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Newsletter #2

Iraq Experts Roundtable - 2024 Regional Index on VAWG

Under the patronage of the President of the Republic and in cooperation with the Directorate of Women's Affairs

The Experts Roundtable on the inclusion of Iraq and Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KR-I) in the Regional Index on Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) took place at the Presidency Office of Iraq in Baghdad on 20 May 2024, under the patronage of His Excellency the President of the Republic. It was organised in cooperation with the Department of Women's Affairs in the Presidency, EuroMed Feminist Initiative (EFI), Women Empowerment Organisation (WEO), and Women for Peace Network (WPN). The Experts Roundtable aimed to discuss, check and validate the information gathered under all indicators and the next steps to scoring the results for Iraq and KR- I, as well as Iraq participation in the regional launching of the 2024 Regional Index. The roundtable gathered about 30 experts, representatives of governmental institutions, women civil society organisations (CSOs) and women's rights experts. It took place in the frame of the project: "Strengthening Feminist CSOs Working in the Implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda in Iraq, Lebanon, Jordan and Palestine", funded by Agence Française de Développement (AFD).

Dr. Amir Kennani, Legal Advisor of President of Iraq opened the meeting by welcoming the participants and stressing on the importance of this meeting. He highlighted the progress made in Iraq after the adoption of 2005 Constitution including the allocation of quota for women in the Parliament as well as the development, implementation and reporting of the First National Action Plans (NAP) on United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on women, peace and security, that was supported by the EuroMed Feminist Initiative.



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Ms. Boriana Jönsson, thanked the Presidency of Iraq for hosting the roundtable and the Department of Women’s Affairs for the fruitful cooperation in organising this important event. She expressed the full support of EuroMed Feminist Initiative for the steps taken to include Iraq in the 2024 Regional Index on VAWG and pointed out that the Index is a tool to support the government to take informed policy decisions in addressing this phenomenon and thus improve the situation of women on the ground. EuroMed Feminist Initiative has long supported the efforts in the region and in Iraq combating VAWG and the role of women in sustaining peace and security. The first Iraq NAP 1325 that EFI supported develop, implement and report, was the first NAP in the region and has inspired other governments to follow.

Ms. Suzan Aref, Head of WEO briefed on the role of her organisation, in cooperation with international NGOs, in supporting women rights and the inclusion of women in decision-making in Iraq including the participation in the development of the NAP 1325.

Ms. Hana Emanuel Gorgis, Director General of the Department of Women’s Affairs in the Presidency of Iraq emphasized that the government is keen to pay attention to women rights and adopt the principle of justice for both women and men. She added that among the major progress made is the endorsement of the law on legal aid by the Council of Representatives.

Mr. Jean-Christophe Paris, Chargé d’affaires a.i. at the French Embassy, Baghdad, underlined the importance of the practical implementation of protection mechanisms and prevention programs. He also elaborated on the importance of regional cooperation with countries with similar sociocultural backgrounds in finding creative solutions based on exchange of best practices. Furthermore, he emphasised France commitment to continue supporting actions and measures to combat VAWG in Iraq with CSOs and the local authorities as part of its feminist diplomacy.

After the opening session, Mr. Thaker Alzghool, Research Manager of the Regional Observatory on VAWG presented the Index structure, highlighting the role of the Regional Observatory and the process on both national and regional level in developing the Index.



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Following this introduction, the two national experts, Ms. Wathbah Tayar and Ms. Nermin Ahmad explained the process of conducting data collection for the 49 indicators of the Index for Iraq and KR-I, and presented the information gathered. A shared challenge has been identified, namely, availability of updated data and therefore the experts underlined the importance of receiving full feedback from the participants.



A lively and high-level quality discussion followed each presentation. Participants provided additional information and posed questions, which enriched the information for the indicators.

In the end of the roundtable, the experts agreed to further provide their feedback in written so that the two national experts can finalise the national report in coordination with the Regional Observatory. In the second stage, the scoring will be accomplished at the next step.

The Regional Observatory on VAWG, hosted by EuroMed Feminist Initiative at the Regional Office in Amman, developed different tools to follow up and support the governmental commitments in the Southern Mediterranean in combating VAWG and implementation of Women, Peace and Security Agenda (WPSA), main among them, the Regional Index on VAWG and WPSA.

The Regional Index on VAWG provides comprehensive documentation on laws, public policies, and services related to VAWG, ensuring their alignment with international laws and women's rights instruments. It includes a set of indicators to follow up on and support the implementation of policies and measures to combat VAWG. The first two editions of the Regional Index (2020 and 2021) measured achievements in seven countries from the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). The 2024 Regional Index will be widened to include Syria and Iraq, thus covering nine countries: Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Iraq, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, Syria, and Tunisia.

