaniyah. ■

Songul Chapook was a member of the Iraqi Governing Council, representing the Turkman population on the Council. By training, she is an engineer. Chapook is the founder of the Iraqi Women's Organization based in Kirkuk, which provides computer training, agricultural instruction, and literacy instruction to women. ● ■

Alia Dally, Chief, Sub-Regional Resource Facility for Arab States (SURF-AS), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) ■

Rajaa Kahlil Dawoud, Member, National Council, Iraq ■

Hanaa Edwar is Secretary for Al-Amal Association, a non-governmental organization dedicated medical, social, cultural, education, reconstruction projects that improve the social-economic conditions of Iraqi people. Edwar is co-founder of the Arab Women's Court, which was formed in Beirut in 1996 with the aim of combating violence against women, and of the Arab Non-Governmental Network for Development. She sits on the presidency council of Asuda, a non-governmental organization based in Sulemaniyah working to combat violence against women and a founder of Beit Khanzad, a shelter for women and children, based in Irbil. She is the President of the Iraqi Council for Peace and Solidarity. ●

Shirin Fattah, Chairperson, Kurdistan Women Union ●

Nazinein Abd-Hassan Faidhallah is a member of the Iraqi Interim National Assembly from the Kurdistan Democratic Party. She has been associated with the feminist movement since 1995 in Baghdad. She is a member of the Kurdistan Women's Union and a founding member of the Iraqi Woman's Council. ▲

Rend Al-Rahim is the Executive Director of the Iraq Foundation. From November 2003 to December 2004, she served as Iraq's Representative to the United States and the Iraqi Chief of Mission. She is a native of Iraq and a co-founder, in 1991, of the Iraq Foundation. Al-Rahim has represented the Foundation with government and international institutions worldwide. She has contributed to numerous reports and books on Iraq, and written policy papers and reports for the Iraq Foundation. She has built partnerships and cooperative relations with several non-governmental and research institutions. She is the co-author of *The Arab Shi'a: Forgotten Muslims*, published in 2000 by St. Martin's Press. She holds degrees from Cambridge University and the University of the Sorbonne. ▲

Zakia Hakki is a member of the Iraqi Interim National Assembly. Previously, she was an attorney in northern Virginia and Vice President of the Iraqi-American Council. She serves as senior advisor to Iraq's Department of Justice. The first woman judge in Iraq, she served as an expert legal adviser in the government's Ministry of Agriculture. She is the founder of the Kurdish Women's Federation and was president of the group from 1958 until 1975. She was the only woman elected to the leadership of the Kurdistan Democratic Party during the general assembly meeting in 1970. As a result of her outspokenness on behalf of the Kurdish people, she was placed under probationary arrest for twenty years until her emigration to the United States in 1996. She has since participated in various working group sessions on Iraq at the U.S. Department of State. Hakki holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration from

the International Labor Union in Switzerland and a Doctor of Law degree from the University of Baghdad. ▲

Shilir Rashed Mohammed Hamawnde graduated in 1990 from the School of Administration and Economics, Statistics Division, and is currently a law student. Since 1991, she has worked in the field of human and women's rights. She is a member of the Iraqi Interim National Assembly, the Kurdistan Women's Union, and the Economic Kurdistan Association. She is a program presenter on the women's movement on the national radio, and has written articles on how to transform the Kurdish society into a civil establishment. ▲

Mandana Hendessi, Commissioner, Social Development, London, U.K. ■

Ban Ghassan Jameel, Iraqi Net for Human Rights and Cultural Development, Baghdad, Iraq ■

Abeer Jumaa, Section Leader, RTI/Democracy Dialogue Activity, Mosul, Iraq ●

Azhar Ramadan Kareem holds a bachelor's degree in veterinary medicine. She is the author of many articles related to law and women's and human rights. She is a member of the Iraqi Interim National Assembly, the Kurdistan Democratic Party, the Kurdistan Human Rights Organization, the Kurdistan Women's Union, and President of the Asia Organization for Helping Women and Children, in Baghdad. ▲

Eman Khammas, Member, INTEL Occupation Watch Centre ●

Samia Aziz Mohammed Khasro is a member of the Iraqi Peace Institute and President of the Committee on Women, Democracy, and Religion. She has participated in various conferences, among them the Baghdad Conference for Dialogue, Dukan Conference for Religious Dialogue and Human Rights, and Irbil Conference for National Reconciliation. She is a member of the Iraqi Interim National Assembly. ▲

Rajaa Habib Dhaher Khuzai was a member of the Iraqi Governing Council and is a member of the Iraqi Interim National Assembly and the Constitutional Drafting Committee. She is also the President of The National Council for Women. She holds degrees in obstetrics and gynecological health from the University of London. For the past several years, she directed a hospital in the southern city of Diwaniyah and taught at the local medical college. Khuzai is the President of the Women's Organization in Diwaniyah and founder of the Women's Health Center in Baghdad. She is the founder of Widow's Care Organization. She seeks to develop a women's health strategy for post-war Iraq, with particular attention to screening and early detection of cancer in women. ●

Suaad Hamid al-Iwabi Lafta graduated in 1983 from the School of Pharmacy, University of Baghdad. She is a member of the Iraqi Women Prisoners Association, the Iraqi Women's Organization, and is a member of the Iraqi Interim National Assembly. ▲

