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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 my previous report of 4 May 2021 ([S/2021/426](#)) and the briefing to the Security Council by the Special Representative for Iraq and Head of UNAMI on 11 May 2021.

II. Summary of key political developments

A. Political situation

2. Preparations for the parliamentary elections scheduled for 10 October 2021 were a key focus during the reporting period. In a televised address on 13 May, the Prime Minister, Mustafa Al-Kadhimi, stated that his Government's primary goal was to "conduct fair and just elections, consistent with the will of the people". The Prime Minister also announced that he would neither take part in the elections as a candidate nor support any political party. He highlighted the ongoing work of his Government, including anti-corruption efforts, economic reforms, measures to bring weapons under State control, efforts to implement the Sinjar agreement, steps to improve regional relations, and the ongoing strategic dialogue with the United States of America. He further noted that work had begun on a budget for the period 2022–2024.

3. Following a meeting between the President, Barham Salih, and the Prime Minister on 18 May, the Presidency issued a statement emphasizing the need to maintain security and stability and create conditions in order to ensure that "the outcome of the election reflected the Iraqis' will". The Supreme Electoral Security Committee, the Chair of the Independent High Electoral Commission and governorate electoral officials met to discuss ongoing preparations to provide security for the elections. In a statement issued on 24 May, the President again emphasized the importance of "optimal conditions" for the elections, including "protection and equal opportunities" for candidate participation. In an address on 20 June, he also noted the need for electoral monitoring, stating that sovereignty began with "respect for the right to vote". On 29 June, Mr. Salih, members of the board of the Independent High



Electoral Commission and the Prime Minister's adviser on elections called for the intensification of the biometric registration campaign and recommended that the results be counted manually and electronically, with the counting process widely covered in the media and the results announced within 24 hours.

4. The higher committee to promote and monitor women's electoral participation, established in March 2021, launched its workplan on 17 June. Activities include the monitoring of violations against female candidates, capacity-building for women to fully participate in electoral processes, and advocacy for legislation promoting women's political participation. Among other initiatives, the committee intends to launch public awareness campaigns to discourage hate speech and attacks against female candidates in order to enable their full and active participation in the elections. Other advocacy efforts by civil society groups to ensure women's participation in the elections, including calls upon religious and community leaders to engage in awareness-raising campaigns, are also ongoing.

5. The killing of activist Ehab al-Wazni in Karbala' on 9 May highlighted once again the challenging pre-electoral security situation and led to protests in the city from 9 to 11 May. The Prime Minister condemned the killing of Mr. al-Wazni on the same day and called upon the Ministry of Interior to identify the perpetrators and bring them to justice. The killing of Mr. al-Wazni was also widely condemned by civil society groups, which demanded a safe electoral environment. Statements were issued in which concern was expressed over the continued killings of activists and the Government's inability to hold perpetrators to account.

6. In the same context, protests were held on 25 May, with several thousand Iraqis gathering in Tahrir Square and other areas in Baghdad. Protesters demanded justice for the victims and an end to impunity for attacks against activists. Two protesters died from bullet wounds, and a number of protesters and members of the security forces were injured. The next day, the Government issued orders to open a transparent investigation and confirmed the Prime Minister's support for peaceful protest and the protection of demonstrators.

7. On 26 May, the Security Media Cell under the Office of the Prime Minister reported the arrest in Baghdad of a commander of the Popular Mobilization Forces. After the arrest, elements of the Forces reportedly deployed within the former International Zone and demanded his release. In a statement issued on 27 May, the President condemned "civil unrest and infringing upon the authority of the State and upon its right to make security and military decisions" and emphasized that "offenders ... responsible for killing the peaceful protesters, activists and journalists must be ... brought to justice, judicial proceedings must be supported ... and optimal conditions for a secure and transparent vote must be ensured". On 9 June, the Supreme Judicial Council issued a statement indicating that the arrestee had been "charged with murder of the activist Ehab al-Wazni ... but the investigation court did not find evidence proving his involvement" and that "he was released after he had been arrested for 12 days".

8. The Government continued its efforts to curb the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. On 11 May, the Joint Operations Command announced that a 10-day full lockdown would come into effect from midnight on 12 May to cover Eid al-Fitr, in accordance with the decision of the Council of Ministers on 4 May. However, on 13 May, the Supreme Committee for National Health and Safety announced its decision to change the measure from a lockdown to a partial curfew. In addition, Government institutions (excluding health and security services) were closed from 17 to 20 May. A partial curfew remains in place. On 29 May, the Ministry of Health announced that the unstable epidemiological situation did not allow for its lifting. As further vaccines arrived, efforts continued to encourage the Iraqi public to enrol for vaccination.

9. On 17 May, at the Prime Minister's direction, the General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers announced that it had filed a lawsuit with the Federal Supreme Court against several provisions of the Federal Budget Law of 2021, stating that the law contradicted the government programme. A ruling was therefore sought with a view to expediting the implementation of the Law.

10. The Kurdistan Regional Government discussed a regional budget for 2021. In an extraordinary meeting of that Government on 24 May, the Prime Minister of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, Masrour Barzani, stated that the Kurdistan Regional Government would reflect the economic situation of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, increase transparency and outline long-term goals. The last budget law for the Kurdistan Region of Iraq was passed in 2013.

