

Thank you Mr. President!

The protection of minorities and all refugees should to be strengthened with a comprehensive mechanism to provide assistance to returning population according to a national plan. All the citizens of Iraq should get a chance to participate in the next elections in a more safe, fair and transparent manner, free of violence or intimidation. Legislative and practical protection of human rights defenders need to be improved. While Iraqi refugees who have fled to many countries are in need of assistance, the Iranian refugees in Kurdistan often lack proper status and physically are not safe. Human rights and basic economic assistance have to be continuously improved.

An effective and inclusive process to follow upon UPR recommendations as accepted in Para 81 Item 132 contributes to these goals. This in itself increases the protection of the rights of refugees and ethnic and religious minorities, as well as women, human rights defenders, and journalists. A political culture free of violence against citizens and valuable activists of the self-organizing civil society will allow for more democracy and a greater realization of the rights of both Covenants of Human Rights.

A National Human Rights Institution as accepted in Para 81 Item 10 to 15 will be part of the follow-up process and provide human rights education. The ratification of the Optional Protocols to the ICCPR and the ICESCR will contribute to this process of raising awareness and aligning national law and practice to Iraq's voluntary but binding international commitments.

Iraq is faced with many challenges in the human rights field, and is not yet internally at peace. It did not favor the abolition or even the reintroduction of a de facto moratorium on the death penalty. Experience has shown execution as a punishment to be ineffective in terms of general prevention, and individually often leads to a cycle of violence. The sentences already pronounced can easily be commuted to life imprisonment. Südwind considers this an enhancement of the efforts to improve the security situation accepted in Para 81 Item 117.

Thank you.