



Security Council

Distr.: General
13 November 2013

Original: English

First report of the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraph 6 of resolution 2110 (2013)

I. Introduction

1. In paragraph 6 of its resolution 2110 (2013), the Security Council requested me to report every four months on the progress made towards the fulfilment of the responsibilities of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI). The current report is the first submitted pursuant to that resolution. It covers key political and security developments related to Iraq, and provides an update on the activities of the United Nations in Iraq since the issuance of my report dated 11 July 2013 (S/2013/408 and Corr.1).

II. Summary of key political developments pertaining to Iraq

A. Internal developments

2. During the reporting period, Iraq faced serious challenges in maintaining political stability in a deteriorating security situation. The political environment was dominated by preparations for the national parliamentary elections to be held in 2014, in particular negotiations to reach a compromise on amending the General Elections Law. Recent national reconciliation initiatives brought a majority of political blocs together — a glimmer of hope after months of tension.

3. The security situation continued to worsen, with almost daily attacks by terrorist and armed groups against civilians and the Iraqi security forces. Along with rising casualty figures, forced displacement on a sectarian and ethnic basis has re-emerged in several governorates. The Government of Iraq launched a large-scale security operation on 1 August against terrorist and armed groups, focusing on the areas surrounding Baghdad, as well as Anbar, Ninewa, Salah al-Din and Diyala governorates. However, attacks continued unabated.

4. Political leaders made efforts to reinforce national unity. On 9 September, the Vice-President, Khudair al-Khuzai, the Prime Minister, Nuri al-Maliki, and the Speaker of the Council of Representatives, Osama al-Nujaifi, along with heads of political blocs, held a meeting to announce a unified position on the situation in the Syrian Arab Republic. The statement by the three presidencies contained eight points. Four points were related to the Syrian Arab Republic, including the endorsement of the Government of Iraq's second road map for peace in that country.



The remaining four points dealt with the need for actors in Iraq to uphold dialogue, denounce sectarianism, and confront terrorism.

5. On 19 September, the Vice-President convened the National Conference for Social Peace, which brought together the Prime Minister, the Speaker of the Council of Representatives, heads of political blocs, and tribal leaders, as well as representatives of civil society and international organizations, including UNAMI. The Conference launched the Social Peace Initiative, a national dialogue and reform process, and resulted in the signing of a National Code of Honour, a set of principles for this purpose. The Minister of State for Women's Affairs was the only female signatory to the National Code of Honour. The leader of the bloc Al-Iraqiya, Iyad Allawi, the Deputy Prime Minister, Saleh al-Mutlaq, and representatives of the Sadrist Trend did not attend.

6. On 4 November, after prolonged discussions, the Council of Representatives endorsed a new law which replaces the law on elections to the Council of Representatives (No. 16 of 2005). Under the new law, the Council will have a total of 328 seats, three more than the current number. Of the 328 seats, 320 will be allocated to the governorates with each of them constituting a separate constituency, while the number of seats reserved for the minorities — eight seats — remains unchanged. The modified Sainte-Laguë seat allocation method was adopted. On the same day, the Presidency of the Republic issued a decree stipulating that the elections should be held on 30 April 2014. While agreement on expanding minority representation proved to be difficult, my Special Representative supported the negotiations between the political blocs, which were held in a spirit of compromise.

7. Against the backdrop of prolonged parliamentary deliberations on the electoral law, the Independent High Electoral Commission has started planning and preparing for the elections. The Council of Ministers approved the use by the Commission of advanced funds from the electoral budget, including an allocation of 35 billion Iraqi dinars on 24 September and another, of ID120 billion, on 8 October. On 23 October, the Commission started receiving accreditation applications from political entities. In addition, technical and logistical preparations are at an advanced stage for the voter registration update that is scheduled to take place from 10 November to 5 December. Likewise, the Commission finalized the required electoral regulations and procedures for the conduct of the voter registration update and for the accreditation of political entities, coalitions, domestic observers and agents of political entities.

