

**Report on**

**The Situation of Personal Freedoms of Iraqi  
Youths**



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## Foreword:

On many occasions some Iraqi officials have stated that the personal freedoms at this point of time in Iraq are not among the priorities. Iraq goes through delicate times and there are many issues related to the future of Iraq. Issues that are given priority include counter-terrorism, institution building and eradication of unemployment and poverty. Through our works on this report and our various activities with the youths, we came to realize that the youths differ in their opinions with the senior decision makers. They consider personal freedoms and their infringements have direct impact on counter-terrorism and building a better future for Iraq as well as economic development in the country. In our field survey and various interviews with the youths in different parts of the country, we learnt that violations of personal freedoms are noticeably high, targeting the youths from both sexes, in addition to the daily violations committed against female in violence and terrorism affected areas.

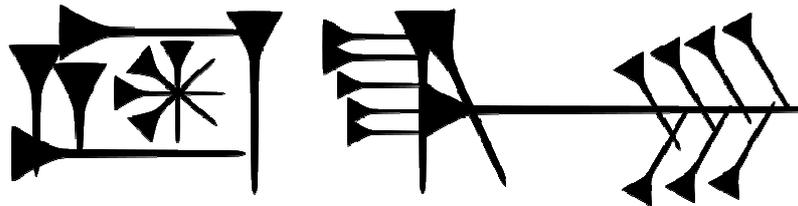
The official statistics indicate that %40 of the Iraqi population is aged between 18-35 years, thus considered young. This large component of the society faces various infringements on their personal freedoms, not limited to threats and displacement but go as far as killing. According to some official statements, many youths were killed belonging to the group known in Iraq as (Emos).

Many Iraqi youths have left the country as the result of attacks on their personal freedoms. All of these are taking place while Iraq has ratified many international conventions, protecting personal freedoms. Also the Iraqi Constitution guarantees personal freedoms of Iraqi citizens.

This report presents realistic and concrete findings on the situation of personal freedoms of the Iraqi youths. The report is a joint work between (Al-Masalla Organization for Human Resources Development) and the (Norwegian People's Aid – NPA). The activities took place within the last four months in Baghdad governorate; including three training workshops for the youths and interviews with the youths in different parts of Baghdad, whose personal freedoms were and still are violated. In addition a field survey was conducted to survey opinions of 463 youths in Baghdad governorate, talking about personal freedoms of youths in Iraq.

## Introduction

Freedom is based on self-ownership. Thus denial of this fact means that someone else has higher right than oneself to own one's life. The truth is no one owns your life nor do you own others' lives.



**Picture: word (Freedom) in Sumerian Cuneiform script**

## Basic Concepts

Before we go to the main topic of the report, we need to explain some basic concepts such as:

1. Personal Freedom: the ability of individual – without any external coercion or pressure – to take decisions or choose between various possible options. In general freedom means the requirement of self-determination in handling any matter. Freedom is lack of material or mental impediments, that constraints human energy and productivity. Freedom includes freedom from slavery of a person, group or self, freedom from applied pressure on someone's undertaking of any task, and freedom from coercion and force. Personal freedom includes freedom of speech, movement, clothing, choosing place of life and work and others.
2. Youths: is the age group between childhood and adolescence, characterized by physical and psychological growth and development. There are differing approaches to identify the youths age group as the development may vary with age and the fact that there are underdeveloped persons belonging to all age groups. Around the world words like (youth, teenager, young and others) mean the same thing. Generally youth refers to a stage of life, neither childhood nor adulthood, but some period between the two.

## Part One

The legal framework of personal freedoms:

1. Personal freedoms according to the international law:

A. Universal Declaration of Human Rights:

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights focuses on individual rights. The followings are some of its Articles:

**Article 1**

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

**Article 3**

Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.

**Article 4**

No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms.

**Article 12**

No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honour and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks.

**Article 13**

(1) Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state.

(2) Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.

## B. International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

Adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by General Assembly resolution 2200A (XXI) of 16 December 1966. Entry into force was on 23 March 1976, in accordance with Article 49.

The States Parties to the present Covenant,

Considering that, in accordance with the principles proclaimed in the Charter of the United Nations, recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world, Recognizing that these rights derive from the inherent dignity of the human person, Recognizing that, in accordance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the ideal of free human beings enjoying civil and political freedom and freedom from fear and want can only be achieved if conditions are created whereby everyone may enjoy his civil and political rights, as well as his economic, social and cultural rights, Considering the obligation of States under the Charter of the United Nations to promote universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and freedoms, Realizing that the individual, having duties to other individuals and to the community to which he belongs, is under a responsibility to strive for the promotion and observance of the rights recognized in the present Covenant.

Article 2, Section 3 provides that:

3. Each State Party to the present Covenant undertakes:

(a) To ensure that any person whose rights or freedoms as herein recognized are violated shall have an effective remedy, notwithstanding that the violation has been committed by persons acting in an official capacity;

(b) To ensure that any person claiming such a remedy shall have his right thereto determined by competent judicial, administrative or legislative authorities, or by any other competent authority provided for by the legal system of the State, and to develop the possibilities of judicial remedy;

(c) To ensure that the competent authorities shall enforce such remedies when granted.

The ratification of this treaty obligates states to abide by its provisions and provide decent life in accordance with the laws and constitution. The Covenant guarantees personal freedoms within the state and society because violation may be committed by social groups, executive, legislative or judicial authority.

Article 9 provides the followings:

1. Everyone has the right to liberty and security of person. No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest or detention. No one shall be deprived of his liberty except on such grounds and in accordance with such procedure as are established by law.

4. Anyone who is deprived of his liberty by arrest or detention shall be entitled to take proceedings before a court, in order that that court may decide without delay on the lawfulness of his detention and order his release if the detention is not lawful.

5. Anyone who has been the victim of unlawful arrest or detention shall have an enforceable right to compensation.

We see that in Sections 4 and 5, deprivation of liberty under the excuse of law enforcement entitles individual to court proceeding to decide on the lawfulness of the legal penalty or whether the arrest was arbitrary or not. In addition such individual is entitled to damages to compensate the harms done against him/her.

Article 10 states that all persons deprived of their liberty shall be treated with dignity. For example some people who play certain sports or practice certain arts, that may be considered unwanted by or unfamiliar to the society, or others who wear unconventional type of clothing or accessories; all of these may be forbidden and the persons involved in such activities may not be treated with humanity by the law and society. The authorities arrest them claiming that these activities are contrary to the public taste and society neglect and oppress them.

Article 10 provides:

1. All persons deprived of their liberty shall be treated with humanity and with respect for the inherent dignity of the human person.

The Articles of the Covenant are not to be limited unless there is threats on security and stability of the country and for the purpose of protection of other people's lives. This is provided for in Article 12, Section 3 as follows:

The above-mentioned rights shall not be subject to any restrictions except those which are provided by law, are necessary to protect national security, public order (ordre public), public health or morals or the rights and freedoms of others, and are consistent with the other rights recognized in the present Covenant.

Personal freedoms are not limited only to appearance it is also related to thought, conscience and religious beliefs. No restriction should be place on anyone who refuses to show religious identity and think that this is a personal matter related to consciousness and personal choice and vice versa no restriction to be place on persons showing their religious identity. Thus Article 18 gave due consideration to the state parties to the Covenant by including showing and hiding elements of personal liberties related to thought, conscience and belief. The Article states:

Article 18

1. Everyone shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. This right shall include freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of his choice, and freedom, either individually or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in worship, observance, practice and teaching.

2. No one shall be subject to coercion which would impair his freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of his choice.

3. Freedom to manifest one's religion or beliefs may be subject only to such limitations as are prescribed by law and are necessary to protect public safety, order, health, or morals or the fundamental rights and freedoms of others.

4. The States Parties to the present Covenant undertake to have respect for the liberty of parents and, when applicable, legal guardians to ensure the religious and moral education of their children in conformity with their own convictions.

Thus the Covenant in addition to obliging state parties to enact and enforce its provisions, respects the right of parents to decide on their children's education; this is another right granted by the Covenant.

## 2. Personal freedom according to the Iraqi Constitution

Constitution is the main legal framework for the state legal system. State constitution guarantees and organizes individual activities but should not limit personal freedoms of the citizens and take social freedom into consideration. The Iraqi Constitution guarantees personal freedoms in Chapter Two (Liberties), Articles 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45 and 46. These Articles guarantees personal freedoms and protects human dignity and provides the legal framework in relation to personal freedoms. The Articles state:

Article 37:

First:

A. The liberty and dignity of man shall be protected.

B. No person may be kept in custody or investigated except according to a judicial decision.

C. All forms of psychological and physical torture and inhumane treatment are prohibited. Any confession made under force, threat, or torture shall not be relied on, and the victim shall have the right to seek compensation for material and moral damages incurred in accordance with the law.

