

Statement for the UPR Pre-Session\Iraq
Geneva, October 10, 2019
by Maryam Subhi Mahmood

I. Presentation

Dear Country representatives and members of civil society,

I am delighted to read my statement on behalf of Al-Namaa Center for Human Rights (long term programme implemented by Iraqi Al Amal Association), works with 650 HRDs from across Iraq.

My statement will focus particularly on Women's rights ,Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity, it will address our report for Iraq 3rd cycle UPR.

II. Statement

1. With lack of legal and social protection, women human rights defenders (WHRDs) are exposed to additional targeted abuse because of their gender.

A mysterious death cases and assassination happened to 4 well -known women in their field of experience and civil work during the last couple of weeks, 2018 , namely the assassination of (Suaad Al Ali), the presidents of Al-wed organization for Human Rights in Basra , as well as that of Tara Faris, the social media influencer and model in Baghdad. furthermore , the death of 6 girls in a fire at a homeless shelter in Baghdad on 4th June 2019. Investigation results for all those crimes and others have not been made public.¹

2. In 2018, the Coalition of Women Human Rights Defenders was subjected to a slander campaign on social media.²
3. During 2018 election campaigns some female political candidates were subjected to political scandal. sexual exploitation and abuse and fabricated sexual content across social media platforms³.
4. Activists and organizations supporting the human rights of (LGBTIQ) persons work in a restricted environment imposed by hatred and attacks. Laura Yousuf, a human rights and LGBTIQ activist, fled Basra in October 2018 after death threats made by militias for her social activities and LGBTQ work. Several cases were reported including concerns regarding the murder of several LGBTQ individuals and lack of protection from the state.
5. 1325 plan doesn't respond to women and girls needs during conflict and post conflict situation UNSCR 2367\2017 expressing its concern that the National Plan had not been implemented.

¹ <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/obituaries/tara-fares-dead-iraq-instagram-shooting-baghdad-a8611031.html>

² Afkar/Sawalef/Sumar News

³ UNAMI, UNs Kubiš Rejects and Denounces Malicious Acts Against Election Integrity, in Particular Defamation and Threats Against Women, Urges Respect and Civility, 24 April 2018, <https://bit.ly/2EYGVMj>.

6. Governmental measures and procedures failed in providing adequate protection for women in conflict especially the survivors from sexual violence and IDPs
7. Child marriage rate is still high; 24.8% of women between 20 and 24 were married before reaching the age of 15; 27.9% of women between 20 and 24 were married before reaching the age of 18.⁴
8. FGM is still practiced in Iraq. According to the UN-supported 2018 Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS) for Iraq, a total of 7.4 per cent of girls get mutilated every year⁵.

III. Suggested recommendations

1. Amend all discriminatory laws, including the Penal Code and Code of Criminal Procedure to remove discrimination against women.
2. Adopt policies to put an end to child marriage and marriage outside the courts and increase penalties in this regard.
3. Emphasize the necessity that the updated NAP 1325 shall ensure gender-sensitive budgeting, and provide indicators for regular monitoring of the implementation, and establish accountability mechanisms.
4. Establish a “National Council for Women empowerment” as a national mechanism dedicated to follow up on the implementation national policies and plans to improve the situation of Iraqi women.
5. Recognize the specific situation of WHRDS and LGBTIQ activists and introduce protection measures to counter stigmatization against them and publicly condemn such attacks and bring perpetrators justice.

Thank you.

⁴ UNICEF Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey main findings.

⁵ <https://reliefweb.int/report/iraq/protecting-girls-iraq-female-genital-mutilation-enarku>