8. On 26 August, the Federal Supreme Court invalidated the law on the mandate of the three presidencies, thus eliminating the term limits for the Speaker of the Council of Representatives and the Prime Minister. The Council of Representatives had adopted the law in January 2013. On the same day, the Court ruled that paragraphs 1 and 2 of article 23 of the law on the governorate, district and subdistrict council elections, pertaining to Kirkuk, contradicted the constitutional provisions of non-discrimination among Iraqis. Nevertheless, the need for a special law for the governorate council elections in Kirkuk remains. On 4 November, the Council of Representatives undertook the first reading of the draft law on the governorate council elections in Kirkuk. On 16 September, the Federal Supreme Court invalidated the framework law of the Higher Judicial Council, a supreme administrative body of the Iraqi judiciary. As a result, Judge Medhat al-Mahmoud was reinstated to the post of head of the Higher Judicial Council, a position he held from 2005 to 2012. He continues to serve as President of the Federal Supreme Court.

9. Protests continued in Anbar, Ninewa, Salah al-Din, Kirkuk and Diyala governorates in the form of “unified Friday prayers”. Compared to the past reporting period, the protests assumed a lower profile, owing in part to increased attention to the protestors’ demands by newly elected local administrations. Indeed, the Anbar Governorate Council elected Sabah Karhout, a member of the Arab Iraqiya party, as its Chair, and Ahmed Khalaf al-Dulaimi, a member of the Muttahidoun party, as Governor. In Ninewa, the Governorate Council re-elected Atheel al-Nujaifi, a known supporter of the protestors and brother of the Speaker of the Council of Representatives, as Governor. On 5 October, dialogue between the Government and the protestors resumed following a meeting between the Prime Minister and the Governor of Anbar, who was nominated by the demonstrators to represent their interests. While the meeting was described as positive and fruitful by the Prime Minister’s office, no progress has been announced to date in addressing the demonstrators’ demands.

10. On 31 August, thousands of protesters gathered in 14 governorates throughout Iraq to demonstrate against what they termed the “lavish” retirement benefits of parliamentary representatives and government officials, while also airing long-standing grievances about widespread corruption and the poor state of public services. As a response, on 3 September, the Council of Ministers endorsed the draft national unified pensions law. The Council of Representatives has started considering the draft law. On 23 October, the Federal Supreme Court ruled as unconstitutional articles 3 and 4 (concerning the rights and privileges of the leadership and the members of the Council) of the law on the Council of Representatives as far as matters related to their pensions are concerned. Nevertheless, other protests against pension benefits were held on 5 and 26 October throughout Iraq.

11. The parliamentary elections in the Kurdistan Region were held on 21 September. Over 6,300 polling stations opened on schedule for 2.65 million registered voters and conditional voting in prisons and hospitals. Advance special voting by security forces was conducted on 19 September, when 372 polling stations for more than 150,000 military, police and security personnel opened on time. Voter turnout reached 73.9 per cent for regular voting and 93.9 per cent for special voting. Observer reports were mainly positive, highlighting a smooth and orderly polling process as well as the professionalism of the Independent High Electoral Commission. On 2 October, the Commission announced the final election results: the Kurdistan Democratic Party won 38 seats, the Gorran Movement 24 seats, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) 18 seats, the Kurdistan Islamic Union 10 seats, and the Kurdistan Islamic Group 6 seats. Pursuant to the quota system, 11 seats were distributed among Turkmen, Christian and Armenian minorities. Women gained 34 out of 111 seats. Following the announcement of the final results, the Electoral Judicial Panel adjudicated and rejected a total of 60 appeals.

12. At the same time, preparations for the governorate council elections in Kurdistan Region have stalled. The Independent High Electoral Commission extended the deadline for nomination of candidates three times, significantly affecting its operational timeline. While a number of political parties were late in submitting their lists, some, including PUK, failed to do so. On 6 October, the Commission informed the Kurdistan Regional Government that it is no longer in a position to conduct the elections as scheduled on 21 November. The Commission

also recommended not holding the governorate council elections before the national parliamentary elections.

B. Regional and international developments

13. The conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic continued to adversely affect the humanitarian, security and political situation in Iraq. On 5 September, the Government of Iraq presented its second road map for peace in the Syrian Arab Republic, based on an initiative discussed at the Summit of the League of Arab States held in Baghdad in March 2012. The nine-point road map called for an immediate and comprehensive ceasefire, ceasing all support to both sides of the conflict, the withdrawal of foreign fighters from Syrian territory, support for the continuation of any United Nations investigation into chemical weapons attacks, ceasing all foreign intervention, establishment of an Arab fund to facilitate the return of Syrian refugees, holding bilateral talks between the Government and opposition under United Nations supervision, reaching an agreement on a mechanism to establish an interim government in the Syrian Arab Republic, and holding national elections to form a new government. In September, the Speaker of the Council of Representatives visited Ankara and Tehran to introduce the Government of Iraq's road map.

