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Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development

Joint written statement* submitted by the International Youth and Student Movement for the United Nations, the Women's International Democratic Federation, non-governmental organizations in general consultative status, the International Organization for the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination, the Union of Arab Jurists, the Arab Lawyers Union, the General Arab Women Federation, the International Association of Democratic Lawyers, North-South XXI, the United Towns Agency for North-South Cooperation, the Indian Movement “*Tupaj Amaru*”, the Asian Women Human Rights Council, the Organisation pour la Communication en Afrique et de Promotion de la Coopération Economique Internationale - OCAPROCE International, non-governmental organizations in special consultative status, the International Educational Development, Inc., a non-governmental organization on the roster

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[22 February 2012]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

Violation of women rights in Iraq**

** The BRussels Tribunal, Arab Lawyers Association- UK, Geneva International Centre for Justice (GICJ), Association of Humanitarian Lawyers (AHL), The International League of Iraqi Academics (ILIA), The Iraqi Commission on Human Rights (ICHR), Women Will Association (WWA), Organization for Widows and Orphans (OWO), Ikraam Center for Human Rights, Belgian Peace Movement, Ligue camerounaise des droits de l'homme, Monitoring Net of Human Rights in Iraq (MHRI), Women Solidarity for an Independent and Unified Iraq, Geneva Global Media Centre, International Coalition against War Criminals (ICAWC), Medical Aid for the Third World, Association of Iraqi Diplomats (AID), The African Association of Human Rights (AAHR), Protection of Human Rights Defenders in the Arab World, Moroccan Association for the Right to a Fair Trial, Americans Against the War (France), General Federation of Iraqi Women (GFIW), The International Action Center (IAC), American Worker, Association of Iraqi Intellectuals and Academics, The International Network of Arab Human Rights NGOs, America In Solidarity, Federacion De Mujeres Cubanas, Association of Victims of American Occupation Prisons, International Anti-Occupation Network (IAON), International Lawyers.org, International Society of Iraqi Scientists, The Perdana Global Peace Foundation, Kuala Lumpur Foundation to Criminalise War, Spanish Campaign against the Occupation and for Iraq Sovereignty- CEOSI, Arab Cause Solidarity Committee, Iraq Solidarity Association in Stockholm, El Taller International, World Courts of Women, Center for Development Studies- India, Wariscrime.org, Action Center for Justice, 1% A Peace Army.org, A Bigger Tent.org, Agir contre la guerre (France), American Voices Abroad (Berlin, Germany), American Voices Abroad Military Project (Europe), Anti War Fair, Arizona Christian Peacemakers, Armbands for Peace, Arms Against War, Artists Against the War, Backbone Campaign, Be the Change, Become Active, Bike for Peace (Germany), Bill of Rights Defense Committee, Bird Dogger Org., Children of Iraq Association (UK),Bloomington Peace Action Coalition (IN), Blue State News Only, Boston Mobilization, Bring Democracy Back, Bring Them Home,Butterfly Gardeners Association, Citizens for Accountability on Iraq, California for Democracy, Camp Casey Blog, Camp U.S. Strike for Peace Campaign, Campaign Against Sanctions and Military Intervention in Iran, Canada Watch, Carolina Peace Resource Center (SC), Cartoon Free America, Catalysts of Hope, Central Colorado Coalition on the Iraq War, Chester County Peace Movement (PA), Cindy Sheehan Org., Cities for Peace, Citizens for Legitimate Government, Citizens for Peace & Justice, Human Rights for all-Morocco, Christian Clergy For Impeachment.com, Clothing of the American Mind, Coalition Against Election Fraud, Coalition for Impeachment Now (COIN), Code Pink, the Iraqi Association for Human Rights (IAHR), Al-Basa'er Media Association, Consumers for Peace.org, Dhafir Trial.org, DC Anti-War Network.org, Democracy Action, Democracy for America Meetup (Birmingham, AL), The Democratic Activist, Democracy Rising.org, Democratic Underground, Human Resources (Tbilisi, Georgia), Democratic Renewal, Democrats.com, Earth Day.org, Earth Island Institute, East Cobb Democratic Alliance (Cobb County, GA), Eastern Long Island Democracy for America (NY), ECU Peace and Justice NC, Election Solar Bus, Environmentalists Against War, Envision a New America, Foundation for the Development of Fox Valley Citizens for Peace and Justice (IL), Global Exchange.org, Global Network Against Weapons & Nuclear Power in Space, Global Resistance Network, Gold Star Families for Peace, Grandmothers Against the War, Grandmothers for Peace, Grass Roots Impeachment, Grass Roots Impeachment Movement, Grassroots North shoreWI, Green Delaware, Hawaii CD-01 Impeachment Action Coalition, Historians Against the War, Honk to Impeach, Idriss Stelley Foundation, Impeach Bush Cheney, Independent Progressive Politics Network, Impeach Bush Coalition, Impeach Bush TV.org, Impeachbush-cheney.com, Impeach Central, Impeach for Peace - Marshall, TX, Impeachable Treason, Impeach Duh, Impeachment Sunday, Inform Progressive Virginia, International Socialist Organization, Impeach Bush Cheney Net, Iraq Veterans Against the War, Iraq Veterans Against the War - Kansas City, Justice Through Music, Lake Merritt Neighbours Organized for Peace (Oakland, CA), Latinos for America, Leader of the Free Word - a great screen saver, Liberal Democracy Alliance, Liberal Kids, LIBERTY TREE Foundation for the Democratic Revolution, Los Angeles National Impeachment Centre, Louisiana Activist Network, Marijuana Policy Project, Massachusetts Impeachment Coalition, Men's Project for Peace, Michael Moore Online.org, Michigan Peace Works, Military Families Against the War (UK),

