

Basrah: City of Peace and Nonviolence
The Second Iraqi Nonviolence Forum
and Fourth Conference of the Iraqi Civil Society Solidarity Initiative
Basrah, 20-22 October 2012



The Iraqi Nonviolence Group, “La'Onf,” together with NOVACT, the Iraqi Civil Society Solidarity Initiative (ICSSI), and other Iraqi and international partners will convene the Second Iraqi Nonviolence Forum this year in Basrah, in southern Iraq, on October 20-22. The second day of the Forum will include the Fourth Conference of the Iraqi Civil Society Solidarity Initiative (ICSSI).

More than 200 Iraqis, including peace and nonviolence activists, representatives of Iraqi NGOs, trade union members, members of the media, university professors, authors, and intellectuals are expected to attend the Forum and participate in its working sessions. The Iraqis will be joined by activists from the Middle East, Europe and North America who will share experiences from their societies with the Iraqis while learning about current nonviolence and civil society activities in Iraq.

Building upon our previous Forum held in Shaqlawa, Erbil in 2009, the Second Iraqi Nonviolence Forum will present current information about nonviolence activities in Iraq, how nonviolence ideology and practice is developing, and the prospects for the future growth of a nonviolence movement in Iraq and the neighboring region. Our goals are:

1. To provide strong support for nonviolent strategies to address problems that prevent effective state and community building in Iraq.
2. To recognize the extremely high price the Iraqi people have paid due to the violence caused by foreign occupation and by the regime left in power after the occupation forces withdrew; to encourage peace-building projects and efforts to promote freedom so that this suffering is ended; and to reject violence as a tool for change or resistance.
3. To acknowledge the political crises that Iraq is experiencing, especially the lack of productive dialogue and discussion about how to solve the Iraqi peoples' and society's problems. The Forum encourages all blocks and factions to pursue development and the creation of a better tomorrow for Iraq, by becoming active partners in building structures that promote dialogue, discussion, and cooperation with government authorities and other institutions.
4. To affirm the important role that nonviolent tactics and strategies can play in advancing security, providing vital services, and ending corruption.
5. To defend Iraqi civil society against forces that would limit citizens' rights and freedoms, curtail the freedom of expression, or oppose trade unions and their right to organize.

In order to further these goals, to seek solutions to Iraq's problems, to promote a peaceful gathering, and to defend Iraqis' rights and freedoms, we convene the Second Iraqi Nonviolence Forum in Basrah. We come together to advance the following ethics, values and hopes:

1. The Forum depends upon cooperation and voluntary work; participants reject all lavishness at this event, focusing instead on creating the best possible content and providing simple and basic accommodations, logistics and technical support in order to assure the success of the Forum.
2. Participants in this Forum advocate nonviolence as the most effective strategy for expressing our goals and promoting change and reform.
3. The Forum seeks to contribute to the building of a strong and vital Iraqi civil society that opposes corruption, provides services and assistance to the most people at the lowest cost, and promotes voluntarism and non-profit work.
4. The Forum is a concrete and vital step towards convening the Iraqi Social Forum, in Baghdad, in 2013. The organizing committee of the Iraqi Social Forum will be officially established during the nonviolence forum.
5. The Forum will include, during its second day, works of the 4th ICSSI Conference, including sessions on water resources, trade unions and workers' rights, freedom of expression, sports for peace, children's health and other ICSSI campaigns.

We seek your support for all our work and invite you to register as individuals or organizations to participate in the Second Iraqi Nonviolence Forum. **Internationals who need a visa for Iraq should register within the 10th of September. Fill in the registration form here: <http://www.iraqicivilsociety.org/basra-conference-oct-2012>**

More information on logistics and security conditions in Basra is available at the above address. The Second Iraqi Nonviolence Forum is made possible by voluntary work. Even if you're not coming, please consider providing financial support for the forum. Donate here: https://unponteper.fundfacility.it/index.php?campagna=100&secseg_rid=Contribution%20ICSSI

The organizing committee in Basra is willing to receive your suggestions and answer your questions. Please email in Arabic to forumbasra@gmail.com or in English to icssi.project@gmail.com

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