11. Among efforts to combat corruption, the President announced, on 23 May, that he had sent to the Council of Representatives a draft law on the recovery of funds "lost to corruption". He explained that the draft law outlined accountability provisions as well as practical measures to recover funds smuggled out of Iraq and lost because of corruption. The President said that the legislation would seek to recover the funds through cooperation with other Governments and international bodies. In this regard, he repeated the country's call for an international anti-corruption coalition.

12. The Council of Representatives resumed legislative sessions on 29 May. Subsequent sessions were postponed owing to the lack of a quorum. On 27 June, the Speaker of the Council of Representatives held a meeting with the heads of political blocs to discuss "the sustainability of the work" of the Council, deciding to hold successive sessions during the following week. The Council subsequently convened a session on 29 June, in which it approved the membership of the Federal Court of Cassation and discussed recent security developments as well as the performance of the Ministry of Oil.

13. In a speech at a high-level conference organized by the University of Kurdistan Hewlêr in Erbil on 19 May, the President of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, Nechirvan Barzani, announced that his office would initiate the drafting of a Kurdistan regional constitution, in cooperation with the Kurdistan Regional Government and the Parliament of the Kurdistan Region. He emphasized that the goal of a regional constitution was to ensure that "all components of the Kurdistan Region feel safe in this country and feel that they and next generations have a better future". During the same conference, Prime Minister Barzani highlighted the need for the regional constitution to reflect "diversity, peaceful coexistence and religious tolerance". The Speaker of the Parliament, who was also present at the conference, added that the regional constitution was necessary "to reform our institutions".

14. On 18 May, the Parliament of the Kurdistan Region approved the appointment of Muna Yukna Yaqu as the new head of the Independent Human Rights Commission of the Kurdistan Region. She is the first woman to hold the position.

B. Relations between Baghdad and Erbil

15. Following the adoption of the Federal Budget Law of 2021 on 31 March, the federal and Kurdistan Regional Governments continued discussions on its implementation. The Deputy Prime Minister of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, Qubad Talabani, led a delegation of the Kurdistan Regional Government to Baghdad, from 31 May to 2 June, to discuss the implementation of the Law. According to article 11 of the Federal Budget Law, the Kurdistan Region of Iraq will receive 12.67 per cent of its budget share in monthly increments in return, inter alia, for submitting 250,000 barrels of crude oil per day, or their monetary equivalent, to the State Oil Marketing Organization. On 15 June, Prime Minister Barzani announced in a statement that he

and Mr. Al-Kadhimi had agreed to resume federal budgetary transfers to the Kurdistan Regional Government, backdated to January 2021. On 22 June, the spokesperson for the Council of Ministers confirmed the Council's decision of 15 June to transfer funds to the Kurdistan Regional Government but highlighted technical difficulties. During a televised interview on 25 June, Mr. Al-Kadhimi clarified that the payments were aimed at providing for the salaries of civil servants of the Kurdistan Regional Government and would be deducted from the actual budget transfers.

C. Security situation

16. Attacks conducted by Da'esh continued, primarily in Anbar, Baghdad, Diyala, Kirkuk, Ninawa and Salih al-Din Governorates. Iraqi security forces continued their counter-terrorism operations in response.

17. On 24 May, the Security Media Cell reported that one rocket had been launched against the Ayn al-Asad airbase in Anbar Governorate. The spokesperson for the international counter-Da'esh coalition noted, on the same day, that there had been no casualties and that the incident was under investigation. No claims of responsibility were made. On 6 June, the spokesperson for the coalition reported that one rocket had struck near a diplomatic facility of the United States within Baghdad International Airport, causing no casualties. The coalition spokesperson stated that the attack was under investigation by the Iraqi authorities. On the same day, the Cell reported that two unmanned aerial vehicles had been shot down above the Ayn al-Asad airbase. On 9 June, the Cell reported that three rockets had targeted the Balcad airbase, north of Baghdad, without casualties. The following day, it reported that Baghdad International Airport had also been targeted on 9 June by three unmanned aerial vehicles, one of which had been shot down. The next day, the coalition spokesperson confirmed the attack at Baghdad International Airport on 9 June. On 20 June, the Cell reported that a rocket had been fired towards the Ayn al-Asad airbase but had not exploded, adding that security forces were investigating the incident.

18. On 26 June, the counter-terrorism services of the Kurdistan Regional Government reported that, on the same day, three unmanned aerial vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices had targeted locations north-east of Erbil, causing material damage. The services stated that investigations were under way. No claim of responsibility was made. The Prime Minister of the Kurdistan Regional Government issued a statement the same day, stating that "there must be a response to this act of aggression".

19. From 11 May to 30 June, more than 29 attacks involving improvised explosive devices were reported to have targeted trucks of Iraqi companies contracted to carry supplies for the coalition, in Anbar, Baghdad, Babil, Basrah, Dhi Qar, Muthanna, Qadisiyah and Salah al-Din Governorates.

20. The Ministry of National Defence of Turkey reported ongoing operations against targets of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) in northern Iraq. On 17 May, the President of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, reported the death of a senior PKK leader during a Turkish operation in northern Iraq. PKK refuted the death of its leader in a statement published on 18 May.