Second: The State shall guarantee protection of the individual from intellectual, political and religious coercion.

Third: Forced labor, slavery, slave trade, trafficking in women or children, and sex trade shall be prohibited.

Article 38:

The State shall guarantee in a way that does not violate public order and morality:

A. Freedom of expression using all means.

B. Freedom of press, printing, advertisement, media and publication.

C. Freedom of assembly and peaceful demonstration, and this shall be regulated by law.

Article 39:

First: The freedom to form and join associations and political parties shall be guaranteed, and this shall be regulated by law.

Second: It is not permissible to force any person to join any party, society, or political entity, or force him to continue his membership in it.

Article 40:

The freedom of communication and correspondence, postal, telegraphic, electronic, and telephonic, shall be guaranteed and may not be monitored, wiretapped, or disclosed except for legal and security necessity and by a judicial decision.

Article 41:

Iraqis are free in their commitment to their personal status according to their religions, sects, beliefs, or choices, and this shall be regulated by law.

Article 42:

Each individual shall have the freedom of thought, conscience, and belief.

Article 43:

First: The followers of all religions and sects are free in the:

A- Practice of religious rites, including the Husseinite rituals.

B- Management of religious endowments (waqf), their affairs, and their religious institutions, and this shall be regulated by law.

Second: The State shall guarantee freedom of worship and the protection of places of worship.

Article 44:

First: Each Iraqi has freedom of movement, travel, and residence inside and outside Iraq.

Second: No Iraqi may be exiled, displaced, or deprived from returning to the homeland.

Article 46:

Restricting or limiting the practice of any of the rights or liberties stipulated in this Constitution is prohibited, except by a law or on the basis of a law, and insofar as that limitation or restriction does not violate the essence of the right or freedom.

### 3. State decisions and youths freedom

Despite all the above mentioned national and international obligations of Iraq in relation to personal freedoms the situation is exactly the opposite. There are clear violations of personal freedoms in Iraq, particularly against the youths and women within the society. The Council of Ministers issued a decision stating "it is prohibited to import clothes and accessories that are contrary to traditions and disturbing to the public taste; and those who promote them must be monitored." The justification is that there are

some public and traditional habits of appearance belonging to the great Iraqi society and need to be protected; in addition there are certain intruding and fabricated customs that disturb the public taste. This decision limits personal freedoms of citizens in general and the youth in particular. Thus the youths is chased by the society and the state, while the provisions of the Constitution and international treaties and conventions are not enforced. Between the imposed limitation on personal freedoms by the state and the society and the legal and constitutional guarantees, the youths search for a space of their own, attempting to change some concepts.

## Part Two

### Exercising Personal Freedoms

#### 1. Real life examples of youths exercising personal freedom

There are hundreds of youths whose personal freedoms are violated around the clock, in every Iraqi governorate, at home, on the street, in schools and public places and elsewhere. Here we present some cases:

##### a. (H.M) the Rap Singer

(G Score) is his name in rap music, (H.M) is a rap artist with great ambitions to become a famous rap singer, not only for the sake of fame but to glorify the art he sees as oppressed in Iraq as are all the rap singers are oppressed too. These kind of artistic activities require state support, something which is lacking. He says that rap has a long history and requires care and devotion on the part of those who work in this art. This is the first objective of (H.M) to introduce real rap in Iraq and develop the situation of the art and the artistes. The unconventionality of this art resulted in striping (H.M) from all his freedoms. He received direct death threats from the religious group (Asaib Ahl Al-haq), they also hacked his Facebook account and blocked his online video clips. He was also dismissed from work for a period of time. The group argues that rap is an intruding Western art and the Iraqi youths should not be allowed to practice it freely as it is religiously forbidden (Haram). (H.M) thinks that rap is an Arabic art not Western; it begun in Akaz Market. Through this historical account he attempts to regain his freedom. He adds that religion is not against the kind of art that lives with the society and its issues. (H.M)'s liberty is not violated only by religious groups but also by social groups; groups that think that rap is an art with no value or direction. These objections come from family, friends and others who look at his work shallowly. Lowering morale is one of the means of deprivation of personal freedom; when they look at his achievements with negativity and pessimism.

(H.M) is not aware of his rights under the Iraqi Constitution or the Universal Declaration of Human rights because he thinks that all his rights are denied in his country. Thus he grew indifferent about his rights, though the Constitution guarantees personal rights and liberties form childhood to elderly (H.M) has low level of awareness about the Constitution.

H.M has realized that silence and subordination will not stop violation of personal freedoms, but legal protections are necessary for persons like him to continue what they have started; claiming freedom through singing. He is not doing anything illegal; he rather practices liberties guaranteed by the Iraqi Constitution and the international treaties ratified by Iraq.

**b. (S.A) the Squash Player**

(S.A) is a special girl, aged 22 years. She is a professional squash player and fifth year student in medical school; she resides in Baghdad. She participated in many international sports competitions; with noticeable success without any institutional support. However, she is supported by family and friends and his coaches. (S.A) thinks that society is not able to control individual energy because it is individual who directs oneself towards any wanted direction. Thus dream can't be killed, when there is willpower behind such a dream. Despite some friends' discouragement, stating that her activity is not important, the encouragement she receives from her family has opened many door for her and motivated her to continue her journey. In relation to her constitutional rights she has little understanding of the contents of the Iraqi Constitution. She knows that every person has the right to free speech, and that the Constitution guarantees this right. She said that "one day I criticized one of my university lecturers on Facebook; which caused him to harass me. I decided to stop my criticism and public expression of my opinion as there are power structures and social limitations that restrict us from expressing our opinions freely." The state, society and other authorities limit the freedoms of persons like (S.A). Thus she spends her university days in Bagdad and the holidays abroad to enjoy more freedoms.

Often (S.A) faces harassment and verbal abuse on the street; her reaction mostly is to keep silence or sometimes she resorts to family and friends for protection. She grew resilient to continue her journey and achieve her goal. She thinks that individuals violating her rights do not affect her negatively; adding that individuals have rights within the state from the age of 18, when they grow mature and capable of rational decision making and understanding their rights. (S.A) thinks that the only solution to the problem of violations is the enforcement of the laws, raising awareness and educating the future generations on personal freedoms and how to exercise them. However, under the current circumstances in Iraq that faces terrorism everyone has surrendered to the coming death.

### **c. (M.M.SH) the Writer**

(M.M.SH) has obtained Bachelor's degree in Media studies. He is a well-known writer within the intellectual community. He has many important published works in paper and online press. His young age did not stop his mental productivity. However, this did not stop the society and family's negative views; because what he offers is simply contrary to their personal opinions and traditions of their ancestors. When (M.M.SH) defends his opinions he faces resistance and oppression just because his opinions are different from the others'. (M.M.SH) is very well read on the Iraqi Constitution. Quoting a friend, he said that "the Constitution reflects our explosive reality" thus freedoms are limited realistically and constitutionally. This is due to (M.M.SH)'s experience when he argues his opinions with others. In this country expression of opinions does not mean differing of views but rather conflict and even erasing the other party. (M.M.SH) said once he argued with someone who got really angry and told him "you are dangerous and should not be left alive because people like you destroy the country."

On the other hand (M.M.SH) experiences various violations by the government authorities and the society; not because he launches a war against an individual or certain political institution, but because he has a long hair, different from ordinary person's hair or a policeman's hair. He wrote in the introduction of his book (Criticizing Democracy) "we live in societies that reject differences and disrespect the differing party. We spend our days with people who hate plurality and disgust diversity. I and many others have got used to these. Often I face harassment for no reasons other than my long hair, or their dislike of my way of talking and dressing. Sometimes these harassments come from security persons who sleep (sorry who don't sleep) for the sake of the country. One day I was stopped by one of these people who asked my name and why I have grown my hair. I tried to answer him with hummer; I grabbed his sunglasses and put them on; asked him don't they look good on me with my long hair? He grabbed back his sunglasses angrily. I felt he was saying to himself this is an ugly person with long hair! He asked for my ID card. I handed it over with a smile. He said "I don't laugh with you" – stating that my smile was inappropriate – "do you know who I am? I'm lieutenant this and that head of this and that division. I can put you in the back of my humvee and beat you until you bleed. No one can stop me or punish me for that. Who are you to joke with me?" I think he was trying to frighten me, but I don't bend down when it comes to arguing rights and liberties. Therefore I laughingly replied: what you are talking about could happen under the deposed former regime, but know Saddam has gone and we live in democracy. If you want to arrest me you must have an arrest warrant issued by the judiciary and

you are not in a position to torture me. He replied to me with a smile: I don't need any of those. I can take you right now and torture you; who can stop me? My reply to him was: I will write about you later and highlight your misconduct; my friend will organize a demonstration if I go missing. The last expression was funny to him and made him laugh. Another night guard came, probably a lieutenant or a kind of boss like him, he told him to let me go. They returned my ID card and I allowed me to go.

