



# Security Council

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## Implementation of resolution [2576 \(2021\)](#)

### Report of the Secretary-General

#### I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution [2576 \(2021\)](#), in which the Secretary-General was requested to report every three months on progress made towards fulfilling the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI). The report covers key developments relating to Iraq and provides an update on the activities of the United Nations in Iraq since the previous report of 11 November 2021 ([S/2021/946](#)) and the briefing to the Security Council by the Special Representative for Iraq and Head of UNAMI on 23 November 2021.

#### II. Summary of key political developments

##### A. Political situation

2. On 30 November 2021, the Independent High Electoral Commission announced the final results of the parliamentary elections held in Iraq on 10 October. In his statement, the Chair of the Board of Commissioners announced that the Electoral Judicial Panel had approved all of the Commission's recommendations except those pertaining to five seats, one each in Baghdad, Basrah, Erbil, Kirkuk and Ninawa Governorates, which were reallocated following a partial recount. The Commission subsequently reported that, of the 329 parliamentary seats, the Sadrist Bloc won 73 seats; the Taqaddum Alliance, 37 seats; the Dawlat al-Qanun Coalition, 33 seats; the Kurdistan Democratic Party, 31 seats; the Kurdistan Alliance, 17 seats (all for the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan); the Fath Alliance, 17 seats; the Azm Alliance, 14 seats; the New Generation Movement, 9 seats; Imtidad, 9 seats; and Ishraqat Kanun Movement, 6 seats. Twenty-three other parties won 5 seats or fewer, for a total of 40 seats, including 5 seats allocated to quotas for minorities, while candidates registered as independents gained the remaining 43 seats, including 4 seats allocated to quotas for minorities.

3. The results announced by the Commission showed that women had won 95 seats, 12 more than the minimum quota of 83 seats (25 per cent of seats) specified in the Constitution, while total voter turnout was 43.54 per cent. On 1 December, the Commission officially submitted the final results to the Federal Supreme Court for ratification.

4. On 30 November, the President of Iraq, Barham Salih, met with the President of the Supreme Judicial Council, Judge Fa'iq Zaidan. In a statement from the President,

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it was noted that the two had agreed on the importance of keeping the democratic process on track, that electoral complaints and appeals should be dealt with in accordance with the Constitution and that maintaining a high standard of transparency and impartiality should be a priority to restore confidence in the polls.

5. Following the announcement of the preliminary election results on 16 October, some political parties and candidates submitted lawsuits directly to the Federal Supreme Court. Those lawsuits served to challenge elements of the electoral process and the legality of aspects of the electoral law, including provisions pertaining to seat allocation and the demarcation of constituencies, as well as the results themselves, with some seeking to annul the election results.

6. The Shia Political Coordination Framework (a grouping of Shiite political parties) was among those challenging the results. In a statement issued on 30 November, the Framework categorically rejected the results of the current elections, reaffirmed its position that the results were subject to significant manipulation and noted that it would continue to pursue a lawsuit aimed at annulling them.

7. On 2 December, the political bureau of the Kurdistan Democratic Party, which had lost two seats on appeal, issued a statement alleging that the Presidents of Iraq and of the Supreme Judicial Council had intervened to extend the period to submit claims to the Electoral Judicial Panel. On the same day, the Independent High Electoral Commission issued a statement highlighting its independence, providing legal justification for the appeals period and emphasizing that neither President had interfered in its work.

8. On 3 December, a statement released by the committee organizing demonstrations to reject the election results criticized the fact that the final election results had been announced while appeals were ongoing, urged the public to join demonstrations and called upon protesters to be steadfast and patient. In addition, the statement questioned the work of the committee established by the Prime Minister of Iraq, Mustafa Al-Kadhimi, to investigate the events that had led to casualties during post-election protests on 5 November. The organizing committee reiterated its demands in a statement issued on 17 December.

9. On 27 December, the Federal Supreme Court announced that it had ratified the results of the 2021 parliamentary elections. That same day, the Court issued decisions rejecting all the lawsuits challenging the final election results.

10. In response to the Court's decision, Muqtada al-Sadr, leader of the Sadrist Bloc, welcomed the ratification and called for the maintenance of peace. The leader of the Fath Alliance, Hadi al-Amiri, stated that he accepted the Court's verdicts "out of concern for Iraq's security and political stability", but maintained his previous statements "that the election [had] involved much fraud and manipulation". Similarly, other leaders within the Shia Political Coordination Framework accepted the decisions, albeit while expressing reservations. The leader of the Sunni Azm Alliance, Khamis al-Khanjar, congratulated the winners, while the former Speaker of the Council of Representatives and leader of the Sunni Taqaddum Alliance, Mohammed al-Halbousi, welcomed the unanimous agreement to abide by the Court's decisions. The Kurdistan Democratic Party, while emphasizing that it had lost two seats "illegally", and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan also welcomed the ratification of the results.