14. On 4 September, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Hoshiyar Zebari, participated in a ministerial-level conference in Geneva organized by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) for the neighbouring countries hosting Syrian refugees. He stated that Iraq needed assistance from donor countries and humanitarian partners to address the issue of Syrian refugees and called for greater regional efforts to find a sustainable political solution to the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic. On 30 September, the Minister also participated in the high-level UNHCR meeting in Geneva on the Syrian humanitarian crisis. As part of a regional tour, the Joint Special Representative of the United Nations and the League of Arab States for Syria, Lakhdar Brahimi, visited Iraq on 21 October and met with the Prime Minister, the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Deputy Prime Minister for Energy Affairs, Hussein al-Shahrastani, to discuss preparations for the second Geneva conference.

15. Relations between Iraq and Kuwait continued to improve during the reporting period. On 23 August, the Council of Representatives ratified the agreement of 29 April 2012 between Iraq and Kuwait on navigation and joint management of the Khor Abdallah waterway. On 6 October and from 26 to 31 October, Iraqi and Kuwaiti officials met in Kuwait to prepare for the next joint ministerial committee meeting, scheduled for December in Kuwait, and to discuss bilateral issues, including the implementation of the agreement on Khor Abdallah and the activation of the bilateral technical commission for maintaining the physical representation of the boundary between the two countries. On 22 October, the Government of Iraq approved the opening of two Kuwaiti consulates, in Erbil and Basra.

16. During the reporting period, relations between Iraq and Turkey improved. On 22 October, the Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the Turkish Parliament met with senior Iraqi officials in Baghdad. He also delivered an invitation from the Prime Minister, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, to the Prime Minister of Iraq to visit Ankara. On 24 and 25 October, the Minister for Foreign Affairs,

Hoshyar Zebari, met with senior Turkish officials in Ankara. On 9 September, the Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK) had announced the suspension of its withdrawal from Turkey into Iraqi territory. On 10 October, the Turkish Parliament approved a motion to extend for one year the authorization for the Turkish armed forces to carry out cross-border operations and interventions "with the aim of getting rid of the terrorist threat and attacks from northern Iraq" against Turkey.

17. On 26 September, the Council of Representatives ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, signed by the Government on 19 August 2008.

III. Update on the activities of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq and the United Nations country team

A. Political activities

18. My Special Representative continued to advocate for progress on political and security issues, including upcoming national parliamentary elections, reconciliation initiatives, the impact of the Syrian crisis and countering violence and terrorism.

19. Since assuming his responsibilities on 25 September, my Special Representative has had a series of meetings with Iraqi political leaders. On 26 September, he met with the Prime Minister to discuss the political situation in the country, national reconciliation, including the role of UNAMI in supporting national dialogue, as well as the delivery of basic services. On 29 September, my Special Representative held meetings with the Speaker of the Council of Representatives and the heads of the National Alliance, Kurdistan Alliance and Iraqiya political blocs to facilitate an agreement on amending the General Elections Law. On 5 and 6 October, he visited the Kurdistan Region where he met with the President of the Kurdistan Region, Massoud Barzani, the Prime Minister of the Kurdistan Regional Government, Nechirvan Barzani, and other officials. He urged all parties to reach a compromise as soon as possible and ensure adherence to the constitutionally mandated electoral time frame.

20. During the reporting period, UNAMI continued to encourage constructive dialogue between the Government and demonstrators in the western governorates, reiterating the need to address the demands of the protesters, and stressing its readiness to play a facilitating role. In this regard, UNAMI has been in contact with the office of the Deputy Prime Minister, Hussein al-Shahristani, who heads the interministerial committee overseeing the release of unlawfully held detainees.

21. On 24 and 25 July and 12 September, my Deputy Special Representative for Political Affairs held several meetings with political leaders, members of the Independent High Electoral Commission, and the diplomatic community in the Kurdistan Region to discuss the Region's parliamentary and governorate council elections. He highlighted the importance of holding timely elections and called on political parties in the Kurdistan Region to fully cooperate with the Commission, to avoid further delays in the electoral process.