These kinds of violations leave deep psychological scars in (M.M.SH) as he puts it: "I can overcome the matter, at least emotionally, however, subconsciously the matter get stored and turns into a psychological problem, comes out as fear, and anxiety. As the result I loss sense of security and feel that I live in a jungle, where oppression is collective." (M.M.SH) is lost, according to the views of many people including his family, encouragement comes only from close friends because the society and (M.M.SH) are alien to one another.

#### **d. Long-haired (M.A)**

(M.A) is a young man with Bachelor's degree in political sciences and has knowledge on the Iraqi Constitution and the laws related to personal freedoms. (M.A) thinks that these laws are not enforced and Iraqi citizens' rights are occasionally violated. These violations differ according to the living habitat of the citizens.

(M.A) thinks that the influence of religion and tribal system is great on limiting personal freedoms, particularly youths' freedom. There are other factors such as family and society that limit personal freedom, in addition to the unenforced laws. Thus we lack legal protection in this country. (M.A) says after his return from his trip in 2007, the taxi driver told him that his long hair is rejected at this period of time. The taxi driver informed him that the militias extrajudicially punish youths for their long hair and cut their hair. (M.A) didn't take the drive seriously and though that he is exaggerating. He was surprised to be questioned by members of the security forces before he got home.

(M.A) remembers that the security forces questioned him for over an hour on reasons for growing his hair in this way. He spoke diplomatically, as he puts it, as he was afraid of arrest, he told them that he was abroad and promised to cut his hair. He later fulfilled his promise because of his fears.

(M.A) says: "I didn't expect the militias to challenge me because of my long hair or that the security forces will question me over it. These forces are there to protect us and our neighborhoods not to violate our personal rights."

**e. (H.T)'s dress complex**

(H.T) says "my personal freedom is denied by the environment and the society I live in and by the ruling traditions and customs in our society." She exclaims: "I see many clothes in the shops; I like some of them and hope I could put them on, but I couldn't, because of the society that forces certain patterns of clothing." Adding: "I am not convinced to wear Hijab, but I am forced to do so by my family and society, with the various excuses such as shame, Haram, fear of the security situation."

**f. (D.K) compromises to complete education**

The situation of Bagdad is not stable, forcing (D.K) to live at her sister's away from the girls' dormitory. Her family live in another governorate and she wants to continue her education and stay alive. (D.K) is pretty and clever, in order for things to move smoothly, she gave in to her family's demands in relation to wearing Hijab. She thinks that this is an infringement of her personal freedom to wear what she wants, but she also understands her family's fears regarding moving around Baghdad without Hijab.

(D.K) did not read the Iraqi Constitution's Articles related to liberties because she does not care – she thinks that the Constitution does not represent Iraqi citizens, it was written abroad, she feels that her locked prison is unbreakable and no source could give her sense of freedom.

(D.K) thinks that the society with its habits and customs denies her personal rights. What is more painful is lack of security above all other bitter situations; which makes live an unsolved crisis.

(D.K) thinks that these limitations and violations lessen human motivations to go forward, but her personal will, despite the psychological harms she continuously suffers, makes her resilient and want to complete her education and develop herself outside Iraq. There are two ways to combat violations of personal freedoms: one, to provide the basic needs such as security and safety and two, development of institutions to work on awareness raising.

**g. (Q.W) likes photography**

(Q.W) is a law graduate turned into new person by the art of photography. He has made a presence in the area of voluntary works and participation in art exhibitions. His distinctness made him subject to violations of personal freedoms, in the area of his hobby and work. Violations come from security forces with the excuse that photography may undermine security. His camera makes him a target, though he wants to photograph only the beautiful things in Bagdad, refusing to photograph death and distraction. He wants to glorify beautiful moments and achievements in the era of terror.

(Q.W) knows the Iraqi Constitution and the Articles related to liberty, but he thinks that the Constitution is only ink on paper and legal protection does not exist in Iraq. The reasons are two-folds: the government and its institutions on the one hand and the citizens on the other hand. Citizens are responsible for not enjoying and claiming their rights and liberties in their own country as they lack legal knowledge and government is responsible for not enforcing the laws and the Constitution.

(Q.W) thinks that the authorities can deny him any of his rights as the simplest activity requires burdensome procedures. For example peaceful demonstration, though Constitutional and international legal right, it is hard to exercise in Iraq.

(Q.W) suffers from violations of his rights, the security authorities forbid him from using his camera, a national security threat according to the police. On one occasion the police gave him the choice of handing over his camera or not passing through the check point. He chose the latter.

(Q.W) uses his rational reasoning when dealing with the security to protect himself, his equipments and his reputation. He thinks that the result of such violation is only psychological suffering. Taking photographs is a simple and legitimate right, but I can't exercise it freely, limiting my personal and professional development.

Violations against (Q.W) come from family too, when they try to impose their views and enforce the household laws. They think that photography is not a profession, it does not pay off and one can't make a living on it. They also have concerns over the safety of their son. Thus he thinks that personal freedoms start from the age of 18 to the end of life. However, there are no enforced laws to protect equally all and punish the violators. The society must demand the enforcement of such laws and must fight to protect personal freedoms. (Q.W) has got used to the reality, terror-ridden reality, going out

while bombs explode became normal and part of ordinary life. However, there is still hope for better future, (Q.W)'s captures it daily with imaginary freedom.

#### **h. (M.H) family restriction**

(M.H) participated in a workshop organized by (Al-Masalla Organization for Human Resources Development) aided by (the Norwegian People's Aid) in Baghdad; to explain the concept of personal freedom and increase their awareness of laws and international treaties protecting personal liberties. (M.H) participated with his workshop colleagues to define personal freedoms and reasons for the denial and violations. (M.H) said "my freedom is denied by my family. I'm not allowed to go out for shopping, though they know my whereabouts, mostly close to home, they keep calling to know why I'm late!" (M.H) adds that "my family's repeated calls is due to their fear and concerns for me after the deteriorated security situation in Baghdad."

#### **i. (W.A) family fears**

(W.A) participated in a workshop organized by (Al-Masalla Organization for Human Resources Development) aided by (the Norwegian People's Aid) in Baghdad. She said that her family's fear over her safety is turning into infringement of her personal freedoms. She can't go anywhere alone; her mother accompanies her everywhere she goes; particularly when she attends workshops in Baghdad. (W.A) said that "my mother's presence with me makes me feel restricted all the time and that all my rights are denied." Although she graduated from civil engineering school, the security situation and her family's fears restrict her from living ordinary life as a mature adult.

#### **j. (M.T) is punished with Hijab**

(M.T) participated in a workshop organized by (Al-Masalla Organization for Human Resources Development) aided by (the Norwegian People's Aid) in Baghdad. She said that her personal freedoms are violated by her family. Her family wanted to force her to enter certain university, but she refused and went to the university she chose. Her family wanted to punish her disobedience with forcing her to wear Hijab. At the end the family had it their way and forced her to wear Hijab. She said that "personal freedoms of youths are violated because of various factors such as religion, tribalism and society. The most widespread

violation against females is forcing them to wear Hijab or forcing them to go to certain universities or even forcing to marry someone they did not choose."

**k. (A.M) and her inactivated freedom**

(A.M) works in one of Baghdad's universities and participated in a workshop organized by (Al-Masalla Organization for Human Resources Development) aided by (the Norwegian People's Aid) in Baghdad. (A.M) thinks that Islam guarantees everyone's personal freedoms but within certain framework of rules. In relation to laws and institutions, the Iraqi Constitution includes one part on personal liberties, but most of the Articles are not activated.

(A.M) said that she faces violations of personal freedoms at work and harassment by work colleagues. She thinks that the reason behind this is the envy of some of her colleagues because her devotion landed her in the position she currently occupies. In addition hypocrisy and sectarianism of some causes problem to the mostly good-hearted people.

**l. (A.W) and the iron chains**

(A.W) participated in a workshop organized by (Al-Masalla Organization for Human Resources Development) aided by (the Norwegian People's Aid) in Baghdad. (A.W) thinks that personal freedoms entails that people could be different and carry views and undertake activities that suit their desires, while respecting freedom of others and the laws. She adds that "despite the beauty and excellence of Iraqi laws, personal freedoms in our society are chained with iron chains, placed by different holders of powers."

