

ADDRESSING THE ROOT CAUSES OF EXTREMISM THROUGH POLITICAL AND SOCIAL REFORM: PROPOSALS OF IRAQI CIVIL SOCIETY

5 Nov
2014

15h – 17h

Room PHS1C05

Building Paul-Henri Spaak | European Parliament

An open dialogue with Iraqi citizens (3 women and 2 men) from unions, NGOs and grassroots groups struggling for peace, democracy and Human Rights in Iraq and the region.



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IRAQI CIVIL SOCIETY SOLIDARITY INITIATIVE

Introduction:

Mr **Ismaeel Dawood**, advocacy and policy officer for *Un ponte per...* and the *Iraqi Civil Society Solidarity Initiative (ICSSI)*.

Short presentations by:

Mrs **Ilham Al-Jasim**, unionist from Basra, about workers' rights and women in the workplace.

Mrs **Nadia Al-Baghdadi**, grassroots activist from Baghdad, about citizens' campaigns in Iraq and the Iraqi Social Forum.

Mrs **Yanar Mohammed**, activist for women's rights from Baghdad, about the situation in women in Iraq.

Mr **Husam Jejo**, yazidi activist for minorities' rights, about the challenges for Yazidi and other minorities' rights.

Questions and answers and general debate.

To learn more about the current situation in Iraq and the work of Iraqi civil society groups please consult the following websites:

ICSSI (Iraqi Civil Society Solidarity Initiative)

www.iraqicivilsociety.org

Un ponte per...

www.unponteper.it

ABOUT THE SPEAKERS

Mr Ismaeel DAWOOD works for the Italian NGO *Un ponte per...* where he acts as advocacy and policy officer for the *Iraqi Civil Society Solidarity Initiative (ICSSI)*, a program dedicated to supporting and promoting Iraqi civil society actions and proposals for social transformation.

Mrs Ilham AL-JASIM is a member of the **General Federation of Workers and Unions in Iraq (GFWUI)** from Basra (South of Iraq).

GFWUI is a federation of unions founded in 2006 with headquarters in Baghdad, and local branches in Basra, Babil, Salah-al-din, Kerbal and Najaf provinces. It represents workers in public and private sectors: oil, ports, electricity, mechanic, public services, transportation, telecommunications and constructions. It brings together 20 000 workers, 20% of them women.

Mrs Nadia AL-BAGHDADI is a grassroots member of the **Save the Tigris and Iraqi Marshes Campaign** from Baghdad.

Save the Tigris and Iraqi Marshes Campaign is an advocacy campaign launched in March 2012 by a coalition of civil society organizations from Iraq, Turkey and Iran. It links groups and movements concerned with the adverse impacts of dams and other development projects on the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, especially the Ilisu Dam, a project of the Turkish government threatening World Heritage sites on the Tigris River.

Mrs Yanar MOHAMMED is a member of the **Organization of Women's Freedom in Iraq** from Baghdad.

The **Organization of Women's Freedom in Iraq** is a feminist organization aiming to organize public struggles to empower women in the fight against women's oppression in the Iraqi society, to achieve full equality between men and women under an egalitarian secular constitution, and to defend women's and human rights in Iraq.

Mr Husam JEJO is a member of the **Yazidi Solidarity and Fraternity League** from Mosul (North of Iraq).

The **Yazidi Solidarity and Fraternity League** is the main NGO of the Yazidi community in Iraq. It has been working for years for Human Rights, interreligious dialogue and peaceful coexistence. The League is currently carrying a very important work of documentation of the genocide committed against their community at the hands of ISIS.

BACKGROUND

Iraq has returned in the news this summer and the deepening crisis is remobilizing everyone. In this context, the Italian NGO *Un ponte per...* which is working in Iraq since 1991, has coordinated in the past months with many international and Iraqi groups in order to harmonize the advocacy work for Human Rights in Iraq.

A common platform was agreed upon with a joint statement titled “**New Government in Iraq Must Address The Root Causes of Extremism**” demanding for far-reaching political and social reforms which are essential to protect and promote fundamental human rights and freedoms, and ensure the meaningful participation of all members of Iraqi civil society.

We are all convinced that meaningful cultural and political change can only come about through a truly participatory process and is the only way to confront the root causes of extremism in Iraq.

Recommendations and demands were gathered in a briefing document presented at the United Nations in Geneva during the Universal Periodic Review of Iraq at the Human Rights Council, Monday 3 November. The report highlights the severe, on-going human rights violations in Iraq from a civil society perspective.

Iraqis also want to bring these issues to the attention of European Union institutions, and, foremost among them, the European Parliament. **Future European policies towards Iraq must take into account these demands to contribute to a positive change for peace and democracy.**

CONTACTS

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