21. On 5 June, a Turkish air strike took place near Makhmur, south-east of Mosul. On 6 June, Mr. Erdoğan indirectly referred to the attack on social media and stated that the "senior manager of the PKK terrorist organization and general manager of Makhmour was neutralised".

22. In a statement issued on 5 June, the Ministry of Peshmerga Affairs of the Kurdistan Regional Government reported that an attack in northern Iraq had "resulted

in the death of five Peshmerga soldiers and wounded four others”, attributing the attack to PKK. The same day, the Presidency of the Kurdistan Regional Government condemned the attack by highlighting the need to end the “PKK’s aggression against the Kurdistan Region”. The spokesperson for the Iraqi Commander-in-Chief also condemned the attack in a statement on 5 June and stated that security forces were investigating the incident. Similarly, the federal Ministry of Defence issued a condemnatory statement, noting that “Peshmerga forces are integral parts of our armed forces, and any attack on these forces is rejected and unacceptable”. In a press statement on 6 June, the Ministry of National Defence of Turkey condemned the attack and noted that Turkey “stands by ... Iraqi brothers in their fight against terrorism and is ready to support them”. On 5 June, the PKK issued a statement denying its responsibility.

23. In a statement on 6 June, the Presidency of Iraq condemned the attack against Peshmerga the previous day. It also noted the “unlawful presence” of the PKK on Iraqi territory and that the “Iraqi Constitution stipulates that Iraq will not allow its territory to be used as a staging post for any hostile action against any of its neighbours”. Referring to the Turkish air strike near Makhmur as a “dangerous escalation”, the Presidency also called for an end to “Turkish incursions and violations of Iraqi sovereignty” and affirmed that the “Turkish military presence in the Kurdistan Region and Mosul ... should be withdrawn”. In the statement, the Presidency also stressed the importance of enhancing Iraqi-Turkish cooperation to resolve cross-border and security issues.

24. On 31 May, the federal Minister of Agriculture and the Minister of Agriculture and Water of the Kurdistan Regional Government issued a joint statement in which they denounced acts of deforestation in northern Iraq and called upon the Government of Turkey to put an end to those activities.

25. The Ministry of National Defence of Turkey issued a statement on 4 July affirming that the Turkish Armed Forces continued to fight against terrorism “in Turkey and across the border” in accordance with international law and that they “display maximum sensitivity so that innocent civilians, the environment, historical and cultural assets are not harmed”.

26. On 27 June, the Press Secretary of the United States Department of Defense announced that United States forces had conducted “defensive precision airstrikes” against facilities that, it reported, had been used to launch “unmanned aerial vehicle attacks against US personnel and facilities in Iraq” and that the air strikes constituted an “unambiguous deterrent message”. The Press Secretary noted the intention of the President of the United States to protect United States personnel and that, “as a matter of international law, the United States acted pursuant to its right of self-defense. The strikes were both necessary to address the threat and appropriately limited in scope”.

27. The Government of Iraq condemned the United States air strikes in statements issued on 28 June by the Presidency, the military spokesperson for the Prime Minister, the National Security Council and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

28. On 5 July, the coalition spokesperson reported that three rockets targeting the Ayn al-Asad airbase had landed on its perimeter without causing injuries. On 6 July, the spokesperson reported that one unmanned aerial vehicle had struck in the vicinity of Erbil airbase. He stated that initial reports indicated no casualties or damage. On 7 July, the spokesperson reported that 14 rockets had landed on and within the perimeter of the Ayn al-Asad airbase and that “force protection defensive measures” had been activated. He later confirmed that two personnel had sustained “minor injuries”, adding that a damage assessment was under way. Responsibility for the strike was claimed by a group calling itself the “Revenge for Muhandis”. On 7 July, the spokesperson for the Iraqi Commander-in-Chief condemned both incidents as a

“terrorist attack” perpetrated by “enemies of Iraq”, pledging that they would be prosecuted.

D. Regional and international developments

29. On 17 May, the Prime Minister spoke by telephone with the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Hassan Rouhani. The Office of the Prime Minister stated that they discussed joint counter-terrorism efforts and ways to jointly achieve and support regional peace, security and sustainable economic development.

30. Security issues also shaped international engagement. The Deputy Minister of Defence of Saudi Arabia visited Baghdad on 11 May and met separately with the three presidencies. On 18 May, the Prime Minister received the Assistant Secretary-General for Operations of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). In a statement, the Prime Minister noted that he had stressed the Government’s efforts to strengthen bilateral relations and highlighted that future relations would be “confined to non-combat fields” in line with the Government’s needs.

31. On 20 May, the Prime Minister received the Commander of the United States Central Command, General Kenneth McKenzie. In a statement, the Prime Minister reported their agreement to hold the first meeting of the specialized technical committee to develop mechanisms for implementing the outcomes of the third round of strategic dialogue. Subsequently, the Security Media Cell reported that the first meeting had taken place on 5 June in Baghdad, where the two parties agreed on a framework to discuss the long-term, bilateral security relationship. According to the spokesperson for the Iraqi Commander-in-Chief, the parties also agreed that, before the next meeting, a plan would be developed to implement decisions made during the strategic dialogue, including “specific mechanisms and timings to complete the redeployment of coalition combat troops”.