## 2. Are all the Emos killed in Iraq?

Violence in Iraq in general and Baghdad in particular restricts most of the personal freedoms. One issue faced the youths at the beginning of 2012 was killing of (Emos) in a brutal manner contrary to all humane principles. The issue of Emos was one of the most important subjects of 2012 and early 2013. However, discussion on the subject was stopped altogether. Are all the Emos killed in Iraq?

### A. Who are the Emos?

The word Emo is taken for the English word Emotion; translated in Arabic as emotional or sensitive. This phenomenon started as a musical movement of hard rock in the early 1980s, turned into life style in the third millennium adopted by certain groups that appeared in Washington. Sociologists say these groups represent natural development of the semi-extinct punk groups. The Emos are distinguished by the fact that most of its member are youths not older than seventeen years of age and have particular life style, certain dress and music.

### B. Emos in Iraq

The phenomenon of Emos among the Iraqi youths first appeared in areas of Baghdad such as Sadr City, Karada, Mansur, Saidiya, Dora, and Palestine Street. These youths faced violence, death and threats because of their unfamiliar outlook, considered by some to be evil appearances. Some claimed that the Emos are devil-worshippers, deviants and astray of the ordinary path.

Many news websites and social networks published photos and videos about the killing incidents of the Emos. Ilaf is one such website who spoke to eye-witnesses in Baghdad confirming that they have seen many youths belonging to Emo groups killed in Baghdad, particularly in Kadmiya. The eye-witnesses stated that these youths are confronted with hostility by the general public and they are sometimes threatened with death or burning. They stated that this phenomenon is not related to male but also include Iraqi female who cut their wrists with blades and do whatever pleases them; with no consideration to the concepts of shame or unacceptability.

The Iraqi security sources stated that there are (blood suckers) belonging to the Emo sect. they stated further that they have detected drawings of skulls and

unknown English writings, which according to internet sources, match the symbols of devil-worshippers abroad.

### **C. Killing operations of Emo youths**

Parliamentary and human rights sources requested speedy investigation to reveal the identity of those who are behind the killings of the youths known as Emos or devil-worshippers. They also demanded to investigate with those who stood behind violations of rights and detention of number of youths and students in Baghdad during that period, particularly near colleges and universities. Many complaints were launched by youths, claiming that the security forces, including social police, arrested them, because of their unfamiliar outlook to the security forces and not to their own society. Some people were arrested because they were wearing jeans or had western hair styles. According to some students these incidents caused horror among the youths and students.

### **D. Targeting Emo youths**

Killings of Emos and forcing others, who many not necessary belong to such groups, to avoid wearing jeans of unfamiliar clothes and cut their hair, made the Parliament to consider these incidents as crimes and contrary to human rights principles. Human rights activists refer to extremist groups targeting more than 85 youths, accusing them to belong to Emos. While these incidents were taking place, the police force was working on countering this new phenomenon, claiming that it will lead to deviant behavior.

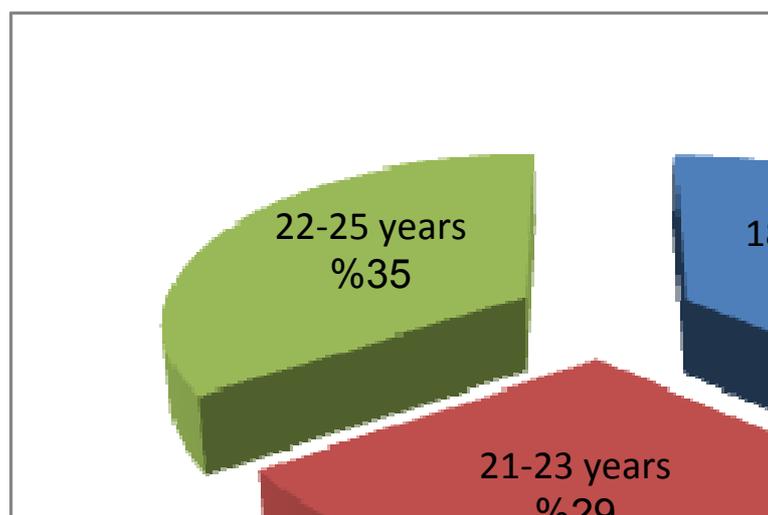
## Part Three

### Field surveys

1. Findings of the field survey on personal freedoms of Iraqi youth, Baghdad as an example:

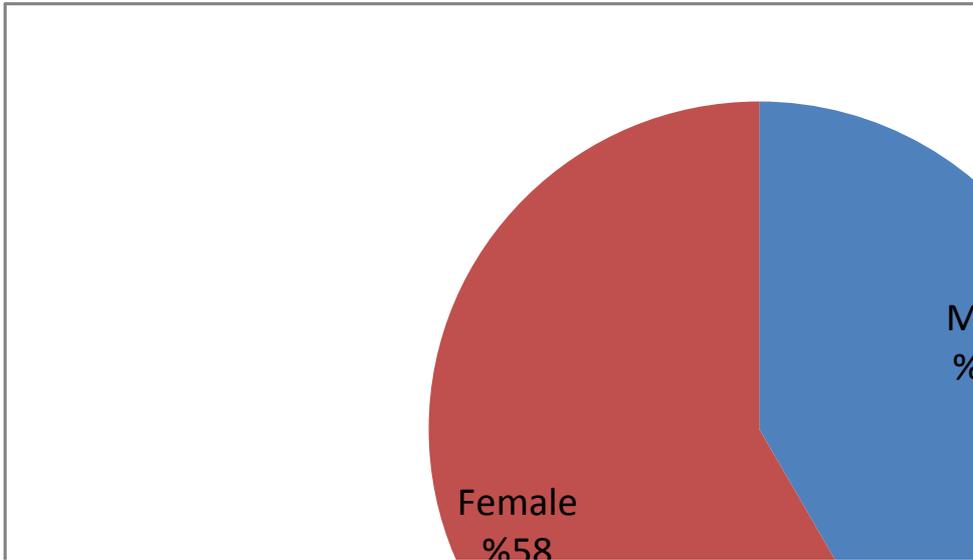
This field survey was conducted in Baghdad governorate between October and November of 2013 to survey the youths' opinions on personal freedoms and social and legal constraints. The opinions of 500 youths were taken through special questionnaire forms. 463 valid forms and 37 invalid forms were returned. Below we present the findings from 463 forms.

General information of the field survey findings:



