

**10 Years of Solidarity in Action!  
Acting together, we grow stronger and do more!**

**Iraqi Civil Society Solidarity Initiative Conference for Strategic Planning**

For the first time in its 10-year history, ICSSI convenes in Baghdad.



**31<sup>st</sup> of January – 1<sup>st</sup> of February 2019  
Baghdad, Iraq**

For decades, solidarity with Iraq has been an important issue and has engaged internationals who know and love this country and its people: famous for its culture and history, but also its wars and the brutal sanctions by the international community.

Over the last 10 years internationals and Iraqis have built a platform for solidarity with Iraqi civil society. Their slogan was “solidarity in action” and this is how the Iraqi Civil Society Solidarity Initiative (ICSSI) started. ICSSI has held many conferences, from Rome 2009 to Paris 2010, Erbil 2011, Basra 2012, Oslo 2014, Sulaimaniya 2016 and 2017. At these events, activists from all over the world focused on communication, networking, advocacy, participation, in thematic programs that help support Iraqi civil society for human and environmental rights.

Over these same 10 years, Iraqi civil society has continuously progressed. Iraq has seen many developments: most recently the defeat of Daesh and the return of vast numbers of internally displaced persons to their liberated cities where they must now reconstruct peace and reinvigorate civil society. Popular, nonviolent protests across Iraq (Baghdad 2011 and 2016, Sulaimaniya 2016, and Basra 2018), have succeeded in putting political reform, social justice, ensuring basic services for all, and protection of water resources and the environment, among top priorities for Iraqi politicians. Social movements made it clear that Iraqis deserve better and another Iraq must emerge!

It is time for Baghdad to host a new ICSSI conference, where representatives from local civil society, including the Iraqi Social Forum, Kurdistan Social Forum, and the local social forums in western and southern Iraq, along with internationals coming from countries throughout the world, will come together to reflect on the decade long evolution of ICSSI and the work it has supported.

Together for two days of a public event (Thursday 31 January and Friday 1 February), we will engage in analysis of three important questions: What have been the primary challenges and achievements of Iraqi civil society over the last 10 years? How are civil society actors now rebuilding Iraq? What impact have social movements had on the politics of Iraq? What forms of international solidarity have been most effective? And finally, what kinds of international solidarity are needed to support today's civil society goals?

This reflection and analysis will prepare participants and set the stage for a strategic planning meeting that will also be held in Baghdad following the conference (Saturday and Sunday, 2-3 February 2019) among ICSSI members and partners only, to set 4-year goals and refine our structures of international solidarity.

This is a call for all those involved in international solidarity with Iraq, members of Iraqi social movements and activists, to take part in the discussions of the ICSSI conference by contributing a written paper of approximately 250 words on one of the three topics we will be exploring together:

- 1) What have been the key challenges and achievements of Iraqi civil society over the last 10 years?
- 2) How are civil society actors now rebuilding Iraq? What impact have social movements had on the politics of Iraq?
- 3) What forms of international solidarity have been most effective? And what kinds of international solidarity are now needed to support today's civil society goals?

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**Send your contributions and feedback on the conference call to the email:**

[icssi.project@gmail.com](mailto:icssi.project@gmail.com)

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