32. In addition, the chair of the French parliamentary commission on national defence and the armed forces, Françoise Dumas, visited Iraq between 21 and 25 May, travelling to Baghdad and Erbil as part of a fact-finding mission on stability in the Middle East and prospects for military cooperation between France and Iraq.

33. The Foreign Minister of Pakistan, Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Hussain Qureshi, arrived in Baghdad on 28 May for a three-day visit, during which he met separately with the President, the Prime Minister and the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Defence and Interior. Discussions covered security cooperation, including on countering terrorism and violent extremism; economic cooperation; the combating of crime and drug trafficking; and the strengthening of cultural ties.

34. On 1 and 2 June, respectively, the World Bank Vice President for the Middle East and North Africa, Ferid Belhaj, met with Mr. Al-Kadhimi and Mr. Salih in Baghdad. Discussions were focused on conducting economic reforms, reinvigorating investments, countering corruption and restructuring public service delivery. Mr. Belhaj commended the Government’s white paper on economic and financial reforms.

35. On 4 June, the Prime Minister received a telephone call from the President of France, Emmanuel Macron. In a statement, the Office of the Prime Minister reported that the Prime Minister had “praised France’s role and support for Iraq against ISIL” and highlighted economic and cultural fields as two important areas for bilateral cooperation. For his part, Mr. Macron “praised the balanced diplomacy led by the Iraqi Prime Minister creating the conditions for dialogue and stability”, including by facilitating regional dialogue in Iraq.

36. On 6 June, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Denmark, Jeppe Kofod, inaugurated the new Danish embassy in Baghdad and met with the President, Prime Minister and Foreign Minister. Discussions touched upon bilateral relations, including cooperation in the economic, health and security fields, and on the fight against terrorism.

37. On 8 June, the three presidencies and the Minister for Foreign Affairs met separately in Baghdad with the Foreign Secretary of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Dominic Raab. In their discussions, they highlighted cooperation in the security, economic, cultural and health fields, as well as the forthcoming elections. The Prime Minister reported the signing of a bilateral “strategic political cooperation document”, described in a statement from the President’s office as a memorandum of understanding that would also benefit regional security and stability. In a statement, the United Kingdom reported the signing of a “strategic partnership” that would “further deepen and strengthen ... friendship” between the two countries. It added that the Foreign Secretary had also met with senior military officials from the international counter-Da‘esh coalition and NATO. The following day, the President of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq received Mr. Raab in Erbil.

38. In a statement marking World Environment Day on 5 June, the President described the impact of climate change on Iraq and highlighted its economic and social risks. He called for unity in addressing climate change and for a national programme to deal with the urgent need for climate adaptation and to use it as an opportunity to diversify the economy, promote renewable energy and increase the resilience of vulnerable areas. He also noted the ratification in January of the law to accede to the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

39. On 14 June, the Foreign Minister arrived in Doha to attend consultative and emergency meetings of foreign ministers of the League of Arab States Council. According to the readout of the Foreign Ministry, the Foreign Minister requested the League of Arab States to send electoral observers “to monitor the progress of the upcoming electoral process”. On the sidelines of the meeting, the Foreign Minister participated in a tripartite coordination mechanism meeting with his Egyptian and Jordanian counterparts.

40. On 19 June, the President, the Prime Minister and the Speaker extended their congratulations to the President-elect of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Ebrahim Raisi, on his election. The President and the Prime Minister of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq also congratulated the President-elect.

41. On 21 June, the Foreign Minister attended a meeting of the Foreign Affairs Council of the European Union in Luxembourg. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs reported in a statement on the same day that the Foreign Minister had stressed his country’s keenness to receive the “support of the European Union member states to monitor the upcoming elections”.

42. On 27 June, the Prime Minister and the President hosted the President of Egypt and the King of Jordan for the fourth tripartite summit. In a joint communiqué released after the summit, they outlined their aim to enhance trilateral cooperation in the security, political and economic fields and, regionally, to shape “a common vision ... through cooperation and coordination”. Egypt and Jordan also affirmed their support for transparent and fair elections in Iraq.

43. On 29 June, Mr. Al-Kadhimi arrived in Brussels for a two-day visit, during which he met with the Prime Minister of Belgium, the Presidents of the European Commission and European Parliament, the Secretary General of NATO and the

permanent representatives of NATO member States. Discussions were focused on support for stability in Iraq and the region, free and fair Iraqi elections, reconstruction efforts and economic reforms, as well as bilateral cooperation with Iraq.

44. On 2 July, Mr. Al-Kadhimi met with the Prime Minister of Italy, Mario Draghi, in Rome. They discussed bilateral cooperation on security, including countering terrorism and organized crime, and on investment, energy and culture. On the same day, he met with Pope Francis in the Vatican. The two sides “recalled the Pope’s historic apostolic visit to Iraq in March” and stressed the need for national dialogue to foster stability in the region.