11. On 28 December, the Shia Political Coordination Framework issued a statement in which it called for an end to protests against the election results. The committee organizing demonstrations later announced that its sit-ins would end on 1 January 2022 following the commemoration of the deaths on 3 January 2020 of the Iranian General Qasem Soleimani and the Iraqi Deputy National Security Adviser and Deputy

Chairman of the Popular Mobilization Commission, Jamal al-Ibrahimi, also known as Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, in an airstrike close to Baghdad International Airport.

12. Meanwhile, post-electoral meetings took place across the political spectrum throughout the reporting period. On 2 December, leaders of the Shia Political Coordination Framework met with Mr. al-Sadr for the first time since the October elections. In a statement following that meeting, the Coordination Framework noted that the attendees had discussed “outstanding issues and latest developments” and had agreed to continue dialogue in order to develop “realistic solutions to the political impasse”. For his part, Mr. al-Sadr called for a “national majority government” in a social media post. Conversely, the leader of the Dawlat al-Qanun Coalition, Nouri al-Maliki, stressed the need for the prompt formation of a consensus government during an address to members of his party following the meeting with Mr. al-Sadr.

13. A further meeting between Mr. al-Sadr and representatives of the Shia Political Coordination Framework was held on 29 December 2021. On 7 January 2022, the Shia Political Coordination Framework issued a statement, in which it called on all representatives of the largest social component, especially the brothers in the Sadrist Bloc, to form the largest bloc to preserve the constitutional entitlement and the stability of the political process. The same day, Mr. al-Sadr published a social media post in which he stated that “the will of the people is a national majority government”.

14. In addition, meetings were held among political leaders and parties from across the political spectrum, including from the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. On 22 December 2021, the President of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, Nechirvan Barzani, received a delegation from the Shia Political Coordination Framework, headed by Mr. al-Maliki. According to a statement issued by the Office of the President of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, the two sides agreed on the need for all political forces to reach a common understanding, the rejection of the election results by some parties notwithstanding. The Coordination Framework’s delegation also met with senior figures from the Kurdistan Democratic Party and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan.

15. On 7 and 8 January 2022, a joint delegation from the Kurdistan Democratic Party and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan travelled to Baghdad and met separately with delegations from the Sadrist Bloc and the Coordination Framework, as well as with Shia and Sunni leaders.

16. On 8 January, the Azm and Taqaddum Alliances announced the formation of a new coalition, to be presided over by Khamis al-Khanjar, and stated that they would nominate Mohammed al-Halbousi as parliamentary Speaker. The same day, the President of the Kurdistan Democratic Party, Masoud Barzani, met with the two alliance leaders in Erbil.

17. On 30 December 2021, following the ratification of the election results and in line with the time frame established in the Constitution, Mr. Salih issued a decree convening the first session of the new parliament. On 9 January 2022, the Council of Representatives held the first session of the fifth electoral cycle, under the chairship of its eldest member, Mahmoud al-Mashadani (Azm Alliance). A total of 325 Members of Parliament attended the session and took the constitutional oath. During the session, the Shia Political Coordination Framework and the Sadrist Bloc each claimed to constitute the largest parliamentary bloc. The session was briefly adjourned due to the departure of Mr. al-Mashadani from the chamber. According to a Council of Representatives readout, Mr. al-Mashadani had exited the chamber owing to a health condition. The session was resumed under the chairship of Khaled al-Daraji (independent), and parliamentarians re-elected Mr. al-Halbousi as the Speaker of the Council of Representatives. The new Council of Representatives also elected Hakem al-Zamili (Sadrist Bloc) and Shakhwan Abdullah Ahmed (Kurdistan Democratic Party) as the First and Second Deputy Speakers, respectively.

18. Mr. Salih and Mr. Al-Kadhimi were among those who congratulated the new appointees. However, the Shia Political Coordination Framework, whose members had left the parliamentary session prior to the vote, issued a statement on 9 January in which it stressed that it did not recognize the outcome of the session for procedural reasons. On 11 January, the Coordination Framework released a statement in which it said that it would seek legal recourse through the Federal Supreme Court.

19. During the reporting period, the Government continued to address the situation related to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and maintained measures aimed at curbing community transmission of the disease and reducing the impact thereof. On 30 November 2021, the Ministry of Health authorized booster vaccinations for individuals aged 65 years and older, those with underlying medical conditions and health-care workers.

20. In Sulaymaniyah Governorate, university students took to the streets between 21 November and 5 December to demand improved living conditions. After demonstrators set fire to a Patriotic Union of Kurdistan office and blocked access to Sulaymaniyah University and several roads, members of the security forces used live rounds and tear gas, resulting in injuries to 30 protesters and approximately 15 security personnel, according to information verified by UNAMI. A number of demonstrators were arrested, with the Sulaymaniyah police department alleging that demonstrators had attacked the police. The protests ended after the Council of Ministers of the Kurdistan Regional Government announced financial support for students and senior Patriotic Union of Kurdistan members committed to addressing the students' concerns.