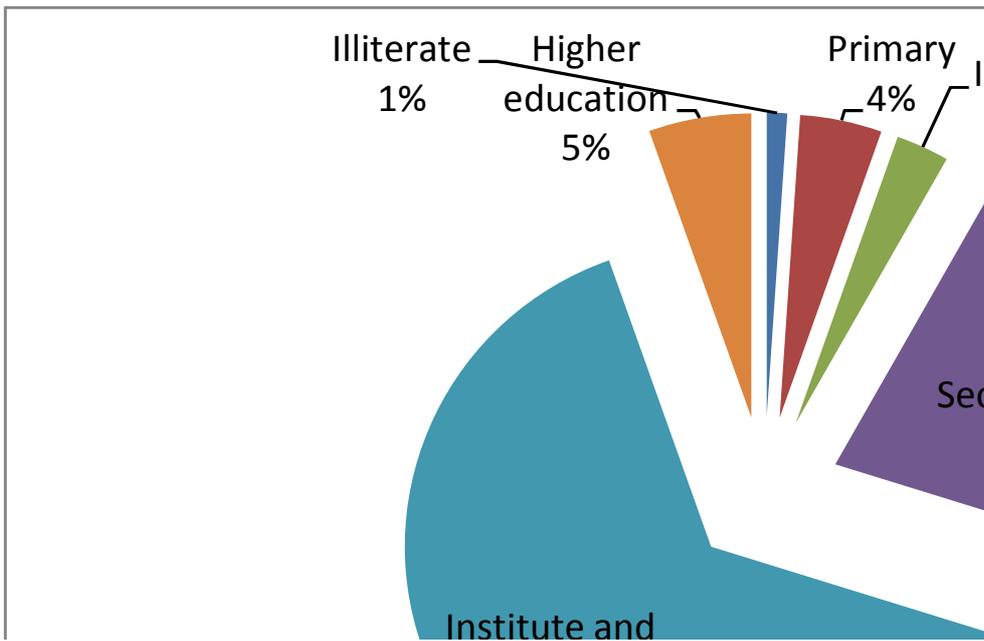
**Figure: Model 1**

**Age of participants in the survey**



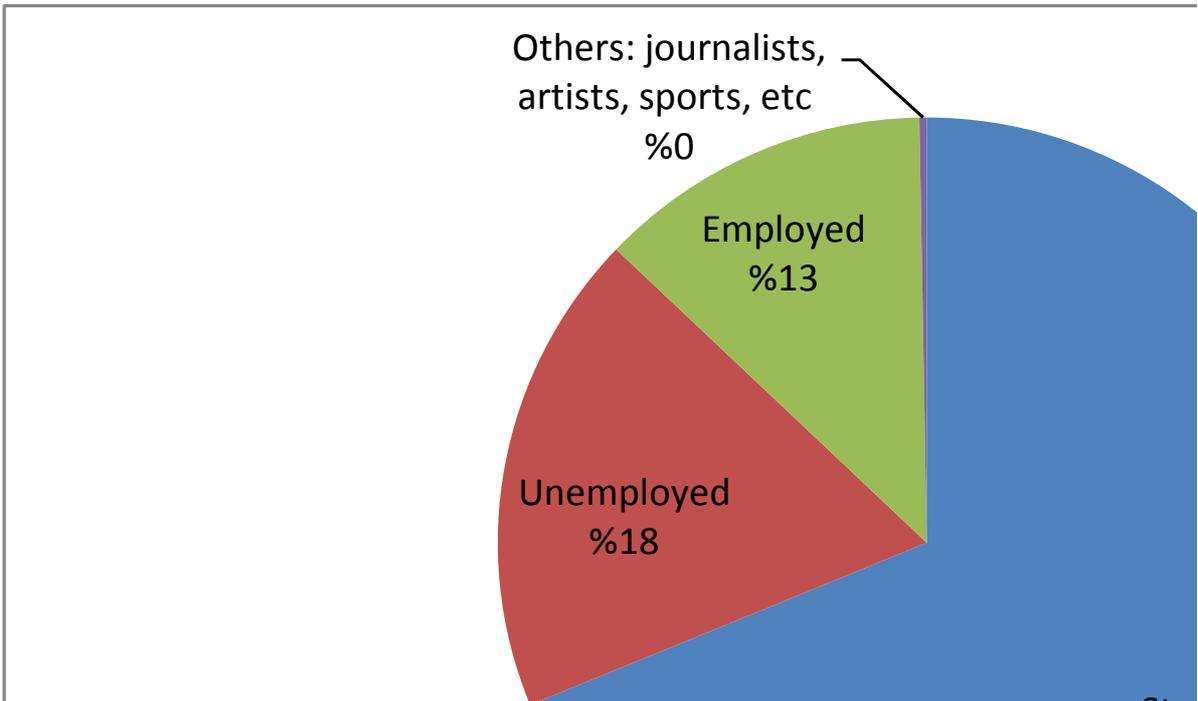
**Figure: Model 2**

**Sex of participants in the survey**



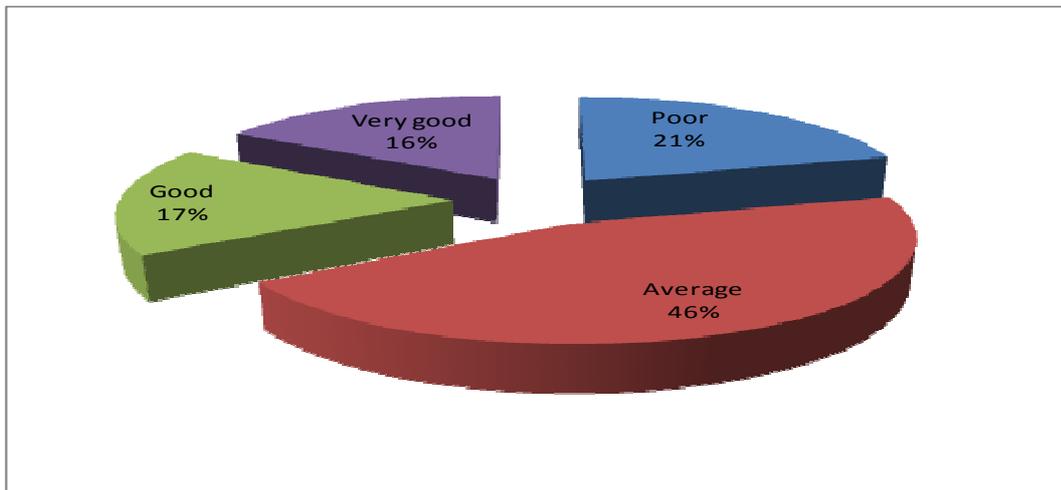
**Figure: Model 3**

**Education attainment of participants in the survey**



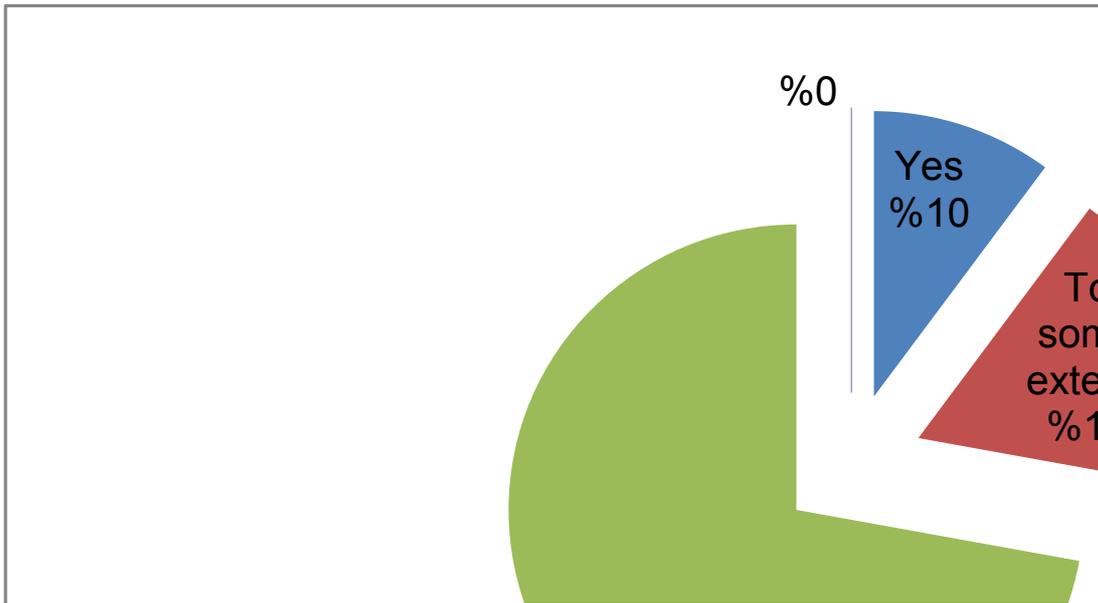
**Figure: Model 4**

**Occupation of participants in the survey**



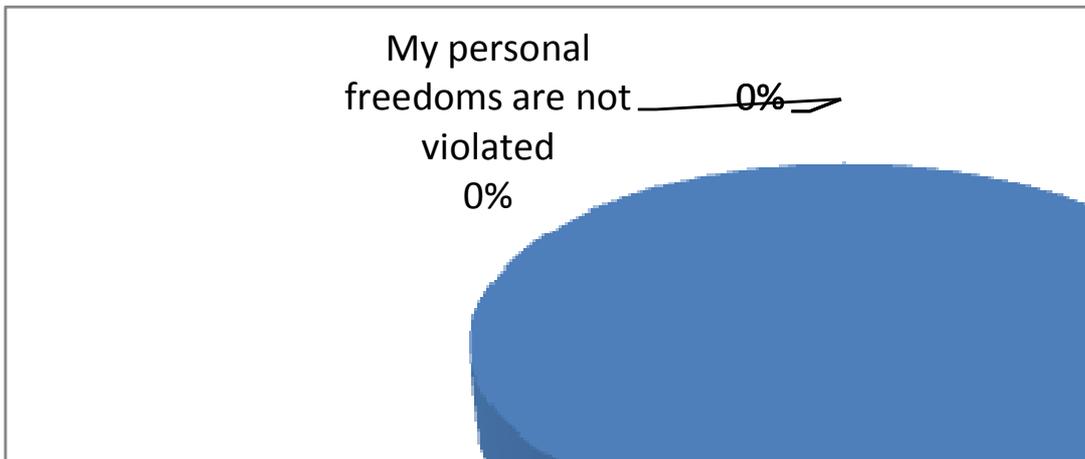
**Figure: Model 5**

**Economic situation of participants in the survey**



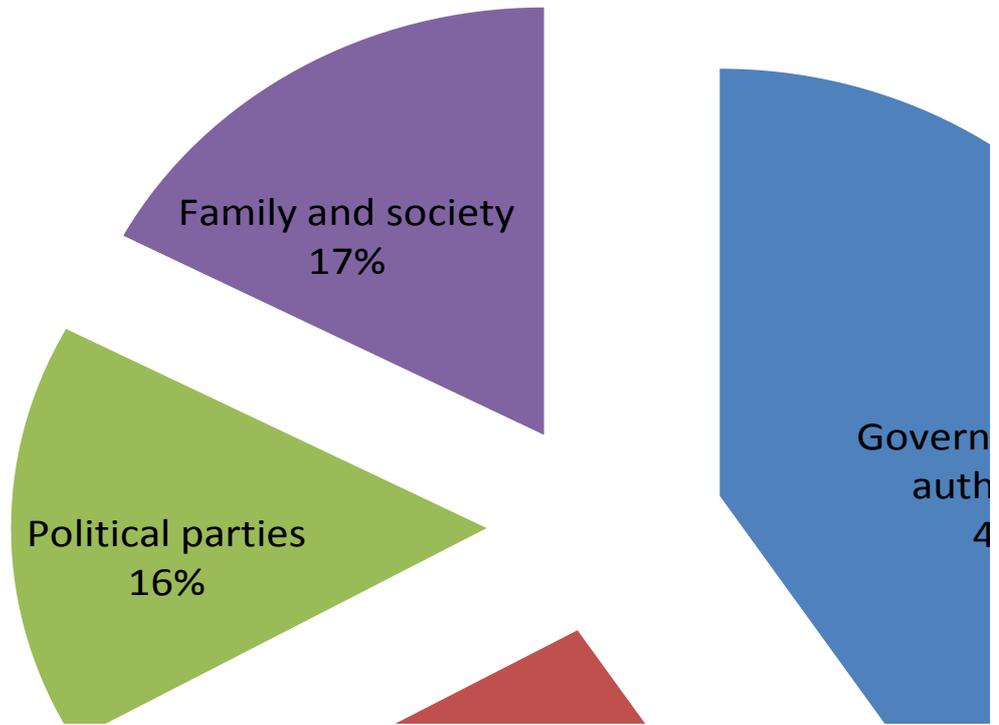
**Figure: Model 6**

**Opinion of participants on legal protections of personal freedoms in Iraq**



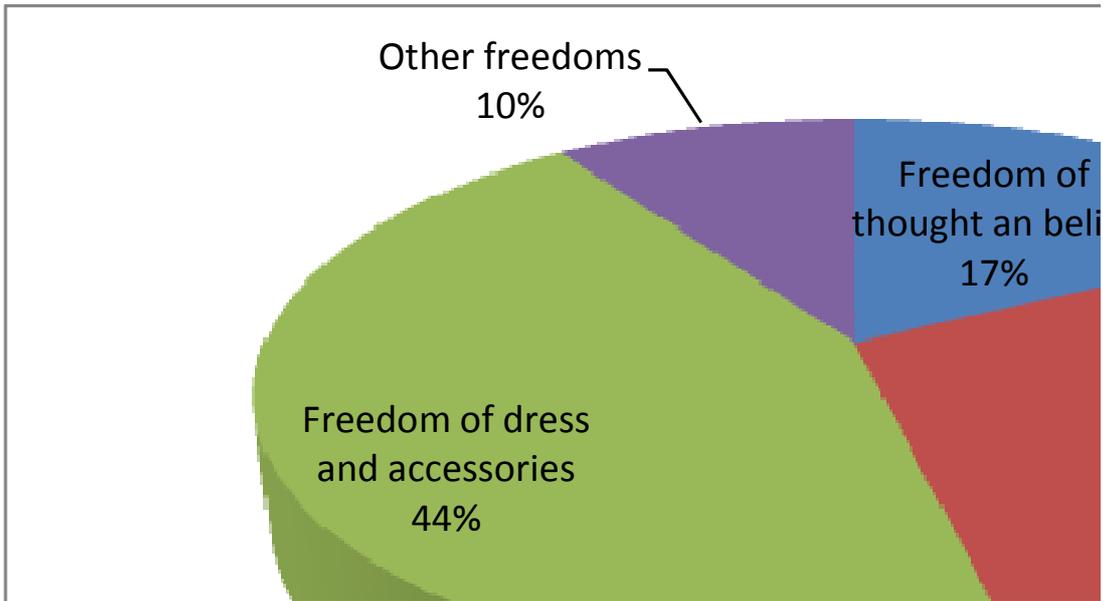
**Figure: Model 7**

**Opinion of participants on violation of their personal freedoms**



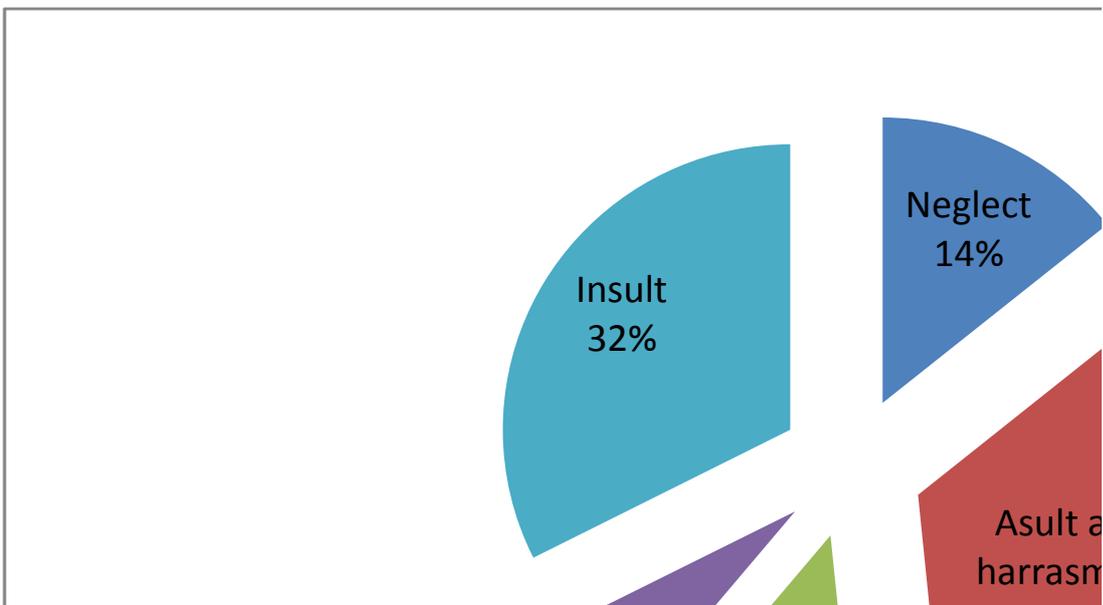
**Figure: Model 8**

**Opinion of participants on violation of their personal freedoms**



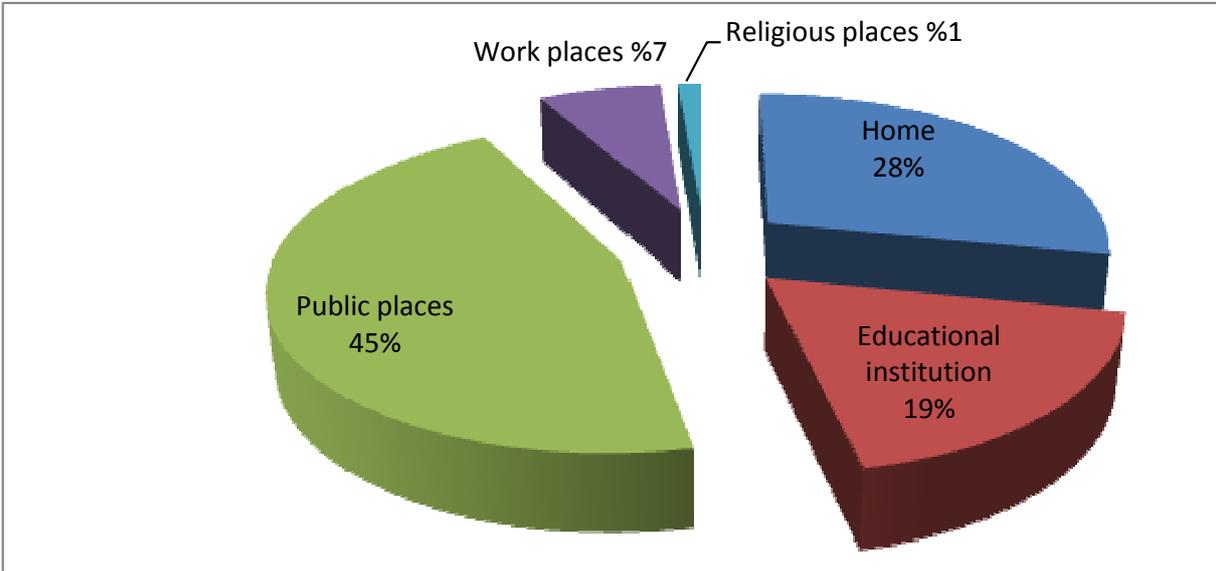
**Figure: Model 9**

Opinion of participants on types of violations of their personal freedoms



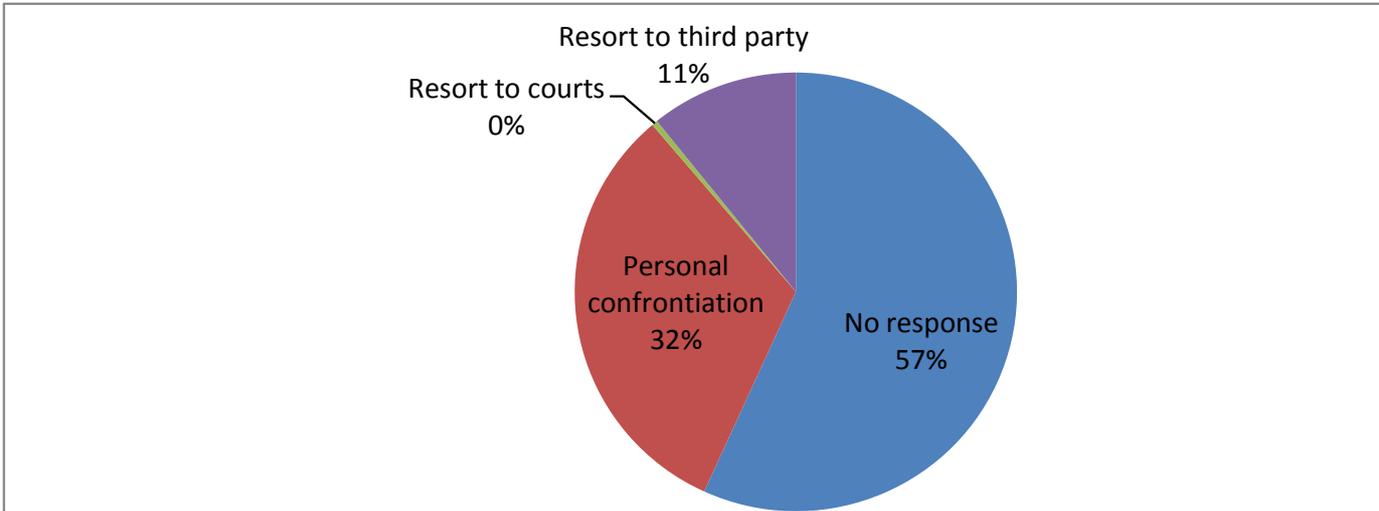
**Figure: Model 10**

Opinion of participants on means of violation of their personal freedoms