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

A. Political activities

45. The Special Representative continued regular engagement with the three presidencies, political party leaders, parliamentarians, the Independent High Electoral Commission, religious and community leaders, activists and protest groups, with a focus on electoral preparations, anti-corruption measures, justice and accountability. She stressed the importance of all political actors in Iraq contributing to a conducive environment for the elections. Concerning electoral preparations, she highlighted the enhanced technical support provided by UNAMI to the Independent High Electoral Commission. The Special Representative also reiterated that the integrity of the electoral process, which would allow broad participation, was the primary responsibility of Iraqi stakeholders. Responding to calls to boycott the elections, she encouraged all voters to participate in the elections, as that was the best way to make their voices heard and promote an electoral process that was and would be perceived as credible and inclusive.

46. In parallel, the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Political Affairs and Electoral Assistance also engaged regularly with the Board of Commissioners of the Independent High Electoral Commission, political interlocutors, the higher committee to promote and monitor women’s electoral participation, and the international community on preparations for the upcoming elections. She reiterated the support of UNAMI for a gender-responsive electoral process, acknowledging the challenges faced by candidates, including women.

47. In her engagements with community leaders, protesters and activists, the Special Representative listened to their aspirations for a civil, moderate, sovereign, just, safe and stable State, free of corruption. She underlined that the public reports issued by UNAMI were aimed at engaging government institutions through fact-based recommendations, accountability and progress measurement. In addition, she discussed with government officials the pattern of attacks against demonstrators and political activists and urged the Government to increase its efforts to end impunity.

48. On 24 June, the Special Representative visited Karbala’ and met with the family of killed activist Ehab al-Wazni. She expressed her condolences and explained the efforts of the United Nations to promote justice and accountability. She also met with the Governor of Karbala’ and underlined the need to hold perpetrators to account.

49. On 19 May, the Special Representative participated in a conference organized by the University of Kurdistan. In her speech, she highlighted the strength and resilience of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, which arose from its diversity. She emphasized the need for intra-Kurdish unity and stressed that sustainable democratic societies required patience and compromise, noting that the ultimate concern of the

political leadership should be the delivery of reliable services to the people. Furthermore, while acknowledging the added value of adopting a regional constitution, she underlined that any outcome document should “fit hand-in-glove” with the federal Constitution.

50. During a visit to Erbil, the Special Representative met with Kurdistan Regional Government leaders and Kurdish civil activists and journalists. While recognizing unique domestic, regional and international circumstances, the Special Representative underscored that transparency and accountability were vital. She emphasized that compliance with legal procedures and international human rights standards was essential for any democratic society. She also visited Sulaymaniyah, where she met with the leaders of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan and the Movement for Change to discuss intra-Kurdish and Baghdad-Erbil relations.

51. On 31 May, the Special Representative travelled to Moscow, where she met with the Deputy Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation as part of her outreach in support of Iraq. She discussed, inter alia, the situation in Iraq in the context of the early parliamentary elections, the role of the United Nations in support of the electoral process, and the initial efforts undertaken by Iraq for the repatriation of certain Iraqi families from the Hawl camp in the Syrian Arab Republic to Iraq.

52. During her visits to Basrah and Kirkuk on 24 May and 10 June, respectively, the Deputy Special Representative held a series of meetings, including with local government, tribal leaders, civil society, governorate offices of the Independent High Electoral Commission and security leaders, to discuss issues related to the political situation, elections and security. She underlined the importance of holding elections in an inclusive, transparent and secure way with broad participation.

53. On 17 June, the Deputy Special Representative attended the launch of the workplan of the higher committee to promote and monitor women’s electoral participation. She underscored the commitment of the United Nations to support efforts to advance women’s political participation. She also urged the Government to do more to enable the safe, meaningful and fair participation of women in the elections, and beyond in reaching decision-making positions.

B. Electoral assistance

54. UNAMI continued deploying additional electoral advisers as part of its strengthened technical electoral assistance project in support of ongoing electoral preparations by the Independent High Electoral Commission. As at 1 July, 31 international electoral advisers and 54 national electoral officers provide the Commission with technical assistance and advisory support in areas including management and legal advice, operational planning and coordination, training and procedures, logistics, procurement, information technology, election security, communications and public outreach, gender, electoral complaints and COVID-19 mitigation measures during elections. Electoral teams deployed to five UNAMI regional hubs continued to engage with governorate electoral offices. UNAMI is planning the deployment of more than 30 additional staff within the framework of the project.

55. In response to Security Council resolution [2576 \(2021\)](#), UNAMI, in collaboration with the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), developed a project proposal that entails the phased deployment of an additional 130 international electoral experts of the United Nations in advance of and on election day. The experts will be deployed to Baghdad and regional hubs to achieve the widest geographical coverage possible. The project also foresees the establishment of a dedicated communications team to implement the strategic messaging campaign of

the United Nations, which is aimed at informing Iraqi voters of electoral preparations and United Nations activities in support of the elections. The Secretariat is supporting the recruitment of experts through the electoral single roster, in coordination with UNAMI and UNOPS.

56. The Independent High Electoral Commission achieved significant progress in its electoral preparations, including in candidate registration. At the close of the candidate nomination period on 1 May, more than 3,500 candidates, of which 982 (28 per cent) were women, had submitted nomination papers to contest the elections. In line with the electoral law, the Independent High Electoral Commission sent the documentation of the candidates to the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, the Ministry of Interior and the Accountability and Justice Commission for vetting before the certification of the final list of candidates.

