

Conference Concept Note

Reconciliation in Iraq: Finding Solutions to the Disputes in the North

Organised by: The Iraqi Turkmen Human Rights Research Foundation (SOITM) in collaboration with the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (UNPO), in partnership with the Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament

Location: European Parliament, Brussels, Room **ASP 3G2**, (10.00 – 14.00)
Date: 10 June 2010

Topics: Iraq is a country with a mosaic of multi-ethnic and multi-religious communities. The three decades that exposed Iraq to a harsh dictatorship prompted foreign intervention that has simultaneously provoked both instability and opportunity. Instability is visible in security, economic and political fields, which lead to the lack of regional peace, the dire human rights situation and the less than satisfactory situation of Iraq's indigenous populations. Opportunity for change and for progress is in the hands of Iraqis and the effectiveness of the international assistance.

Conflicting political interests, inexperience and instabilities which influenced the writing of the Iraqi constitution interrupts its amendment, too. Despite agreement on many issues and addition of various articles and paragraphs to the constitution, certain important issues are still awaiting ratification. Federalism and the related items (Power of the federal and central authorities, boundaries of Kurdish region and underground wealth) remain the most controversial subjects to be amended.

The status of the so-called disputed areas is now emerging as not only the most threatening factor to the reconciliation processes but also as a threatening factor of the peace processes. This area measures hundreds of square kilometres, includes large numbers of districts, sub-districts and hundreds of villages, and is populated with millions of mixed peoples: 2-400,000 Shabaks, about 2-500,000 Yazidis, most of the Iraqi Chaldo-Assyrians, larger numbers of Turkmen, Kurds and Arabs. Almost all the Iraqi communities are drawn into this conflict. But despite a history of discrimination, assimilation and intimidation, these communities are determined to maintain their historic roots.

This conference will provide a platform for representatives from these areas and the minority groups to voice their concerns and express their opinions on the future policies. Efforts will be made to identify a way forward consistent with the principles of democracy, human rights and the genuine inclusion of all affected communities in the region. These are principles without which a stable Iraq will inevitably remain illusive.

Participation:

The conference will have as its aim the bringing together of a number of influential Iraqi policy and law-makers. This will ensure a high-minded and in-depth discussion of these issues. Parliamentarians, high-ranking governmental officials and experts in the subjects of conference will be invited. Whilst aiming primarily to present expert opinions, Iraqi authorities and international experts dealing with the Iraq will participate in presenting their opinions on the situation and resolution.

Participants to be invited:

Notes by:

Ismail Ertug, Member of European Parliament

To be confirmed, Mohammad al-Doreky, Ambassador of Iraq to Belgium

Marino Busdachin, UNPO General Secretary

SOITM

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Sheth Jerjis, SOITM Chairman
Nermin Mufti, Turkmen Rights Association

Session I

Understanding the Issues - A View of Iraq's Communities Today

Salam Farhan, Secretary of Mandeian Human Rights Group
Hunain al-Qaddo, Shabak's Member of the former Iraqi Parliament
Amin Farhan, Yazidis Member of the Iraqi Parliament
Gevara Youkhana, Member of former Nineveh province council
Suphi Saatçi, Turkmen author & general secretary of Kerkuk foundation
To be determined, Kurdish member of the Iraqi parliament
Saleem al-Jburi, Spokesman of the Iraqi Accordance Front

Session II

A New Iraqi Parliament – With New Responses to Disputes”

Bashar Mohammed Hamid, Member of the Iraqi Parliament - Mosul
Jala al-Naftchy, member of the Iraqi parliament - Kerkuk
To be determined, Member of the Iraqi Parliament – Erbil?

Session III

What Role for the International Community?

Expert, to be mentioned

Struan Stevenson, Chairman of the Delegation for Relations with Iraq
To be confirmed, **Heidi Hautala**, Chair of Subcommittee on Human Rights

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