

Security Council Open Debate on Women, Peace and Security October 2014, Security Council Chamber

Statement by Mr. Sinjaree, Permanent Mission of Iraq to the United Nations

Madam President, allow me to congratulate you on having assumed the presidency for this month; we thank you for the efforts made in order to fulfil your mandate. We also welcome the presidential statement adopted this morning by the Council (S/PRST/2014/21). We would like also to thank the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon, for the support he is providing to the work of the United Nations aimed at promoting the rights of women.

Let me stress the political will of the Iraqi Government to continue to support the rights of women. This approach began in 2003, with a view to strengthening the role played by women in Iraqi society. Allow me to refer here to a few of the successful measures taken by the Iraqi Government to support women and resolve various problems in this area.

First, the Iraqi Council of Ministers set out two national strategies on the promotion of women. The first relates to the struggle against violence against women, and the second promotes the role of women in general. Also, the Commission on the Rights of Women, under the authority of the Iraqi Ministry on Women, created a joint working group among ministries aimed at implementing the two national strategies effectively.

Secondly, the Iraqi Government set up a national action plan to implement resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security, from 2014 to 2018. The plan of action was launched in February. Iraq is one of the countries most advanced in the field of women's rights in the Middle East.

The plan of action stresses the importance of enabling women to participate in decision-making and in conflict resolution while providing them with protection and care. It also calls for the carrying out of a study on legislation in Iraq so as to identify those provisions that pose an obstacle to ending discrimination against women and violate the rights of women as set out in the Constitution, and to review current related legislation so as to either end or amend it, to ensure that it is in compliance with international instruments on the rights of women.

In addition, gender divisions have been created within all Iraqi ministries to respond to the request made by the secretariat of the Iraqi Council of Ministers, so as to respect human rights and the principle of justice and equality of opportunities between the different genders in Government, giving prime importance to all women's issues. That division is also responsible for preparing statistics on the number of women in State ministries and the percentage of women in those ministries, so as ensure a better distribution of women across the various departments of different ministries.

Thirdly, the Iraqi Constitution, in its article 49, paragraph IV, states that women must occupy 25 per cent of seats in the Iraqi Parliament. Currently 81 of the 325 seats in the Iraqi Parliament are occupied by women.

The Government of Iraq has always worked, and will continue to work, to promote the status of women in Iraqi society despite the considerable challenges we are facing as a people and a

Government as a result of the barbaric terrorist attacks against us, which have undermined social cohesion within the country. Iraqi women have been the prime target of such attacks, and particularly following the events of 10 July, women were subjected to serious violations carried out by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in various parts of Iraq controlled by that criminal entity.

ISIL has carried out measures including killings, kidnapping, rape, forced marriage and other kinds of practices that have traumatized the victims thereof and their families. Furthermore, the fate of Iraqi women kidnapped by ISIL remains unknown, which further traumatizes the families of the victims and is of deep concern to all Iraqis.

ISIL attacks and intimidation have led people to flee their homes to try to find safe haven far from the terrorists. This has exacerbated the suffering of Iraqi families and Iraqi women in particular, especially with the arrival of winter in Iraq. There is also an urgent need to support medical care, including vaccinations for pregnant and lactating women.

The Iraqi Government has used all of its available resources and has collaborated with the international community and Iraqi and foreign non-governmental organizations to try to alleviate the suffering of those women by providing urgent aid for displaced persons and to protect and liberate the regions controlled by that criminal entity. Furthermore, we will continue to work to determine the fate of the kidnapped women and to free them.

Once again we call upon the international community, including States and organizations, to continue to help the Government of Iraq in its war against terrorism to try to liberate the regions from those criminal groups and prosecute the perpetrators and instigators of such attacks. We call on the international community to help the victims of terrorism by providing psychological assistance, especially women. We know that women have a vital role to play in rebuilding Iraqi society.