22. On 17 July, as part of the UNAMI commitment to support women's political participation in accordance with Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), my Deputy Special Representative for Political Affairs met with women parliamentarians from various blocs and members of the Women for Lasting Peace

Initiative, at a meeting organized by UN-Women and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Subsequent advocacy led to the inclusion of language on advancing women's socioeconomic rights in the document related to the Social Peace Initiative.

23. On 18 and 19 August, the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs visited Baghdad and met with senior officials, including the Prime Minister, the Speaker of the Council of Representatives, the Deputy Prime Minister, Saleh al-Mutlaq, the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the head of the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq, Ammar al-Hakim. While the primary objective of his visit was to discuss the situation in the Syrian Arab Republic, he took the opportunity to raise the political and security situation, the upcoming national parliamentary elections, ways to build momentum towards national reconciliation, and other regional developments.

B. Electoral assistance

24. During the reporting period, United Nations electoral assistance activities focused on the preparations for the parliamentary elections in the Kurdistan Region, as well as the now postponed governorate council elections there. UNAMI continued to lead the United Nations integrated electoral assistance team in supporting the Independent High Electoral Commission in the finalization of the legal and regulatory framework, operational plans and procedures and its external relations and communication strategies. UNAMI also provided technical advice to the Council of Representatives' legal affairs committee regarding amendments to the law on elections to the Council of Representatives.

25. As the Commission explores the feasibility of adopting new technologies for conducting voter registration and elections, UNAMI provides technical advice. UNAMI has highlighted the importance of careful planning and testing, awareness-raising, and political consensus in implementing the planned electronic voter registration project, including the pilot component on voter biometric data collection that is planned to commence by the first quarter of 2014. UNAMI also recommended the inclusion of additional election integrity measures which pertain to processes at the intake and audit centres and polling regulations and procedures.

C. Human rights developments and activities

26. Violence and acts of terrorism have increased in Iraq to levels not seen since 2008. According to figures released by UNAMI, more than 3,000 civilians were killed and another 7,000 were injured from acts during the reporting period. Scores of coordinated attacks were carried out, mostly in Baghdad, Anbar, Salah al-Din, Ninewa, Kirkuk and Diyala governorates, targeting areas where civilians gather, including cafes, restaurants, parks, playgrounds, mosques and markets, and even funerals.

27. UNAMI has monitored prisons and places of detention under the responsibility of the Ministry of Justice, which is implementing reforms aimed at improving the conditions of prisons and detention centres. In many prisons, UNAMI continued to observe overcrowding and lack of adequate health services. UNAMI also noted a significant number of cases of prolonged detention owing to lengthy trial or appeal

procedures and a lack of special programmes for female detainees and prisoners to ensure their reintegration into society after release.

28. UNAMI has not yet been granted access to detention centres under the authority of the Ministry of the Interior. UNAMI nevertheless received reports of abuse, mistreatment and, at times, torture of many detainees and prisoners in those facilities prior to charge and transfer to facilities under the authority of the Ministry of Justice, in particular with regard to persons detained under the Anti-Terrorism Law (No. 13 of 2005).

29. Weaknesses in the judicial system and the administration of justice are of concern. UNAMI has recorded a large number of cases where courts relied on the confessions or evidence of secret informants to support convictions, even when accused persons claimed that the confessions were obtained through coercion or torture. UNAMI remains active in working with the Government of Iraq to address problems confronting the administration of justice. UNAMI has made recommendations to the Ministry of Justice on improving conditions of detention in prisons under its jurisdiction and on ways to enhance respect for due process. UNAMI advocated reforming the Anti-Terrorism Law, in particular the provision that currently permits indefinite detention of persons suspected of committing acts of terrorism without charge or trial. UNAMI also conducted several workshops, training sessions and seminars for officials engaged in the administration of justice to ensure compliance with due process, fair trial standards and other rights guaranteed by the Constitution and international law binding on Iraq.

30. Iraq continues to implement the death penalty for serious crimes, particularly those relating to terrorism. Eighty-seven individuals, including one Egyptian national and one woman, were executed between 5 August and 9 October, after being convicted under article 4 of the Anti-Terrorism Law and criminal charges. The Ministry of Justice has repeatedly stated that Iraq will continue to carry out executions. On 12 August, the Ministry of Justice announced that it had drafted amendments to the criminal procedure code to ensure that no terrorist would escape implementation of the death penalty.