## **B. Relations between Baghdad and Erbil**

21. On 3 December 2021, following an attack attributed to Da'esh in the Makhmur district, the President of Iraq, Mr. Salih, the President of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, Nechirvan Barzani, the Speaker of the Kurdistan Regional Parliament, Rewaz Fa'iq, and other officials issued statements calling for enhanced coordination between Iraqi security forces and the Peshmerga forces to address security gaps. On 4 December, the Security Media Cell reported that a delegation from the Ministry of Peshmerga Affairs of the Kurdistan Regional Government had visited the Iraqi Joint Operations Command in Baghdad to discuss security coordination to combat terrorist attacks.

22. On 8 December, Mr. Al-Kadhimi met with the Prime Minister of the Kurdistan Regional Government, Masrour Barzani, in Erbil. According to a statement issued by the Office of the Prime Minister of the Kurdistan Regional Government, during the meeting the two counterparts had emphasized the importance of a stable Iraq and of enhanced security cooperation between the Iraqi security forces and the Peshmerga forces.

23. On 20 December, the Federal Ministry of Finance announced that it had transferred 200 billion Iraqi dinars to the Kurdistan Regional Government, the fifth transfer of its kind since 11 July, which contributed to the payment of civil servant salaries in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq for the month of November. Those transfers were made as the full implementation of article 11 of the 2021 Federal Budget Law by both Governments remained stalled.

## **C. Security situation**

24. Da'esh continued to conduct asymmetric attacks during the reporting period, primarily in Anbar, Babil, Baghdad, Diyala, Kirkuk, Ninawa and Salah al-Din Governorates. From 23 November 2021 to 5 January 2022, 123 attacks targeting security forces were attributed to Da'esh, in addition to the continued targeting of

community leaders, off-duty security personnel and civilians accused by Da'esh of collaborating with Iraqi authorities. Iraqi security forces continued their counter-terrorism operations in response to Da'esh activity.

25. On 28 November 2021, Mr. Al-Kadhimi met with the families of those killed during an October attack in Diyala Governorate attributed to Da'esh. During the meeting, he warned against sectarian strife and called upon the security services to hold the perpetrators to account.

26. On 29 November, the National Security Adviser, Qasim al-Araji, gave a briefing to the press on the initial findings of the investigation into an assassination attempt on Mr. Al-Kadhimi, on 7 November 2021, which had been widely condemned by political actors in Iraq and by the international community. Mr. al-Araji stated that two explosive-laden uncrewed aerial vehicles had been used in the attack, one of which had failed to explode.

27. On 3 December, the Security Media Cell reported that an overnight attack by Da'esh against the village of Khidr Jijah in the Makhmur district had led to the death of multiple civilians and members of the Peshmerga forces. The attack was condemned by the President of Iraq, Mr. Salih, the Prime Minister of Iraq, Mr. Al-Kadhimi (through his military spokesperson), the President of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, Mr. Nechirvan Barzani, the Prime Minister of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, Mr. Masrour Barzani, and other officials. They all reiterated earlier calls for enhanced cooperation to combat terrorism and greater coordination between the Peshmerga and the Iraqi security forces.

28. On 7 December, the Security Media Cell reported that an improvised explosive device attached to a motorcycle had detonated in the city of Basrah, leaving four civilians dead and four more injured. The same day, Mr. Salih issued a statement in which he condemned the attack and called for unity to support the State and the security services. Mr. Al-Kadhimi also issued a statement in which he ordered an investigation.

29. On 30 December, the Security Media Cell reported that a number of bodies of civilians had been found in Jablah, Babil Governorate, following a security operation against suspected terrorists. On 31 December, Mr. Al-Kadhimi ordered the National Security Agency to investigate the matter and, on 3 January 2022, announced that he had received a report in which it was indicated that there had been a clear failure in the performance of the security system and that 14 participants in the crime had been arrested, either for mishandling malicious information or for involvement in the execution of the security operation. He also stated that a higher committee had been formed to expand the scope of the investigation and that other judicial measures had been taken, including the dismissal of the Babylon police chief, the Babylon director of intelligence and the Jablah director of intelligence, all of whom he said would be referred for immediate investigation. The National Security Adviser, Mr. al-Araji, was tasked with submitting a report on the organization of security and intelligence entities in order to avoid similar incidents.

30. From 25 November 2021 to 5 January 2022, 44 attacks were reported against trucks belonging to Iraqi companies contracted to carry supplies for the international counter-Da'esh coalition, in Anbar, Babil, Baghdad, Basrah, Dhi Qar, Muthanna, Qadisiyah and Salah al-Din Governorates. Responsibility was claimed by five different armed groups for 38 of those attacks. No casualties were reported.

31. On 9 December, the Security Media Cell reported on social media that members of the Iraqi Military Technical Committee had met with their counterparts from the international counter-Da'esh coalition. The same day, the international counter-Da'esh coalition announced that it had "completed its transition to a non-combat mission", adding that its new mission was "to advise, assist and enable Iraqi forces".