Women in Iraq had previous to the occupation made important advances compared to most countries in the region. Earlier laws ensured education for girls, family rights, and the right to serve in the government. However, present-day Iraq is plagued by insecurity, transforming the situation for women into a national crisis. Assassinations and abductions are rampant. In what was once a secular country, there are now threats to women who drive, or don't cover their hair.¹

Between 1960 and 2003, Iraqi women had successfully gained access to education, health care and employment, and their political and economic participation had significantly advanced. The women and girls of Iraq have borne the biggest brunt of this conflict and resulting insecurity after the 2003 invasion. "For Iraqi women, who enjoyed some of the

Military Free Zone, Stop the War Coalition (Bedford, UK), Million Musicians March, Mission Not Accomplished, Montgomery County Progressive Alliance (MD), Musicians and Fine Artists for World Peace, Muslims for Peace (Australia), National Lawyers Guild - Chicago chapter, National Lawyers Guild - Detroit & Michigan chapter, Northeast Impeachment Coalition, North Jersey Impeach Group (NJ), Northeast Georgia Peace Corner Group (Helen, GA), Northwest Ohio Peace Coalition, Northwest Progressive Institute (Pacific Northwest US), Not in Our Name.org, Not in Our Name (Aotearoa, New Zealand), Nyack Impeachment Initiative (NJ), Ohio Progressive Action Coalition, One Global Community, Olympia Citizens' Movement to Impeach Bush/Cheney (WA), One Million Reasons, Operation Cease Fire, Operation Impeachment, Orange County Grassroots (CA), Out of Iraq, Out of Iraq Bloggers Caucus, Patrick Henry Democratic Club, Patriotic Pulse, Patriots for Gore, Peace Action, Peace Action Wisconsin, Peace and Accountability, Peace Drum, Peace Majority, Peace Movement Aotearoa (New Zealand), Peace Reso.org, Peninsula Peace and Justice Center (Palo Alto, CA), People's Campaign for the Constitution, People Powered Impeachment, People's Email Network, People's Glorious Five Year Plan, Picnic to Impeach, Pixel4Peace.org, Playing in Traffic, PledgeToImpeach.org, Political Cooperative, Politics and Art, Progressive Action Alliance, Progressive Action Center, Progressive Avenues, Progressive Democrats of America, Progressive Democrats of Hawaii Project Filibuster, Project for the OLD American Century, Refusing to Kill.org, Rescue Our Democracy, Sacramento for Democracy (CA), St Pete for Peace (FL), Sampsonia Way, San Diego for Democracy, School of the Americas Watch, Sheehan for Congress, South Florida Impeachment Coalition, South Mountain Peace Action (Maplewood & South Orange, NJ), Springs Action Alliance (CO), Stop the War Coalition (UK), Students for Impeachment, Students Towards a New Direction (STAND), Summit County Progressive Democrats (OH), The Known UnKnowns, The Politically Incorrect Cabaret, The Rational Response Squad, Think Blue Dems, Time for Accountability, Plataforma Aturem la Guerra (Stop the War Catalonia), Toronto Coalition to Stop the War (Canada), Torture Abolition and Survivors Support Coalition International, True Blue