31. UNAMI received reports of attacks and threats of violence against ethnic and religious groups. As a result, 160 Sunni families from Basra and Dhi Qar governorates moved to Salah al-Din and Anbar governorates, and 250 Shabak families were displaced from Mosul to the districts of Basheqa, Bartela and Hamdaniya in the south-east of Ninewa Governorate. Violence in the mixed districts of Diyala Governorate has led to the displacement of 250 Sunni families into other areas of the Governorate and into the Kurdistan Region. A smaller number of families, including Turkmen, also fled from various governorates into Kerbala, Najaf and Wassit governorates. Since the beginning of the year, bombings and sectarian tensions have displaced over 5,000 Iraqis, adding to the 1.13 million internally displaced persons that fled their homes amid the sectarian violence in Iraq from 2006 to 2008.

32. UNAMI continued to support the article 125 committee of the Council of Representatives to ensure that the law on the protection of the rights of ethnic and religious minority communities meets international standards. On 10 September and 2 October, UNAMI facilitated meetings on the draft law. Participants examined comments from civil society organizations and revised the draft law article by

article. However, the committee's work faces challenges regarding the structure of the draft law, its terminology and implementing mechanisms.

33. On 7 September, the Council of Representatives endorsed the law on the care of persons with disabilities and special needs. However, there remain concerns about those aspects of the law that do not fully comply with Iraq's obligations under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, particularly in relation to the establishment of an independent oversight mechanism. Signed on 23 January 2012, the Convention was ratified on 10 February 2013. The Government of Iraq is expected to respond to the amendments proposed by UNAMI and drafted in partnership with the Council of Representatives' human rights committee and the Iraqi Alliance of Disability Organizations to ensure the law's conformity with the Convention.

34. There are continuing concerns about the respect for the right of freedom of expression. On 25 August, the Prime Minister's office sent a letter to the Ministry of the Interior ordering unregistered media outlets to be closed if they failed to obtain licences or register with the Communications and Media Commission within three months. On 13 September, on this basis, the Ministry closed the television channel Al-Baghdadia. Media outlets have since alleged that they have obtained licences and paid fees, but that the processing had been slow. At times, licences were allegedly denied without valid reasons being given.

35. National regulations governing the holding of lawful assemblies are of particular concern, as conditions under which the authorities can refuse permission to hold demonstrations or the process by which authorizations can be obtained are not clearly stated. UNAMI received reports that the authorities prevented a number of demonstrations, particularly in Baghdad, on the basis of political and other considerations. Early in August, demonstrations against corruption and violence were prevented by the authorities in Baghdad, and 13 people were allegedly arrested on the grounds that the demonstrators had failed to obtain the necessary authorization. The authorities also prevented demonstrations against pension benefits, mentioned earlier in this report, on the grounds that participants were at risk of terrorist attack.

36. Women throughout Iraq continued to be subjected to domestic and other forms of violence, including so-called "honour crimes". The Family Protection Law, which aims to protect the victims of domestic violence, remains stalled in the Council of Representatives. UN-Women, with the support of UNAMI and UNDP, has provided technical support and advice on the Government of Iraq's draft policy on safe houses, holding and referral centres for women at risk. The creation of shelters for women at risk is one of the key recommendations identified in the National Strategy for Combating Violence against Women, which was endorsed by the Council of Ministers in March 2013.

37. Children continue to be gravely affected by violence and acts of terrorism. Claims by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant that it intended to intensify attacks against schools to coincide with the start of the new academic year are particularly worrisome. On 6 October, a suicide bomber drove a truck packed with explosives into the playground of a primary school in Tal Afar in Ninewa Governorate, killing 10 schoolchildren and injuring over 90. The United Nations country task force on monitoring and reporting violations against children found that at least 95 children were killed and 165 were injured during the reporting

period, mostly as a result of waves of coordinated attacks in civilian areas. Concerns remain over children indicted or convicted on terrorism-related charges under article 4 of the Anti-Terrorism Law and their conditions of detention, which often do not meet minimum international standards of juvenile justice. A formal mechanism of collaboration on child protection between the country task force and the Government remains to be established.