32. On 29 December, Mr. Al-Kadhimi issued a statement on social media in which he confirmed that the international counter-Da'esh coalition had “fully completed their combat role after transfer of personnel and material outside Iraq”. Going forward, he stated, the coalition’s role would be “to advise and assist ... security forces per the outcome of the Strategic Dialogue”. In addition, Mr. Al-Kadhimi thanked the coalition and “its members, our partners and neighbours in combating Da’esh”. The previous day, on 28 December, the Coordination Body for the Iraqi Resistance had issued a statement questioning the coalition’s intention to withdraw and threatening to drive out any forces remaining in the country after 31 December. The same day, the leader of the Fath Alliance, Hadi al-Amiri, also issued a statement emphasizing the need for foreign combat forces of all kinds to be withdrawn from Iraq by 31 December. For his part, on 30 December, Muqtada al-Sadr proposed several conditions aimed at ensuring that the coalition’s combat mission had ended and called upon Mr. Al-Kadhimi to implement them.

33. On 3 January 2022, the spokesperson for the Commander-in-Chief informed the media that air defence systems had destroyed two uncrewed aerial vehicles targeting a military facility in the vicinity of Baghdad International Airport. On 5 January, the Security Media Cell reported that a rocket had landed in the same area. Responsibility for both attacks was claimed by a group calling itself “Saraya Ababil”. In addition, the Security Media Cell reported that Ayn al-Asad airbase in Anbar Governorate had been targeted by two uncrewed aerial vehicles, on 4 January, both of which had been intercepted; five rockets, on 5 January, all of which had landed outside the airbase perimeter; and one uncrewed aerial vehicle, on 6 January, which had also been also intercepted. The rocket attack of 5 January was claimed by a group calling itself “Qassim al-Jabbarin”. In response to the latest attacks, the international counter-Da’esh coalition described such attacks as a “dangerous distraction” from its current mission and a threat to the Iraqi people. For his part, on 5 January, Mr. Al-Kadhimi informed the Cabinet that attacks on Iraqi bases were “irresponsible” and were designed to “disturb security and stability in the country”.

34. During the reporting period, the Ministry of Defence of Turkey reported ongoing operations against Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK) targets in northern Iraq. In identical letters dated 4 November 2021 addressed to the President of the Security Council and to me (S/2021/927), the Permanent Representative of Iraq drew attention “to the fact that these violations of the sovereignty of Iraq that Turkey committed were contrary to the principles of good-neighbourliness and violated the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law”. In the same letters, the Government of Iraq reiterated its willingness to cooperate with Turkey with a view to “finding common ground and arriving at peaceful solutions”. In a letter dated 8 October 2021 addressed to the Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, the Permanent Representative of Turkey noted that Turkey had been exercising its “inherent right of self-defence, as outlined in Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations”, and had been “taking appropriate measures within the context of the responsibility attributed by relevant Security Council resolutions to States Members of the United Nations in the fight against terrorism”, adding that the measures taken by Turkey were “in compliance with its obligations under international law”.

#### **D. Regional and international developments**

35. The Government of Iraq continued to strengthen its ties with the international community in areas ranging from economic cooperation to security coordination in counter-terrorism efforts. On 22 November 2021, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden, Ann Christin Linde, met separately with Mr. Sahil and Mr. Al-Kadhimi in

Baghdad to discuss issues including counter-terrorism, regional cooperation, climate change and investment opportunities. On 23 November, Ms. Linde visited Erbil and had separate meetings with the President, the Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

36. On 26 November, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Iraq issued a statement on Iraqi migrants travelling to Europe. On 30 November, the President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, reported that she had spoken by telephone with Mr. Al-Kadhimi and that they were “cooperating closely on repatriation flights”. On 19 December, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesperson informed the media that 10 evacuation flights had brought approximately 4,000 individuals back to Iraq.

37. Mr. Al-Kadhimi also had telephone conversations with the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, Sheikh Mohammed Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, on 25 November; the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Elizabeth Truss, on 6 December; and the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia, Mohammed bin Salman Al-Saud, on 12 December. In addition, on 9 December, Mr. Al-Kadhimi participated in the opening of the Summit for Democracy convened by the President of the United States, Joseph R. Biden, Jr.

38. On 30 November, the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation and Presidential Special Envoy for the Middle East and North Africa, Mikhail Bogdanov, met separately with the President of Iraq, the Prime Minister of Iraq and the Minister for Oil for discussions on bilateral security, defence and economic cooperation, among other issues. On 1 December, Mr. Bogdanov met with the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iraq before travelling to Erbil, where he met separately with the Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister of the Kurdistan Regional Government, and then with the President of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

39. On 12 and 13 December, the United States National Security Council Coordinator for the Middle East and North Africa, Brett McGurk, visited Baghdad and Erbil. A statement issued on 13 December by the National Security Council spokesperson noted that Mr. McGurk had met separately with Mr. Salih, Mr. Al-Kadhimi, Mr. al-Halbousi, Mr. Nechirvan Barzani and other officials. On 12 December, the Office of the President of Iraq reported that discussions had focused on bilateral ties and on “putting an end to the combat role of the coalition forces in Iraq and strengthening the capabilities of the Iraqi security forces by providing military advice to the Iraqi troops”, as well as highlighting the importance of combating terrorism and recent developments related to the regional situation. In a statement made on 13 December by the National Security Council spokesperson, it was noted that Mr. McGurk had confirmed the commitment of the President of the United States, Joseph Biden, to the results of the bilateral strategic dialogue, underscoring that there were no longer United States forces serving in a combat role in Iraq. Among other things, he had also reaffirmed that the remaining coalition forces would be present at the invitation of the Government of Iraq “with a mission limited to advising, assisting and enabling” the Iraqi security forces.