Liberal.org, Trumansburg Impeachment (NY), Truth Empowered, Truthtelling Project, UC Nuclear, Underground Action Alliance, Unitarian Universalist Peace and Justice Group (Nantucket, MA), United Blue USA, United for Veterans (Wayne, MI), United Progressives, Upbeat Defiance, US Peace Memorial, US Tour of Duty: Iraq Veterans and Military Families Demand the Truth, Velvet Revolution, Vet Gulf March, Veteran Intelligence Professionals for Sanity, Veterans for Peace, Chapter 27, Virginia Grassroots Coalition, Voters for Peace, We the People for Peace, We the People Network, We the People Now, We The People United Bangladesh.org, Peace Surge, Peace and Justice Action League of Spokane (WA), Stop the War (UK), U.S. Peace Council, World Can't Wait.org, World Prout Assembly, Komite Internacionalista- Basque, Asociación Paz, Igualdad y Solidaridad Internacional, Arab Cause Solidarity Committee, Iraq Solidarity Association in Stockholm, Málaga, Spain, Stop Fascism Action Network, The Asian Jurists Centre, Association of Human Rights Defenders in Iraq (AHRDI), The African Center for Human Rights (ACHR), Veterans for Peace, Your Declaration of Independence.org, Arab Lawyers Network-UK, Conservative Centre of Environmental & Reserves in Fallujah (CCERF), Willie Nelson Peace Research Institute, Studies Centre for Human Rights and Democracy, The Iraqi Centre for Human Rights, Association internationale des droits de l'homme, NGOs without consultative status, also share the views expressed in this statement.

¹ WomenForWomenInternational: <http://www.womenforwomen.org/global-initiatives-helping-women/assets/files/Iraq-Country-Sheet.pdf>

highest levels of rights protection and social participation in the region before 1991, this has been an enormously bitter pill to swallow."²

Drawing on stereotypes regarding the position of women in Arab and Muslim societies, USA and British officials have defended the occupation regime in Iraq by suggesting its positive effects for women's emancipation. These claims not only ignored the considerable advancements in women's education and employment made during the first twenty years of Baathist rule; they also cover up the particularly detrimental impact of US-UN-imposed sanctions on Iraqi women during the 1990s. Similarly, these stereotypes distract attention from the further deterioration of women's rights and access to education and employment under the occupation regime.³

The reports of Women for Women International Iraq program in 2008, and the Oxfam report in 2009: *In Her Own Words: Iraqi women talk about their greatest concerns and challenges* observed a general deterioration for women in Iraq⁴.

Killings

U.S.-led coalition forces showed higher rates of indiscriminate killing of women and children than insurgents, a study has found in 2011.⁵ Hundreds of women have been targeted and killed as professionals or for their public role in Iraq. In the medical profession alone, many have fled or abandoned their work, triggering a brain drain and crippling the health system.⁶

According to the BRussels Tribunal website 341 male and 35 female media professionals were killed since the Iraq invasion.