57. The Commission initiated the recruitment of more than 350,000 staff to carry out polling and counting duties. UNAMI provided technical advice on the recruitment process, the staff training methodologies and the review of regulations and procedures for polling, counting and transmitting results. It also advised the Commission's committee that follows up on the planning and implementation of COVID-19 safety measures for election day. Similarly, UNAMI advised and supported the Commission on the results management audit process and the procurement of electoral materials, including ballot papers and other printed forms.

58. The Independent High Electoral Commission has also achieved considerable progress in cross-checking the registration records of the 25.1 million eligible voters in the registry and confirming the number of polling stations required on election day. The distribution of voter cards continued across all governorates. UNAMI advised the Commission on the use of voter cards and on improving procedures to allow for wider enfranchisement of voters, including those who may still be internally displaced or are living in secondary displacement locations.

59. The Commission followed up with embassies and international organizations on its invitation to observe the 10 October 2021 parliamentary elections. Registration guidelines for observation and accreditation forms were made available and shared with the entities that had indicated an intention to deploy electoral observers. According to the European Council readout of 21 June, the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy announced a European Union decision to deploy an "EU election observation mission" for the forthcoming elections in Iraq, following an invitation by the Government of Iraq. As mandated by the Security Council, UNAMI will assess support to third-party international observers, as appropriate and pending available resources, on the basis of their deployment plans and specific needs.

C. Human rights and rule of law developments and activities

60. UNAMI continued to document concerns over the rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly. On 23 May, in Nasiriyah, Dhi Qar Governorate, a protester was injured after an improvised explosive device detonated on his vehicle, the fifteenth such attack targeting protesters in Dhi Qar in recent months, according to information verified by UNAMI. On 25 May, as reported above, protesters gathered in Baghdad to call for an end to impunity for the killing of demonstrators and activists. According to information verified by UNAMI, two protesters had been killed by live ammunition.

61. On 30 May, UNAMI released a public report entitled "Update on demonstrations in Iraq: accountability for human rights violations and abuses by unidentified armed elements". In the report, UNAMI focused on the steps taken by the Iraqi authorities

to ensure accountability for human rights violations and abuses in the context of demonstration-related violence and encouraged greater efforts to end impunity for the attempted or actual targeted killing, abduction, torture or disappearance of protesters, activists and critics by “unidentified armed elements”. In the recommendations of the report, UNAMI emphasized the need for further efforts in the areas of investigation, accountability and protection.

62. On 12 May, UNAMI and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights released a joint report entitled “Freedom of expression in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq”. In the report, they documented allegations of unlawful restrictions of the rights of those expressing criticism of the authorities or policies of the Kurdistan Regional Government. They note that, between March 2020 and April 2021, journalists, activists and others were subject to arbitrary arrests and violations of procedural guarantees, unfair trials, the use of threats or other forms of pressure, and intimidation.

63. After the enactment of the Yazidi Female Survivors Law on 1 March, the Council of Ministers established a General Directorate of Yazidi Survivors Affairs under the federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs in May and appointed a Yazidi female lawyer as Director General. Furthermore, in accordance with article 11 of the Law, the General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers, supported by the International Organization for Migration, initiated the development of by-laws to facilitate its implementation, including by ensuring that the law prioritizes the needs of survivors.

64. Insecurity and violence continued to affect civilians. Between 1 April and 30 June, UNAMI documented 72 incidents resulting in at least 151 civilian casualties (36 deaths, including 6 boys and 2 women, and 115 injured, including 12 boys, 2 girls and 1 woman). A total of 75 civilian casualties (20 deaths and 55 injuries) were attributed to Da‘esh, 29 civilian casualties (5 deaths and 24 injuries) to unidentified armed groups operating outside State control and 22 civilian casualties (3 deaths and 19 injuries) to armed elements. Aerial operations by Turkish forces targeting PKK continued. Between 1 April and 30 June, UNAMI recorded 4 civilians injured (3 men and 1 boy) during military operations by Turkish forces in Dahuk Governorate. In addition, UNAMI received credible reports of the displacement of civilians and damage to agricultural lands. In a press release issued on 30 May, the Ministry of National Defence of Turkey stated that, in determining targets, the “utmost sensitivity and attention is accorded to protect the properties and lives of the civilian population and the environment”.

65. Following the reimposition of a curfew in May to contain the spread of COVID-19, UNAMI continued its social media campaign illustrating the impact of the pandemic on human rights. The campaign is also aimed at reducing stigma and encouraging compliance with COVID-19 prevention measures.

D. Humanitarian assistance, stabilization and development

66. As at 29 June 2021, the Iraq humanitarian response plan was 24 per cent funded, having so far received \$143 million out of the \$607 million required. In June, approximately 1.2 million people were still living in displacement in Iraq, including 180,000 people hosted in 25 camps administered by the Kurdistan Region of Iraq and 11,000 people in four camps in other parts of Iraq. Sixteen camps have been closed or reclassified since the end of 2020.