40. The Federal Minister for Defence of Germany, Christine Lambrecht, visited Iraq on 9 January 2022. She met separately with Mr. Al-Kadhimi and with her Iraqi counterpart in Baghdad before travelling to Erbil, where she met with the President of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

41. On 23 December 2021, the Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Italy, Luigi Di Maio, visited Baghdad, where he met separately with Mr. Salih and Mr. Al-Kadhimi. Mr. Di Maio then travelled to Erbil, where he met with Mr. Nechirvan Barzani.

42. Also on 23 December, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iraq, Fuad Mohammad Hussein, and his delegation were received by the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Ebrahim Raisi, in Tehran. The Iraqi Ministry of Foreign Affairs reported that they had discussed bilateral relations between Baghdad and Tehran and developments in the regional and international situation. The Iraqi delegation also met with the Iranian Minister for Foreign Affairs.

43. On 27 December, Mr. Hussein spoke by telephone with the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Saudi Arabia, Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al-Saud, to discuss bilateral relations, regional developments and other issues. Together, they subsequently co-chaired a virtual meeting of the Political, Security and Military Committee of the Iraqi-Saudi Coordination Council, held on 9 January 2022.

44. In a statement issued on 21 December 2021, the Central Bank of Iraq announced the payment of \$44 million, which it said completed “the full payment of the compensation amounts approved by the United Nations Compensation Commission of the Security Council under resolution 687 (1991), with a total of \$52.4 billion”. In the statement, it was noted that “it is hoped that the ending of compensation payment[s] will contribute to removing Iraq from Chapter VII and its impact on reintegrating the Iraqi banking system with the global banking system”. The United Nations Compensation Commission was established pursuant to Security Council resolutions 687 (1991) and 692 (1991) to process claims and pay compensation for “any direct loss, damage – including environmental damage and the depletion of natural resources – or injury to foreign Governments, nationals and corporations” as a result of the unlawful invasion and occupation of Kuwait by Iraq in 1990 and 1991.

### **III. Update on the activities of the Mission and the United Nations country team**

#### **A. Political activities**

45. Following the 10 October 2021 parliamentary elections, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, based on her good offices mandate, continued to engage with the three presidencies, senior leaders of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, political parties, electoral stakeholders and others. In her meetings, she emphasized that outstanding electoral complaints should be dealt with through the appropriate legal channels and within the timelines specified by the law. She called upon all parties to exercise restraint, to respect the outcome of the electoral appeals and dispute adjudication processes, and to await the final decision of the Federal Supreme Court on the ratification of the election results.

46. In addition, my Special Representative encouraged all Iraqi political actors to work towards a constructive and forward-looking post-electoral environment, including through the expeditious formation of a government capable of addressing the multiple challenges that Iraq faced.

47. On 28 November, the Special Representative attended a conference on gender equality and women’s empowerment strategies in Erbil. In her remarks, she acknowledged the increased participation of women as voters and candidates in the election. She noted that the preliminary election results predicted that a historic number of women would be elected to the Council of Representatives, surpassing the 25 per cent quota, and stressed that such a strong electoral performance should ideally translate into women’s meaningful representation in the next government. With reference to the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence campaign, the Special Representative called for the enactment of the draft anti-domestic violence



law in order to provide legal protection for victims of all forms of domestic violence and to ensure accountability for such acts.

48. Following the Da'esh attack in Makhmur on 2 December, the Special Representative expressed her condolences to the families of the victims and underlined the importance of strengthened cooperation between Iraqi security entities in the fight against terrorism. In strongly condemning the attack on 7 December in Basrah, she stressed that holding perpetrators accountable and strengthening national unity would prevent similar attempts to destabilize Iraq. Emphasizing the need for peace and stability, she continued to call upon the relevant parties to the Sinjar Agreement to take all necessary measures to expedite its implementation.

49. As part of her broader electoral outreach, the Deputy Special Representative for Political Affairs and Electoral Assistance, Ingibjörg Sólrún Gísladóttir, held a meeting with the Women's Advisory Group and civil society organizations on 6 December. Attendees shared their observations regarding women's participation in the elections, including their experiences throughout the campaign period. My Deputy Special Representative highlighted the need for women to work together across political party lines and to support relevant legislative work in the Council of Representatives.

## **B. Electoral assistance**

50. During the reporting period, UNAMI continued to provide electoral assistance and technical support to the post-election activities of the Independent High Electoral Commission, including the procedures for examining challenges against the preliminary election results, the manual recount of challenged polling stations and preparations for the announcement of the final election results.

51. UNAMI was present during the manual recount process conducted by the Commission in Baghdad. On 25 November 2021, the Commission announced that it had completed the manual recount of the 870 polling stations that were subject to legal challenges, noting that its findings had been forwarded to the Electoral Judicial Panel for decisions thereon.