Security

Over the past several years, women have increasingly been targeted with acts of violence, threats and abduction. Indirectly, continued insecurity has also greatly degraded the quality of women's lives across the country, no matter their religious, economic or cultural identities⁷. Insecurity is also severely restricting women's personal mobility.

² Iraq: Vulnerable Citizens at Risk: <http://www.hrw.org/en/news/2011/02/21/iraq-vulnerable-citizens-risk>

³ International seminar on the situation of Iraqi academics , 2011 Ghent University - Belgium. <http://www.brusselstribunal.org/Seminar/#id=main1&ts=1328222981357&page=1&language=en>

⁴ *In Her Own Words: Iraqi women talk about their greatest concerns and challenges* <http://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/oxfam-in-her-own-words-iraqi-women-survey-08mar2009.pdf>. As compared with 2007 & 2006, more than 40% of women (OXFAM 2009) said their security situation worsened in 2008 & slightly more than 22% said it had remained static compared to both years. 55% had been a victim of violence since 2003; More than 30% had family members who died violently. Some 45% said their income was worse in 2008 compared with 2007 and 2006; Nearly 25% had no daily access to drinking water & half of those who did have daily access to water said it was not potable; 69% said access to water was worse or the same as it was in 2006 & 2007; One-third of respondents had electricity 3 hours or less per day; two-thirds had 6 hours or less; 80% said access to electricity was more difficult or the same as in 2007, 82% said the same in comparison to 2006 and 84% compared to 2003; Nearly half of women said access to quality healthcare was more difficult in 2008 compared with 2006 and 2007.

⁵ Civilian death study rates "dirty war" in Iraq , Reuters, 2011 <http://www.trust.org/alertnet/news/civilian-death-study-rates-dirty-war-in-iraq>

⁶ *Women in war*, ICRC, 2009, <http://www.icrc.org/eng/assets/files/other/iraqi-women-in-war-eng.pdf>

⁷ *In Her Own Words: Iraqi women talk about their greatest concerns and challenges*, 2009. <http://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/oxfam-in-her-own-words-iraqi-women-survey-08mar2009.pdf>

Other top challenges were fear of being harmed by U.S./U.K. soldiers, and fear of being harmed by militia violence. Alarming, 88.8% of respondents expressed a great deal of concern that they or someone living in their households would become a victim of the violence occurring in Iraq; 71.2% of respondents said they did not feel protected by U.S./U.K. soldiers.⁸

While both men and women are kidnapped, the trauma of the abduction for many women does not end with the release. The shame associated with the event is a lasting stigma. Such incidents are probably underreported by families for the same reason.⁹

In spite of reports of a decline in violence in Iraq as a whole, nearly 60% of women surveyed (Oxfam 2009) said that security and safety remained their most pressing concern.¹⁰

In addition Iraqi experts believe that domestic abuse has increased during the years of war and economic hardship since the 2003 U.S.-led invasion.

A World Health Organization has estimated that one in five Iraqi women has reported being a victim of domestic violence, and experts say the rate is much higher.¹¹

Illiteracy

Within two decades, women's status in Iraq was transformed to advanced level compared to the surrounding countries in the region. Illiteracy amongst women dropped from 91% in 1957 to 12% in 1990. During the 1990's, women faculty members in Iraqi universities and research centers made up more than 30% of total faculty members in Iraq. About 67% of all teaching staff in primary, secondary, and high schools in Iraq were women during the eighties.

According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) women illiteracy (after 2003) crawled back to more than 50% in most of Iraqi governates, unemployment among women rose to more than 50%, and real decline in all other related parameters.