Layla Abdul Latif, former Minister of Labor and Social Affairs ●

Khanum Rahim Latif is program manager of Asuda, an organization in Sulemaniyah that combats violence against women. In addition to running a shelter for women, she is responsible for the awareness and research program at Asuda. She has created a network of women in the Kurdistan region and was an organizer for a conference in Sulemaniyah on women's political participation. ●

Amena Mahmood, Head of Kurdistan Institute of Elections, Baghdad, Iraq ■

Sinan Ghanem Makhwir, Messan, Iraq ■

Hana'a Kh. Mohammed, Baghdad, Iraq ■

Munira Abdool Mohammad is a member of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan and Kurdistan Women Union. She has served in various posts in the Kurdistan government, and is now a member of the Iraqi Interim National Assembly and the Constitutional Drafting Committee. ▲

Yanar Mohammed, President, Organization of Women's Freedom in Iraq ●

Iman Muslet, Program Manager of the Rafidain Women's Coalition ▲

Layla Y. Othman, Baghdad, Iraq ■

Dhuha Sabah Rouhi, President, Association of Women Entrepreneurs ●

Hana'a A. M. Saligh, Baghdad, Iraq ■

Haifa Ali Samerai, Executive Manager of the Rafidain Women's Coalition ▲

Amal Shlash, Chairperson, Beit El Hekmah, Bab al Moadham ●

Issam Shukri, Organization for the Defense of Secularism in Iraq Society ●

Sahar Taha, Operations Researcher, Member of "Nahran Society," Beirut, Lebanon ■

Ala Talabani is the former vice president of the Kurdistan Women's Union and an advocate for Kurdish and women's rights. She has contributed to a number of British and Arab newspaper and magazine articles on the state of Iraq and its Kurdish population. Talabani has organized and chaired a number of conferences on women's political participation in post-war Iraq. She co-founded Women for a Free Iraq in February 2003 and the Iraqi Women's High Council in October 2003. ●

Ala Nouri Talabani is a member of the Iraqi Interim National Assembly. She received a master's degree in English Literature from Sulemaniyah University in 1997. Politically, she was an active member of Kurdistan student movement until her graduation. She worked as a diplomat in the foreign affairs office of the Kurdistan Regional Government. She also worked for two years as a Liaison Officer between UN agencies and the Kurdish government. In June 2004, she was

appointed Assistant to the Iraqi National Conference Chairman. In October 2004, she was appointed women's affairs advisor for the Kurdish Prime Minister. ▲

Shola Ali Yasin, Member, Peace and Solidarity Organization, Baghdad, Iraq ■

Juliana Yousif, Professor of English Linguistics, Basra University ●

Soiba Mahmoud Zangana, Head of Minister's Bureau, Minister of State for Women's Affairs, Baghdad, Iraq ■

Mona Noor Zalzala is editor-in-chief of an Iraqi feminist magazine and has held continuous political and social seminars for women. She is a member of the Iraqi Interim National Assembly. ▲

Anna Zayer is a former civic leader, investigative reporter, and editor-in-chief from the Netherlands. She founded a Center in Baghdad in 2003 after the war to support new Iraqi civil organizations in all fields. The Center, Civil Pillar (CP), also supports the growth of independent media in Iraq and organizes courses and workshops for journalists. CP is currently involved in building an independent news agency in Iraq and issues *Al-Nida al-Insani* (The Call for Human Duty), the biggest human rights monthly in Iraq. ▲

Conflict Prevention Project

The Conflict Prevention Project was created in October 2000 to build upon the work begun by the Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict. Activities sponsored by the Project have contributed knowledge, experience, and suggestions for implementing conflict prevention strategies, as well as encouraged focus and coordination within the conflict prevention community. The Project has also explored the complex experiences of women engaged in peace building, and has co-sponsored a number of events and workshops to support women as they strive to secure their equal rights and participation in the new Iraq.

In June 2005, prompted by the growing demand for leadership training directed at both the prevention of violent conflict and the reconstruction of war-torn societies, the Conflict Prevention Project was restructured as a Project on Leadership and Building State Capacity, which responds to the urgent need to refine our understanding of how leadership interventions can be most effectively structured; to expand the cadre of professional trainers capable of working in the tenuous political and diplomatic environments of countries and regions in conflict or emerging from conflict; and to deepen our capacity to conceptualize, implement, and manage these complex interventions.

Middle East Program

The Middle East Program was launched in February 1998 in light of increased U.S. engagement and the profound changes sweeping across many Middle Eastern states. In addition to spotlighting day-to-day issues, the Program continues to concentrate on long-term developments and their impact on political and social structure, economic development, and relations with the United States.

The Middle East Program draws on domestic and foreign regional experts for its meetings, conferences, and occasional papers, which assess the policy implications of: long-term political, social, and economic developments in the region and individual states; the Middle East's role in the international arena; American interests in the region; the threat of terrorism; and strategic threats to and from the regional states. The Program pays special attention to the role of women, youth, civil society institutions, Islam, and democratic and autocratic tendencies.

The Middle East Program examines employment patterns, education, legal rights, and political participation of women in the region. The role of women in advancing civil society, the problem of trafficking in women, and the attitudes of governments and the clerical community toward women's rights are areas to which the Program devotes considerable attention. The Program also has a keen interest in exploring women's increasing roles in conflict prevention and post-conflict reconstruction activities.

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Lee H. Hamilton, President and Director

One Woodrow Wilson Plaza
1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20004-3027

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Participants, organizers, and trainers of the December 2004 workshop, "Building a New Iraq: Women's Role in the Political Process On the Eve of the January 2005 Elections," pose in front of the UN House in Beirut, Lebanon.