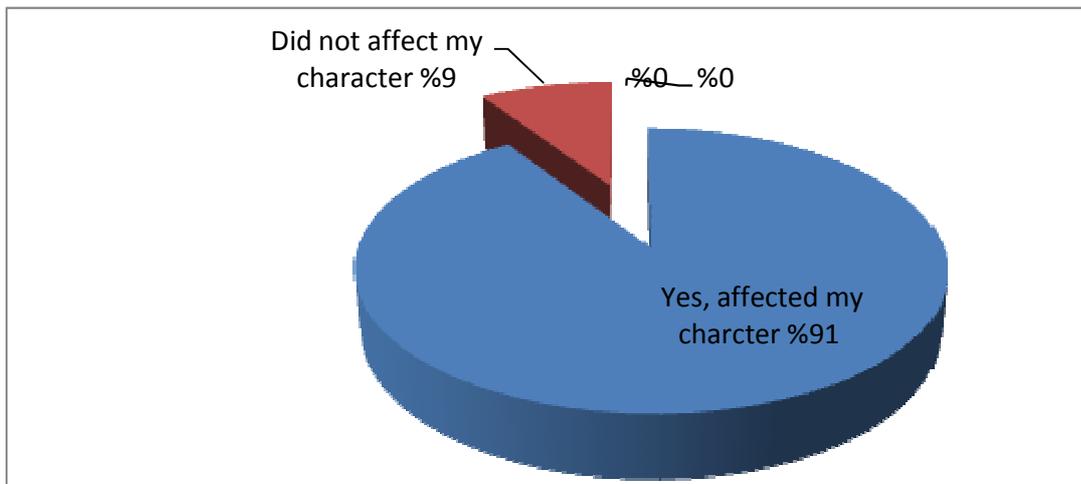
**Figure: Model 11**

**Places of violations of personal freedoms**



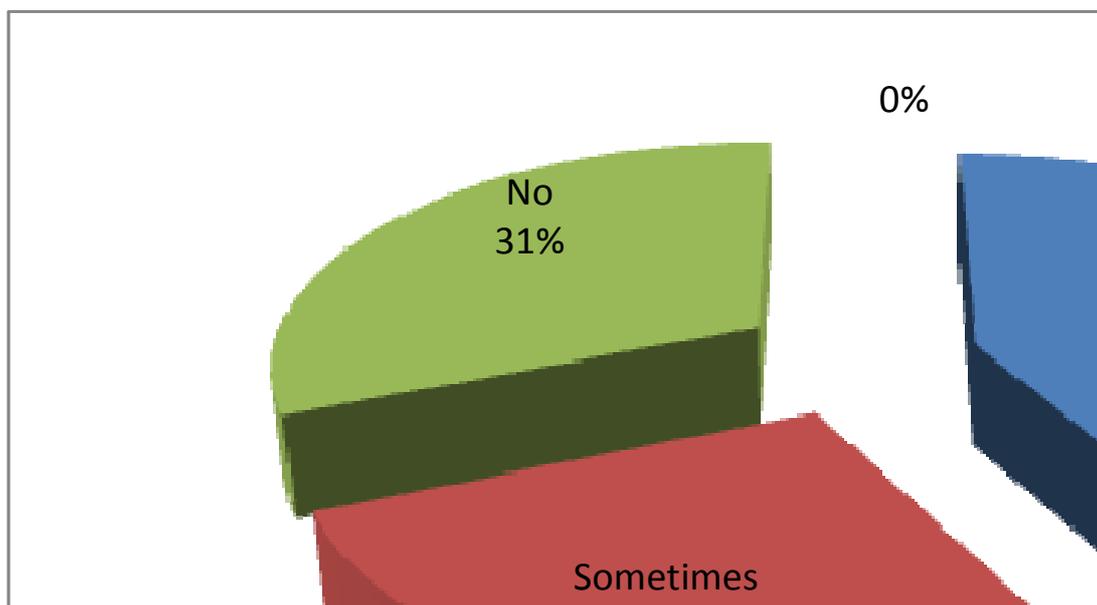
**Figure: Model 12**

**Reaction of participants to violation of their personal freedoms**



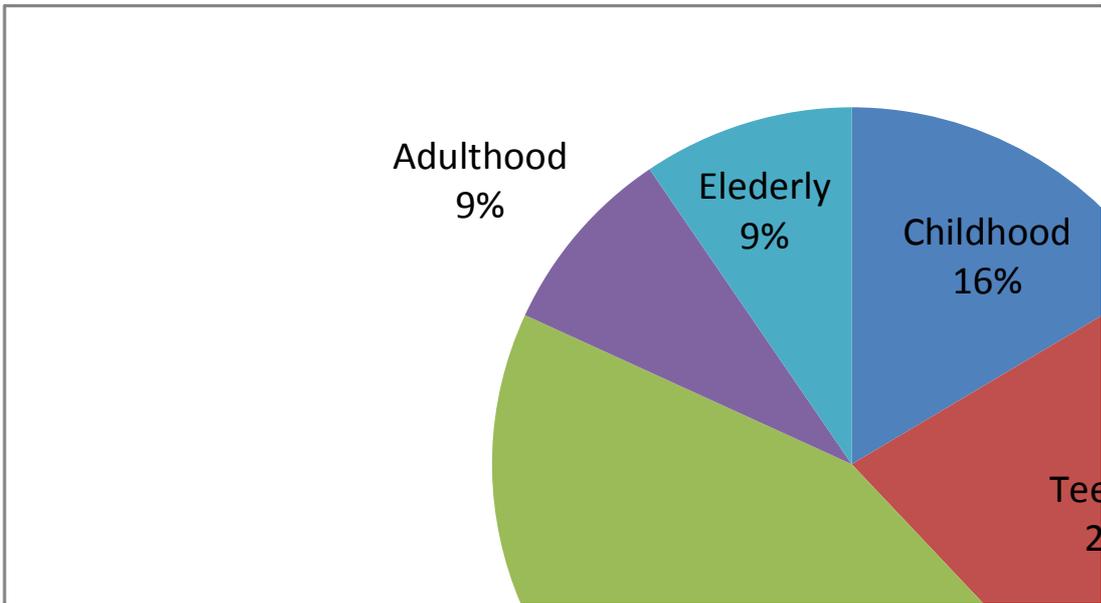
**Figure: Model 13**

**Impact of violation of personal freedoms**



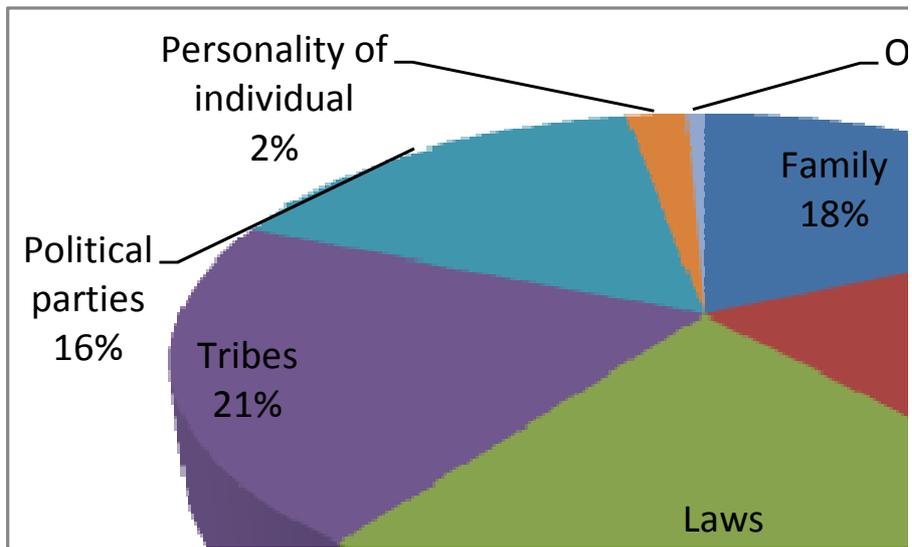
**Figure: Model 14**

**Opinion of participants on violation of their personal freedoms for the sake of protection of other's rights**



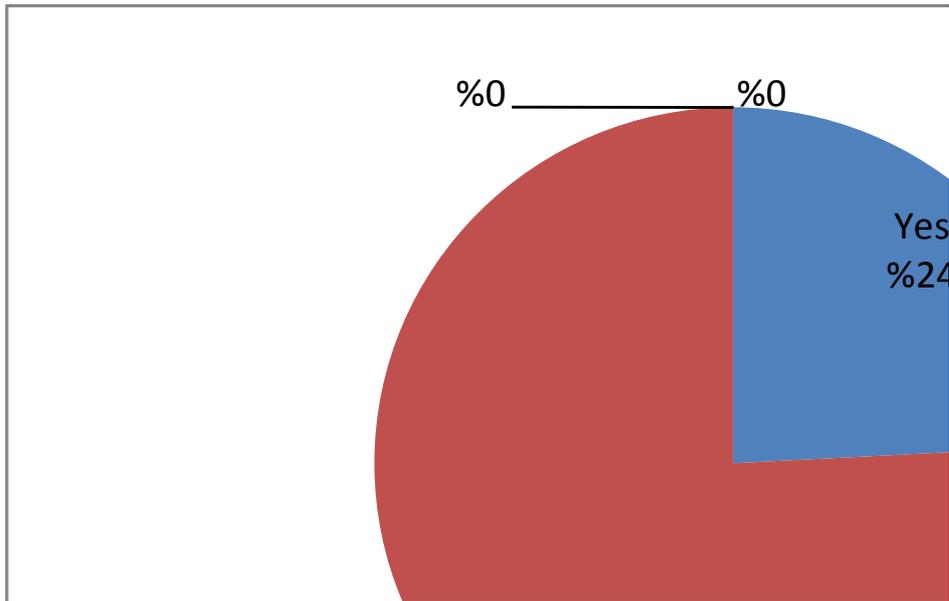
**Figure: Model 15**

**Opinion of participants on violation by age group**



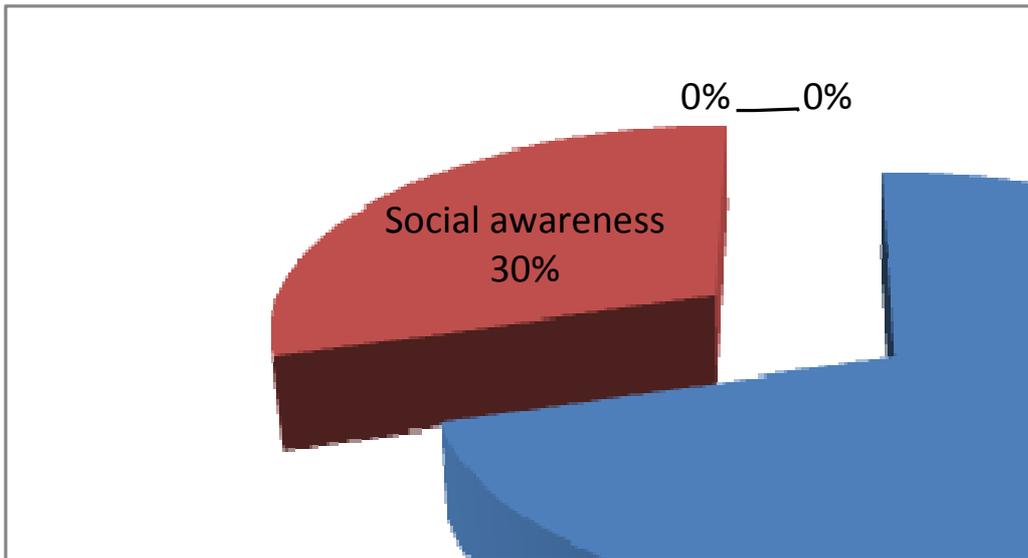
**Figure: Model 16**

**Opinion of participants on main cause of violation of personal freedoms in Iraq**



**Figure: Model 17**

Do the participants have information on national strategies for youth in Iraq?



**Figure: Model 18**

Opinion of participants on necessary guarantees to protect against violation of personal freedoms