52. UNAMI assisted with the quality control of data and the display set-up for the Commission's announcement of the final election results on 30 November. UNAMI also advised on public information activities in relation to the status of electoral complaints, challenges and elections results, and countering misinformation.

53. On 6 December, UNAMI facilitated a meeting with the Commission and representatives of Member States and international organizations that had contributed to the joint UNAMI and United Nations Development Programme project entitled "Support to Iraq's electoral process". During the meeting, the Chairman of the Commission shared the electoral body's priorities for further capacity development, particularly in the areas of voter registration, results management, communication and the electoral legal framework. With UNAMI support, the Commission is conducting a post-election review that is expected to result in a lessons learned document with recommendations for future elections.

## **C. Human rights and rule of law developments and activities**

54. From 1 October to 31 December 2021, UNAMI documented 28 incidents resulting in at least 115 civilian casualties (50 deaths, including 9 boys and 1 woman; and 65 injured, including 23 boys, 2 girls and 2 women). A total of 52 civilian casualties (30 deaths and 22 injured) were attributed to Da'esh; 50 civilian casualties (18 deaths and 32 injured) to unidentified armed elements; 12 civilian casualties

(2 deaths and 10 injured) to unexploded ordnance; and one injured civilian to Turkish military airstrikes against Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) targets in northern Iraq. On 30 November, the Ministry of Defence of Turkey stated during a press briefing that all the operations that it was conducting concerning the terrorist threat against Turkey were carried out in accordance with international law, respecting the borders and territorial integrity of all its neighbours, including Iraq, within the scope of the right of self-defence and targeting only terrorist elements in the region.

55. On 28 November, UNAMI launched a social media campaign to raise awareness of human rights relating to the criminal justice system, including fair trial standards. In December 2021 and January 2022, UNAMI and the Higher Judicial Council convened three workshops with judges and prosecutors to finalize guidelines on the key rights of suspects and accused and detained persons at the different stages of criminal proceedings.

56. In December, UNAMI held four round table discussions to mark the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence campaign in Baghdad, Basrah, Kirkuk and Mosul, attended by over 100 government and civil society representatives. Recommendations from the meetings included adopting the draft anti-domestic violence law, increasing civil society participation in discussions on that law and legally formalizing the role of civil society organizations in the provision of services for victims of domestic violence.

57. In December and January, UNAMI and the Iraqi Network for Social Media held six training sessions on digital rights, attended by approximately 200 human rights defenders, bloggers and journalists. A digital security guide for activists, a digital help desk, and tailor-made digital security assessments for Iraqi non-governmental organizations (NGOs) were developed and made available online.

58. To mark Human Rights Day, on 10 December 2021, UNAMI and the Prime Minister's Adviser for National Components sponsored an exhibition of artworks by members of 13 minority groups, reflecting the theme of equality. Government and diplomatic representatives attended the event alongside members of civil society organizations.

59. On 12 and 13 December, UNAMI and the Office of Counter-Terrorism conducted a workshop for 20 law enforcement officials aimed at strengthening the compliance with human rights of counter-terrorism operations. At the workshop, attendees examined the domestic legal framework of Iraq and relevant international human rights law and identified areas for further improvement.

60. On 14 December, the Government carried out the death penalty against three prisoners convicted of terrorism-related offences. In 2021, UNAMI documented at least 22 cases in which the death penalty had been implemented, mainly in relation to terrorism offences.

61. In order to promote accountability for human rights violations and abuses since October 2019, UNAMI organized a capacity-building workshop, held on 20 and 21 December, for members of the Government Fact-Finding Committee mandated to investigate demonstration-related violations, with a view to sharing international best practices.

62. On 22 December, UNAMI and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights released a joint report entitled "Human rights and freedom of expression: trials in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq". In the report, the criminal justice proceedings were examined in four emblematic cases adjudicated by the Erbil Criminal Court. The cases concerned 16 individuals prosecuted for alleged crimes linked to the exercise of the right to freedom of expression. The report contains recommendations on measures to prevent further violations of the right to a fair trial and to provide redress for victims of violations.

## D. Humanitarian assistance, stabilization and development

63. As at 31 December 2021, the 2021 humanitarian response plan was 62 per cent funded, having received \$377 million of the \$607 million required. Approximately 1 million people were reached with some form of humanitarian assistance, out of the 1.5 million people targeted in 2021.

64. As at December 2021, approximately 1.2 million people remained displaced in Iraq, including 174,729 persons hosted in 25 camps administered by the Kurdistan Region of Iraq and 5,264 people in 1 camp for internally displaced persons outside the Kurdistan Region, in Ninawa Governorate. Humanitarian organizations recorded a deterioration in living standards in some camps for internally displaced persons, citing in particular a lack of food, water, sanitation, hygiene and fuel, owing to shortfalls in humanitarian funding and the phasing out of government assistance to camps. Assessments conducted by humanitarian organizations show that a majority of the internally displaced persons who had left the camps in 2021 remained in need of further assistance.