67. The Government of Iraq conducted initial repatriations of certain Iraqi families from the Hawl camp in the Syrian Arab Republic. On 25 May, a first group of 93 Iraqi families (a total of 382 persons, comprising 98 women, 39 men, 124 girls and 121

boys), who were trapped by or fleeing Da‘esh and therefore living in a special section of the camp, were relocated to the Jeddah 1 camp in Ninawa Governorate. After a stabilization period and an assessment of their home communities, the families will be supported in returning to their areas of origin. The United Nations country team has been providing post-return humanitarian assistance, including through camp management support and service delivery, to the Ministry of Migration and Displacement. Modalities for further returns continue to be discussed with the Government.

68. As part of efforts to address the documentation needs of internally displaced persons and returnees, during the months of May and June, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) processed a total of 12,839 applications, issuing 1,461 civil status identity cards and 5,421 Iraqi nationality certificates. In this context, UNHCR also supported government visits to displacement sites in Ninawa and Anbar to facilitate the issuance of documentation.

69. In May, at the request of local authorities in Dahuk Governorate, humanitarian partners provided water, food and non-food items to 60 families (approximately 500 people) displaced from three villages affected by Turkish military operations.

70. During the month of June, UNHCR supported 5,806 internally displaced families (32,513 individuals) with emergency cash assistance, while 6,500 households (28,190 individuals) continued to benefit from monthly cash grants. In the same month, UNHCR provided emergency COVID-19 cash grants to 7,200 returnee and 18,000 refugee households (40,320 and 78,064 individuals, respectively).

71. To facilitate returns to areas of origin, the Funding Facility for Stabilization of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) continued to implement infrastructure rehabilitation, livelihood and social cohesion projects in Anbar, Diyala, Kirkuk, Ninawa and Salah al-Din. In addition, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) carried out rapid assessments of destroyed houses in areas of Ninawa and assisted 2,190 families whose houses were destroyed with registering compensation claims. UN-Habitat continued to issue occupancy certificates to Yazidi returnees in Sinjar.

72. Meanwhile, in May, the World Food Programme (WFP) launched “food assistance for assets” activities in Anbar, Ninawa, Salah al-Din and Dhi Qar Governorates, supporting 94,044 smallholder farmers through the provision of equipment and capacity-building activities. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations expanded its support to 70 households, including returnee households, producing livestock in Ninawa to mitigate the impact of drought and increasing green fodder production and feed availability. In support of vulnerable households in urban settings, WFP also carried out activities to improve the livelihoods of 1,700 beneficiaries, including the provision of cash assistance to small and medium-sized businesses in Ninawa and Basrah Governorates.

73. The World Health Organization (WHO) continued to work closely with the Government of Iraq in the rollout of vaccines obtained through the Government’s self-financed COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access (COVAX) Facility programme. Iraq has received a total of 1,727,000 vaccine doses, including 865,000 through the COVAX Facility. As at 28 June, a total of 976,052 doses have been administered (4.22 per cent of the population), of which 644,193 were first and 331,859 second doses.

74. UNOPS continued to run the Iraq Information Centre on behalf of the humanitarian country team to help beneficiaries to address basic needs. Through its free and confidential hotline, the Centre provides beneficiaries with critical information about humanitarian assistance available to the Iraqi population as well as

with a mechanism for reporting issues related to humanitarian assistance or the abuse of power. From 12 May to 29 June, the Centre received 25,599 calls, of which 18,121 (71 per cent) were from refugees with concerns over protection issues, including registration and cash assistance.

75. On 10 May, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the United Nations Children's Fund, in collaboration with the Ministry of Youth and Sports, launched the 2030 national youth vision initiative to implement an evidence-based governmental response to youth employment needs in Iraq. Meanwhile, the International Labour Organization (ILO) supported private sector development and job creation through a partnership with the Central Bank of Iraq and commercial banks. The ongoing initiative, which targets 700 beneficiaries in Dohuk and Ninawa Governorates, is aimed at supporting young people and existing businesses in accessing financial services. ILO continued to support the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs in developing a national employment policy.

76. Under its security sector programme, UNDP continued to conduct specialized courses to improve the effectiveness of local policing for approximately 140 officers, mostly selected from Anbar and Ninawa Governorates. Model police stations were piloted in Anbar, Baghdad, Basrah and Ninawa Governorates. In parallel, UNDP provided technical advice to the Office of the National Security Advisor on revising the national security strategy.

77. The Mine Action Service cleared 370,000 m² of agricultural land in areas of Anbar and Ninawa that had been contaminated with improvised explosive devices during the Da'esh occupation. Explosive ordnance risk education was provided to 5,200 returnees and 3,500 individuals affected by explosive threats in those areas. Five Iraqi teams, trained in survey and clearance operations through a capacity development programme, began operations in areas of Ninawa Governorate. Following the removal of explosive threats by the Service, the construction of a green-space park in the Old City of Mosul was also completed in June, providing a safe space for young people.

78. As at 31 May, 1,091 children (including 43 girls) remained in detention on national security-related charges, including 35 foreign children (of whom 28 were girls). In addition, 137 foreign children (including 62 girls) were detained with their mothers, although not on national security-related charges. In May, the United Nations in Iraq verified five grave violations against children (five girls), in most cases the killing and maiming of children. Explosive remnants of war were the predominant cause of child casualties. Two verified violations were attributed to Da'esh, while others remained unattributed.