## **2. Findings**

### **A. Technological development and personal freedoms**

The development of technology and its universal availability; is an information revolution invading equally all worlds from the first to the third world. This fast development overtakes the social development and creates disharmony and generational gaps. Considering that most of today's youths use technology, and considering the impact of technology on the youths, we can say that digital relations are created more than actual relations. The youths find space in technology to express and promote their thoughts freely and without any restrictions or oppression. Some get obsessed with these technological means for what they offer are not found in their daily lives. The fast changing world of technology brings fast changes to the lives of the youths. The youths try to catch up with other youths in the advanced countries as those countries give opportunities for a meaningful life with freedoms to enjoy. Researches show that teenagers and youths use technology more than any other age group for their abilities to comprehend it. They also show that the youths are not able to abandon technology as it is very important for them. Thus technology creates disharmony between the reality and the youths' desire to have personal freedoms and get rid of social restrictions.

### **B. Youths freedoms and legal protections**

In new democratic societies freedom brings along many unfamiliar practices and actions; some deemed unacceptable by the traditional society such as outlook, appearance and new habits. These are generally considered personal freedoms protected by the Constitution and the law. Yet despite these legal guarantees and protections certain unjust decisions may come out that violate personal rights. One such example is the Council of Ministers decision banning the import of certain clothes and accessories.

**C.** Expansion and spread of armed radical and extremist religious groups in Iraq had negative impact on personal freedoms and their practice by the youths and women. Many studies confirm that these radical movements target youths and women who have different outlook and direction and don't think, eat or drink like them. These radical groups have killed many women and youths under different excuses such as the Emos and similar names.

**D.** There is a big and hidden generational gap in the society influencing the family and the society in Iraq. The main characteristics of this generational gap are played out in the different types of violations of personal freedoms committed against women and the youths.