

Women activists seek to boost women's role in Iraqi politics

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Women activists seeking to boost the role of women in [Iraqi politics](#) presented their vision on the inclusion of the [gender equality](#) perspective in the new Government of Iraq's programme and advocated the support of the [United Nations](#) in achieving their meaningful and effective representation in political processes.

The group of 13 women activists from the Iraqi Women Network, 1325 Iraqi Network, 1325 Alliance, and academics presented their demands at a meeting today with Special Representative of the [United Nations](#) Secretary-General (SRSG) for Iraq Ján Kubiš, who commended the efforts of the activists and pledged increased UN support to achieve their goals.

The participants lamented the [lack of political will](#) and vision to include women in decision-making positions.

They demanded to broaden space for women in the political and reconciliation processes that have not yet materialized regardless of pledges to do so as well as a multitude of government strategies, plans, and national frameworks, often with the support of the UN.

The women charted out the way forward on [gender equality](#) for the future government, Council of Representatives and leaders of political parties.

Recommendations highlighted the need to include women in committees negotiating the Government formation, a 30-percent share in the upcoming Cabinet, independent commissions and institutions in the government's legislative and executive branches.

The participants also called for the establishment of a national mechanism with powers and authority to coordinate the implementation of [national frameworks](#) advancing the women, peace and security agenda, including the National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325.

The participants requested United Nations' active and effective support for their proposals and demands, also through UN work with the government and political leaders, heads of political blocs.

Special Representative Kubiš commended the efforts of the women, saying it came at an opportune time between elections and the government's formation.

He underscored that the [United Nations](#) Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) will urge political leaders and forces to reflect the gender perspectives in the government's programme as well as a gender-responsive budget.

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Mr. Kubiš reiterated UN commitment to strengthening civil society's efforts to achieve [gender equality](#) and the empowerment of women and said UNAMI is ready, based on its reinforced mandate, to continue and enhance its work in this respect.

The participants also raised general concerns, which included the steady regress on women's rights, the lack of meaningful steps to address women's rights and lack of economic opportunities for women. They stressed developing special programmes to empower youth - with a focus on the role of females - as future leaders in all aspects.

The women explained that Da'esh created more problems for women than they already faced, notably women with no livelihoods and heading households, some of whom are suffering due to stigma and association with the terrorist group as well as lack of care for families of martyrs who fought Da'esh.

They stressed the need to adopt transitional justice mechanisms to ensure political and community reconciliation, accountability and justice and reparations for survivors of Da'esh's atrocities.

In the same context, the Special Representative met two days ago with the delegation of the National Team implementing the Iraqi National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325.

The delegation presented similar requests, in addition to discussing the progress on the implementation of the INAP as well as the challenges impeding its implementation, including lack of a dedicated budget to support INAP activities.

Mr. Kubiš commended the work of the National Team. He reiterated that UNAMI would continue to work with political leaders to include gender perspectives in the government programme as well as a 30 percent quota for women representation in the Cabinet and leadership positions.