Political participation

The fundamentalism of the government under the occupation drastically undermined women rights. Occupation's women 25 % (quota) in the Iraqi Parliament is only symbolic political representation which served to improve the image of the occupation.¹² Only 62

⁸ Women For Women Survey, 2008 <http://www.womenforwomen.org/news-women-for-women/assets/files/IraqReport.03.03.08.pdf>. 86.0% (WomenForWomen 2008) said they are not able to walk down the street as they please; 68.3% of women are not able to drive a car; 48.6% said that they are not able to work outside the home; When asked about the biggest challenges to their personal mobility, 46.8% of respondents named unsafe streets as the top challenge.

⁹ ICRC, Women in war, 2009 <http://www.icrc.org/eng/assets/files/other/iraq-women-in-war-eng.pdf>

¹⁰ In Her Own Words: Iraqi women talk about their greatest concerns and challenges, 2009 <http://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/oxfam-in-her-own-words-iraqi-women-survey-08mar2009.pdf>

¹¹ Iraqi Women Abused Under Unchanging Laws, Bushra Juhi, 2011 http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/10/11/iraqi-women-abused_n_1005382.html

¹² Report on Human Rights in Iraq, UNAMI, 2010 http://www.uniraq.org/documents/UNAMI_HR%20Report_English_FINAL_1Aug11.pdf

judges operating in Iraq are women, out of a total of 1200.¹³ Women should have the right of equal access and opportunities in decision making positions.

Detention

Women have been raped in Iraqi detention centers, according to various reports.¹⁴ UN Assistance Mission for Iraq reported that its staff had interviewed several women and girls detained at the Women's Prison of al-Kadhimiya in Baghdad who said that they had been beaten, raped or otherwise sexually abused in police stations.¹⁵

The General Secretary of the Union of Political Prisoners and Detainees in Iraq declared (2010) that the US occupation in Iraq relies on systematic rape, torture, and sadistic treatment of Iraqi women prisoners in its prison camps. Their clothing is removed and they are deprived of food and water for days in order to break their will. Teams from the International Red Cross and groups operating under the umbrella of the United Nations have been prevented from visiting the detention centers and learning about what goes on there. Rarely do these organizations demand to visit prisons and detention centers because of the lack of security and the fact that the sectarian militias control the facilities.¹⁶

In prison, pregnant women receive limited or inadequate ante- and post-natal care— and the food for such women often falls below necessary standards of nutrition. There are poor personal hygiene levels maintained for persons in detention. Specific hygiene needs of women are not met (such as provision of sanitary towels, etc).¹⁷

Women poverty in Iraq post 2003

23 percent of oil-rich Iraq's estimated 30 million people, around 7 million, live under the poverty line and more than half are women¹⁸.

Drawing on a comprehensive statistical survey, Dr. Souad Al Azzawi showed that the deteriorating security situation drove Iraqi women out of work. At least 85% of educated women are unemployed.¹⁹

A 2011 World Bank report titled: “Confronting Poverty in Iraq”, show that only about 11 % of adult women are employed, compared to about two-thirds of adult men. Main reason

¹³ Consequences of a gender-blind approach to post-conflict reconstruction in Iraq , 2009, University of Bradford

<http://insaniraq.org/Gender%20&%20Post%20conflict%20reconstruction%20in%20Iraq.pdf>

¹⁴ According to the figures provided by the MoI, MoD, MoLSA, and the MoJ, the total number of detainees, security internees and sentenced prisoners held by the Iraqi authorities increased from 28,956 at the end of December 2009 to 35,653 (34,220 adults and 1,433 juveniles; while 757 are female) by the end December 2010.

¹⁵ Amnesty International, Iraq: Civilians Under Fire ,2010

<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/MDE14/002/2010/en/c9dc5d8d-95fa-46e4-8671-cd9b99d0378c/mde140022010en.pdf>

¹⁶ US Practicing Systematic Rape, Torture, Sadism Against Women in Iraqi Prison, 2010 <http://couchtripper.com/rapedbysoldiers/?tag=prison>

¹⁷ UNAMI, 2010

http://www.uniraq.org/documents/UNAMI_HR%20Report_English_FINAL_1Aug11.pdf?bcsi_scan_bc7119cf5383d5a3=0&bcsi_scan_filename=UNAMI_HR%20Report_English_FINAL_1Aug11.pdf