65. NGOs have reported new administrative regulations regarding the provision of humanitarian assistance, including a request from governmental oversight bodies to review all assessment forms and surveys prior to distribution. While the Government has stated that the new regulations are aimed at facilitating NGO activities, NGOs have expressed concern that the additional regulations could lead to delays in their operations.

66. The Government of Iraq facilitated a further two rounds of voluntary returns from Hawl camp to the Jad'ah 1 camp in Ninawa Governorate, on 8 December and 8 January respectively. A total of 447 households (1,778 individuals) have now returned since May 2021. From 2 to 3 December, 43 households that had received security clearances returned to their areas of origin, predominantly to Anbar, Erbil, Kirkuk, Ninawa and Salah al-Din Governorates. In total, 72 households returned to their area of origin in Iraq.

67. As at 4 December 2021, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) had provided emergency COVID-19 assistance through cash grants to over 9,000 internally displaced persons and returnee families. As at 6 January 2022, over 12,870 refugee families had also received emergency COVID-19 assistance. The assistance is intended to mitigate the impacts of COVID-19 and to reduce reliance on harmful coping mechanisms. On 23 November 2021, UNHCR started its provision of winter assistance to help the displaced population to overcome increased expenditures due to extreme cold during the winter months. By the beginning of December, over 6,600 internally displaced persons and returnee families and over 33,000 refugee families had received the assistance.

68. The World Food Programme continued to implement resilience activities in the Anbar, Basrah, Dhi Qar, Maysan, Ninawa and Salah al-Din Governorates. Those activities have reached 123,000 Iraqis and support climate change adaptation through the use of innovative farming techniques and crops that better adapt to salinity. The activities were carried out as the Paris Agreement on climate change came into force in Iraq, on 1 December.

69. Meanwhile, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) supported the food security and agricultural livelihoods of 700 out-of-camp internally displaced and returnee households residing in Salah al-Din Governorate through the provision of cash, agricultural inputs and training. Furthermore, FAO completed several parts of the Al-Jazeera Irrigation System in Ninawa Governorate, enabling 35,000 vulnerable farming households to plant their land and produce a variety of crops.

70. The World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) continued to work closely with the Government of Iraq in the roll-out of vaccines obtained through the Government's self-financed COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access (COVAX) Facility programme. Iraq has received over 22.3 million vaccine doses, including 7.9 million doses through the COVAX Facility. According to the Ministry of Health and Environment, as at 5 January 2022, a total of 14,491,369 doses had been administered, 8,627,607 of them as first doses, 5,837,048 as second doses and 26,714 as third doses, representing 30 per cent, 20 per cent and less than 1 per cent of the population above 12 years of age respectively. Meanwhile, the Government continued to review the situation related to the COVID-19 pandemic and maintained measures aimed at curbing community transmission of the disease and reducing the impact thereof.

71. UNICEF and WHO, in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Environment and partners, continued to conduct a national campaign on COVID-19 vaccination. Key messages were aired on 19 television channels and 15 radio channels from mid-August to the end of November 2021, reaching an estimated 17 million people, and 63,000 banners were distributed across the country.

72. On 30 November, the United Nations Network on Migration helped to facilitate a ministerial briefing on the International Migration Review Forum, attended by the Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Migration and Displacement. The Ministry reiterated its commitment to the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.

73. During the reporting period, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) completed 29 projects in Iraq aimed at improving or rehabilitating basic services, including water and health-related infrastructure projects. On 1 December, IOM presented the National Assessment of Cultural Industries in Iraq in Basrah. The assessment is the first step towards rolling out a series of grants for businesses in the cultural industries.

74. In Mosul and Basrah, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) held 24 workshops on construction-related trades, funded by the European Union. Of the 865 young participants (135 of them women), at least 484 (including 51 women) found jobs related to the reconstruction and rehabilitation of cultural heritage sites in Mosul.

75. To strengthen the management and monitoring of educational services, UNESCO provided training, from 21 November to 6 December, for 16 master trainers (including 3 women) from the General Directorate of Education on the Education Management Information System developed by UNESCO in partnership with UNICEF.

76. On 8 December, UNICEF and United Nations Volunteers, in partnership with the Federal Ministry of Youth and Sports and the Ministry of Culture and Youth in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, launched the National Youth Volunteering Platform, an innovative tool that allows young people in Iraq to be matched with volunteer opportunities with private companies, NGOs and other organizations.

77. UNHCR, together with UNICEF, the Ministry of Education of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq and the education sector, developed a formal policy for the integration of refugee students into the school system in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. The policy was formally endorsed by the Council of Ministers of the Kurdistan Regional Government in November 2021.

78. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, through its Airport Communication Project, collaborated with law enforcement authorities at the international airports of Iraq to strengthen their capacity in maintaining border security, including the identification and interdiction of passengers such as potential foreign terrorist fighters. Training activities, held from 28 to 30 November, reached

more than 100 law enforcement officials and were focused on comprehensive passenger screening, as well as ways and means to promote national inter-agency and international cooperation.

79. As at 25 November, the Mine Action Service was training 30 Iraqi police officers, including 6 women, in managing criminal explosive incident scenes and collecting evidence. On 28 November, for the first time, an Iraqi NGO directly managed and conducted clearance operations of improvised explosive devices in Ninawa Governorate.