79. UNFPA, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), UNDP and UNAMI supported the Government of Iraq through capacity-building activities to strengthen laws, policies and strategies that contribute to the prevention of and response to gender-based violence and protect the rights of survivors, including access to essential gender-based violence services. In addition, UNFPA, in partnership with other members of the United Nations country team, provided technical support to the Government in drafting the anti-domestic violence law, which holds perpetrators of gender-based violence to account.

80. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) provided technical and vocational education and training courses in the construction sector to 325 young people in Ninawa and Basrah Governorates. In addition, 115 course graduates gained employment in that sector. From May to July, UNESCO trained 2,416 teachers in Ninawa Governorate on crisis contexts, mine risk education, positive discipline and psychosocial support and 1,450 students on mine risk education. It further provided vocational training to 750 students.

81. UNESCO, in collaboration with UNHCR, the Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education and the Iraqi Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research successfully piloted the UNESCO Qualifications Passport system in Iraq. The pilot provided 24 Syrian refugees with secondary education credentials that they had lost during their flight.

82. Within the cooperation framework between the Ministry of Culture and UNESCO, the rehabilitation of historical landmarks in Mosul continued under the “Revive the spirit of Mosul” initiative.

IV. Security and operational issues

A. Update on security arrangements

83. The Department of Safety and Security monitored developments throughout Iraq and implemented risk management measures to enable United Nations operations. Regular security advisories and alerts, including broadcasts related to the pandemic, continued to be disseminated to keep United Nations personnel informed of the precautionary measures in place.

84. The Department supported an average of 24 field missions per day across the country, with assessed risk levels ranging from medium to high. Its close coordination and engagement with the host Government continued to ensure the proper flow of information and the necessary security support for United Nations operations, in particular movements and access authorizations in regions still affected by COVID-19 containment restrictions.

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

85. The Mission continued refurbishment and construction projects in the United Nations Integrated Compound in Baghdad, regional offices and the Forward Support Base while maintaining strict health and security protocols.

86. UNAMI continued to provide administrative and logistical support to 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 its mandate.

87. In collaboration with WHO, UNAMI continued its COVID-19 vaccination campaign for United Nations personnel and dependants in Iraq. As of the end of June, the Mission had administered about 2,200 first or second doses of COVID-19 vaccines.

V. Observations

88. The elections scheduled for 10 October 2021 should provide an opportunity for all eligible Iraqis to exercise their democratic right to freely choose their representatives. In this context, I welcome the continued progress on the electoral preparations. For the electoral process to be successful, the Independent High Electoral Commission needs the full cooperation and support of all stakeholders. In addition, all Iraqis, including the Government of Iraq, political blocs, security forces and civil society, have a responsibility to work to establish conditions that enable an inclusive and credible contest to be held in a secure environment free from fear and intimidation. The Government has a central role to play in protecting fundamental

rights, such as freedom of expression and assembly, and in ensuring accountability for the use of violence and for any violations of electoral rules and procedures.

89. As UNAMI and UNDP expand their technical electoral assistance activities pursuant to Security Council resolution 2522 (2020), the United Nations is strongly committed to providing the broadest possible electoral assistance to the Government of Iraq and the Independent High Electoral Commission. I would also like to encourage the other international partners of Iraq to consider positively the calls of the Government for electoral observers.

90. The ongoing attacks on diplomatic facilities and the international coalition are a matter of great concern. I reiterate my call for concerted efforts by the Government of Iraq to deal with security breaches in a firm and swift manner. It is incumbent upon all security actors to cooperate with the Government in its efforts to establish effective State control over weapons and security.

91. The effective implementation of the Federal Budget Law is a prerequisite for the functioning of the Iraqi State. I therefore encourage the federal and Kurdistan Regional Governments to expedite the implementation of the budget without further delay, and I reiterate my call for institutionalized, regular and structured dialogue to reach durable agreements on other outstanding issues.

92. I welcome Iraqi engagement aimed at maintaining security and stability in the region through diplomatic means. I call upon the regional and international partners of Iraq to support this stance while also promoting security and stability in the country through cooperative bilateral and multilateral negotiations and dialogue. Transboundary threats and terrorism should be addressed with respect for the territorial sovereignty of the States concerned and on the basis of the principle of good-neighbourly relations. In addition, all States need to uphold their responsibilities under international humanitarian law to ensure the protection of civilians.

93. Impunity for human rights violations continues to undermine the legitimacy of the State. I encourage the Iraqi authorities to act decisively and hold to account those responsible for the killing of activists and peaceful demonstrators and the targeting of human rights defenders and civil society activists.

94. After strong engagement and advocacy by the United Nations on safe, voluntary and dignified returns, I was heartened by the Government's agreement to transfer the first group of families from the Hawl camp back to Iraq. I urge 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.

95. The COVID-19 pandemic, protracted displacement and economic uncertainty have increased vulnerabilities in Iraq. I am encouraged by the efforts of the Government and health-care workers to address the pandemic and raise public awareness of this global health challenge. Some 2.4 million people are now in acute need of humanitarian assistance, compared with 1.8 million people in 2020. I urge all Member States to ensure that the humanitarian response plan is funded to meet the needs of the 1.5 million people targeted.

96. Finally, 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 during extraordinary times and under challenging circumstances.