¹⁸ The daily struggle of Iraq's widows of war, 2011 <http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/11/09/us-iraq-widows-idUSTRE7A841T20111109>

¹⁹ Women under occupation, Dr. Souad Al-Azzawi, 2007 <http://www.brussellstribunal.org/pdf/WomenUnderOccupation.pdf>

stated behind these findings are the general security situation as well as country wide unemployment for both males and females. Also the corruption has the effects on it²⁰

In 2010, International Organisation for Migration (IOM) monitors concluded that one out of every eight displaced families is headed by women, 71% of whom are able to work yet cannot find employment and thus cannot effectively provide for their families. In addition, women, especially single mothers, face social and cultural stigmas that place them at an extreme disadvantage when attempting to secure employment or additional educational opportunities.^{21,22,23}

Iraq has run out of money to pay for widows' benefits, farm crops and other programs for the poor, the parliament leader told lawmakers on 21 November 2010.^{24,25}

33 % of women (OXFAM 2009) had received no humanitarian assistance since 2003; 76 % of widows did not receive a pension; 52 % were unemployed; 55 % had been displaced since 2003; and 55 % had been subjected to violence.²⁶

When money is short, women tend to save on education and health care. Up to 47% of the children in households headed by women do not attend school. Some needed the boys' meagre earnings to feed the family.²⁷

In November 2010, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) reported that 2,750,000 IDPs lived in Iraq, out of which 1,660,000 people had been displaced since 2006.²⁸ More than 82 percent of these displaced people are women and children under the age of 12 (IRCS, June 2008).²⁹

Widows

Years of conflict in Iraq have left the country with more than one million war widows and a shortage of young unmarried men - pressures that may be bringing about the return of

²⁰ Confronting poverty in Iraq http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTMENA/Resources/Confronting_Poverty_In_Iraq_G_Chapter_5_part2.pdf

²¹ IOM Review of Displacement and Return in Iraq, February 2011. <http://www.iauiraq.org/documents/1308/librar.pdf>

²² This confirms the findings of Women for Women International 2008 survey: when women were asked specifically about their own access to employment, 45.3% of women described their access to opportunities as poor and 26.6% said they have no opportunities at all. <http://www.womenforwomen.org/news-women-for-women/assets/files/IraqReport.03.03.08.pdf>

²³ This was underlined during the ICRC survey, where the average income among vulnerable women-headed households interviewed was below 150,000 IQD per month (\$125) mainly sourced from relatives and charity. This is less than half the estimated minimum household expenses. Iraq: women in war, The ICRC's Field Newsletter, 05-03-2009, <http://www.icrc.org/eng>

²⁴ Welfare Funding Runs Out in Iraq, Lara Jakes, 2010, <http://www.commondreams.org/headline/2010/11/21-0>

²⁵ Only 60% of the 4 million people who depend on food assistance have access to rations from the Public Distribution System (PDS), down from 96% in 2004 <http://www.informationclearinghouse.info/article18091.htm>

²⁶ Mission accomplished? Not for the Iraqi people , Hadani Ditmars, 2010, <http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=%2Fc%2Fa%2F2010%2F06%2F27%2FIN5D1E116Q.DTL#ixzz0yUDbF2Va>

²⁷ TheICRCWomenSurveyAugust 2011. <http://www.icrc.org/eng/assets/files/2011/iraq-women-survey-2011-08-eng.pdf>

²⁸ IDMC, 2011, [http://www.internal-displacement.org/idmc/website/countries.nsf/\(httpEnvelopes\)/B758527B58E48407C1257914002A629D?OpenDocument](http://www.internal-displacement.org/idmc/website/countries.nsf/(httpEnvelopes)/B758527B58E48407C1257914002A629D?OpenDocument)

²⁹ ICRC, 2008, [http://www.internal--displacement.org/idmc/website/countries.nsf/\(httpEnvelopes\)/B6C0B024031DFA0F802570B8005A74D6?OpenDocument](http://www.internal--displacement.org/idmc/website/countries.nsf/(httpEnvelopes)/B6C0B024031DFA0F802570B8005A74D6?OpenDocument)

polygamy.³⁰ The humanitarian group Relief International estimates there may be 1.5 million widows, nearly 10 percent of the female population.