## **IV. Security and operational issues**

### **A. Update on security arrangements**

80. The Department of Safety and Security monitored developments throughout Iraq and implemented risk management measures to enable United Nations operations.

81. In the post-election period, the Department continued adjusting security measures and contingency plans, liaising with host Government authorities and disseminating information and advisories to maintain personnel awareness of changes in the security environment.

82. The Department supported an average of 24 field missions per day across the country, with assessed risk levels ranging from medium to high. Two very high-risk missions were conducted during the reporting period. Close coordination with the host Government continued to ensure the necessary security support for United Nations operations, in particular, movements and access authorizations to regions still affected by COVID-19 containment restrictions.

### **B. UNAMI facilities, logistics, aviation, financial and legal issues**

83. Construction projects were carried out in the United Nations Integrated Compound in Baghdad, the United Nations Guard Unit camp, regional offices and the Forward Support Base in compliance with strict health and security protocols.

84. UNAMI continued to support the United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies and the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant in the delivery of their mandates by providing office space, accommodation, aviation and telecommunication services.

85. In collaboration with WHO, UNAMI continued its COVID-19 vaccination campaign for United Nations personnel and dependants in Iraq. As at 10 January 2022, the Mission had administered about 5,257 first and second doses of COVID-19 vaccines.

## **V. Observations**

86. The ratification of the final electoral results on 27 December 2021 by the Federal Supreme Court concluded the national election process of 2021. I welcome the increased participation of women as voters and candidates in the election. The final election results indicate that there will be a historic number of women in the Council of Representatives, surpassing the 25 per cent quota. I now call upon all political actors to take the steps necessary to expeditiously form a new Government and to create a political and security environment that is conducive to the delivery of a

government programme that builds trust in public institutions, leads to lasting improvements in people's daily lives and lays the foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable future in which all Iraqis have an equal stake. A peaceful political transition is key to the promotion of long-term stability in the country, in line with the aspirations of the Iraqi people.

87. It is important to draw lessons from the October 2021 election with a view to further improving the capacities of the electoral institutions of Iraq. I therefore welcome the efforts of the Independent High Electoral Commission to conduct a post-election review aimed at informing a capacity development programme. The United Nations remains a partner in this process. In this regard, I appreciate the continued, strong support of Member States to ongoing electoral assistance activities, notably through the joint support of UNAMI and the United Nations Development Programme with regard to electoral capacity development.

88. Continued attacks perpetrated by Da'esh against civilians and Iraqi security forces continue to adversely affect the overall security environment of Iraq. In this context, I welcome the stated willingness of the Federal and Kurdistan Regional Governments to enhance security cooperation, and I commend the efforts made, with the support of regional and international partners, to eradicate the continuous threat posed by Da'esh and its affiliates. Alongside effective counter-terrorism measures, it is crucial to address conditions and root causes that are conducive to the spread of terrorism and violent extremism. In addition, attacks targeting the international counter-Da'esh coalition further contribute to exacerbating security concerns. I also reiterate my call upon the regional and international partners of Iraq to support the country's efforts to promote stability and security through peaceful and constructive negotiations and dialogue, and in accordance with the principles of respect for its sovereignty, territorial integrity and good-neighbourly relations.

89. The promotion and protection of human rights remain essential for fostering the rule of law, justice and solidarity in Iraq. I note the steps that have so far been taken by the Government of Iraq and call upon the relevant authorities to take further measures to strengthen accountability for human rights violations and abuses, including by holding accountable the perpetrators of crimes against demonstrators and other civil society actors, based on thorough and transparent investigations. In addition, the adoption of the draft anti-domestic violence law remains a crucial step towards the protection of women and the strengthening of accountability mechanisms.

90. The United Nations remains committed to the humanitarian and socioeconomic response in Iraq with a view to providing support to vulnerable people, mitigating poverty and building the capacity of government institutions. In addition, I reiterate my calls for continued international support, the ongoing global economic constraints notwithstanding. Progress on the humanitarian and socioeconomic fronts is essential for promoting a peaceful and stable future for all Iraqis.

91. The commitment of the Government of Iraq to return additional households from the Hawl camp in north-eastern Syrian Arab Republic is to be commended. In this context, I encourage Member States to increase their assistance to related United Nations humanitarian efforts and I continue to call upon all countries concerned to follow the example of Iraq and others who have already taken steps to assume responsibility for their own citizens in the Hawl camp.

92. As climate change is increasingly affecting the Middle East region, the accession by Iraq to the Paris Agreement is to be lauded. I call upon Iraq to translate its commitment into concrete and immediate action for the benefit of its people and future generations. Iraq cannot do this alone; international and regional support and expertise is required to address the urgent need in Iraq to use renewable energy

sources, tackle desertification and implement an adequate water management system. The United Nations stands ready to assist Iraq in these endeavours.

93. Lastly, I would like to thank my Special Representative, Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, and the United Nations staff in Iraq for their continued dedication to implementing the Organization's mandate, even during extraordinary times and under challenging circumstances.

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