In accordance with Iraqi tradition, when a woman loses her husband, she moves back to her father's or her in-law's household. Many women find their relatives, if still alive, simply too poor to provide for them.

Only one-sixth of Iraqi widows receive federal aid, amounting to between \$34 and \$81 a month. In order to receive such benefits a widow must be well-connected or enter into a "temporary marriage" based on sex with one of the bureaucrats who distribute the funds. Even then, this paltry amount does not come close to covering a family's needs, so many widows are forced to work as servants, beg, or ask their families for help.³¹³²

During Saddam's reign, widows were paid a monthly benefit and were given land and a car, which helped to placate many. He also rewarded members of the military who married widows. Those benefits stopped when he was toppled.³³

Only 10% received a widow's pension and only 25% obtained the compensation for "spouse killed by terrorism"³⁴.

Sex exploitation

According to al-Azzawi (an Iraqi female University professor), the lack of work permits, qualifications and opportunities "leads some women to prostitution in order to feed their children and their families." In other cases, the sheer lack of protection faced by some women push them into prostitution. Problems in such cases include threats of kidnapping issued against women should they not accept to prostitute themselves. These threats are issued especially against women whose husbands are dead or missing. "The women of Iraq live in a very fragile situation as a result of the American occupation's crimes," al-Azzawi said.³⁵

According to a report³⁶ released by the London-based Social Change Through Education in the Middle East, 5,000 women and girls have been trafficked for sexual exploitation. Traffickers tend to target the youngest girls and women, for whom they can get the highest prices. "The neglect of authorities to deal with this problem effectively had fostered a state of impunity in which crimes against women are neglected and offenders go unpunished," it says.

Wars, sanctions, poverty, the manipulation of the poor and fear have led to an increase in the numbers of women and children being trafficked. Moreover, the wars in Iraq have created an environment where this abuse may thrive.

³⁰ Iraq toys with polygamy as solution for war widows, By RoulaAyoubi, 2011, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-12266986>

³¹ Iraqi Widows Organization: Rebuilding and Hope, Moving From Silent Victims of War Toward Economic <http://imow.org/economica/stories/viewStory?storyId=3659>

³² Factsheets: http://www.iauiraq.org/documents/1149/Violence%20against%20women%20Factsheet_Final.pdf

³³ The daily struggle of Iraq's widows of war, Reuters, 2011 <http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/11/09/us-iraq-widows-idUSTRE7A841T20111109>

³⁴ ICRC Women in War, 2009 <http://www.icrc.org/eng/assets/files/other/iraq-women-in-war-eng.pdf>

³⁵ Dr. Souad N. Al-Azzawi, 2007 <http://www.brussellstribunal.org/pdf/WomenUnderOccupation.pdf>

³⁶ Karamatuna – An Investigation into the Sex Trafficking of Iraqi Women and Girls <http://www.scribd.com/doc/72270822/5/Women-in-Iraq-Human-Rights-and-Status-1986-2003>

The NGOs signatories to this statement call on the United Nations in general and the Human Rights Council in particular to:

- Ensure that all human rights violations in Iraq during the sanction and the invasion and occupation be investigated by an international independent body.
 - All measures must be taken to end the current state of impunity, both within Iraq, and with regard to the culpability and responsibilities of the occupying powers in particular.
 - Appoint a UN Special Rapporteur for the Human Rights situation in Iraq.
 - Request the High Commissioner to present to the Council a detailed report on the Human Rights violations in Iraq since 2003 according to UNAMI and the civil society reports.
 - Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences to focus on the situation of Iraqi women in her reports.
-