Camp New Iraq and Camp Hurriya

38. On 1 September, Camp New Iraq was subject to an attack by unidentified gunmen that left 52 residents dead. On the following day, my Deputy Special Representative for Political Affairs visited the camp. Responsibility for the attack and the fate of seven residents who are unaccounted for remain undetermined. The Government of Iraq formed an investigation committee to look into the incident but thus far no findings have been disclosed. The Government further indicated that it could no longer guarantee the safety and security of the remaining 42 residents in Camp New Iraq. On 11 September, as a result of UNAMI facilitation, the 42 residents were peacefully transferred to Camp Hurriya. In protest at the attack and the alleged abduction of seven residents, an unconfirmed number of residents have allegedly been on a hunger strike.

39. The Government of Iraq has indicated its intention to implement a court order regarding the residents' moveable property remaining in Camp New Iraq. The Government requested the residents to appoint a representative to sit on a court-appointed committee established to draw up an inventory of the moveable property and organize its disposal. The residents have refused to cooperate with the committee and have not appointed a lawyer or representative.

40. In relation to Camp Hurriya, my Deputy Special Representative for Political Affairs urged the Iraqi authorities to meet the residents' requests for extra security measures. As at 4 November, 696 small T-walls and 1,488 large T-walls, 355 bunkers and 40,000 sandbags had been permitted by the Iraqi authorities into the camp. However, the Government of Iraq continues to refuse the residents' request for personal protective equipment on the grounds that such equipment is intended for defensive rather than protective purposes.

41. United Nations monitors in Camp Hurriya continued to receive reports that the leaders of the Mujaheddin e Khalq have been preventing the residents from leaving the camp or participating in the UNHCR processes. Some residents also reported that the Mujaheddin e Khalq leaders restricted their movements around the camp, forced them to undertake self-criticism, prevented their contact with family inside and outside Camp Hurriya, restricted their access to medical care, and prohibited their interaction with the monitors.

42. On 1 October, Camp Hurriya residents resumed participation in the UNHCR process of identifying their international protection needs, following a boycott of the process since the attack on the camp in February 2013. As at 4 November, UNHCR has registered 3,153 individuals and conducted in-depth interviews of 2,075 individuals. A total of 1,627 individuals have been determined to have international protection needs.

43. In parallel, UNHCR is seeking durable solutions for individuals. As at 4 November a total of 286 residents have been relocated outside Iraq, including

76 residents through consular readmission to eight countries, 12 individuals through resettlement to five countries, and 198 individuals through humanitarian admission to three countries. On 23 October, the Department of Political Affairs launched a trust fund initiative to cover the costs related to the relocation process. On 24 October, the Government of the United States of America pledged US\$ 1 million to the trust fund.

D. Humanitarian and development assistance

44. One of the major priorities for the United Nations in Iraq has been the response to the influx of Syrian refugees, in particular in the Kurdistan Region. UNHCR, together with the Ministry of Migration and Displacement, leads the humanitarian response, assisted by United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, the International Organization for Migration and non-governmental organizations.

45. On 15 August, the Kurdistan Regional Government reopened the border with the Syrian Arab Republic, allowing over 50,000 Syrians to cross into the Kurdistan Region. As a result, by the end of October, the total number of Syrian refugees registered in Iraq stands at approximately 200,000. Most Syrian refugees continue to arrive and settle in the Erbil, Dohuk and Suleymaniya governorates where numerous transit centres have been established. A large majority of Syrians stay in non-camp areas hosted by local communities, but camp populations are also increasing. As the Domiz camp population has approached roughly 55,000, decongestion efforts have begun, with construction on newly allocated land surrounding the camp. In addition, five new camps are in development: four in Erbil Governorate (Darashakran, Kawergosk, Qushtapa and Basirma) with a total capacity of 32,000, and one in Suleymaniya (Arbat) that will accommodate 15,000 people. On 29 September, UNHCR started transferring refugees to Darashakran camp.

46. In Al-Qaim, in Anbar Governorate, two existing camps were merged and relocated to a third camp, Al-Obaidi, which accommodates nearly 2,000 Syrian refugees. Another 3,000 refugees are living with the host community in the town of Al-Qaim. Reports indicate that about 6,000 and 17,000 Syrians returned to the Syrian Arab Republic from Anbar Governorate and the Kurdistan Region, respectively.

47. During the reporting period, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) provided classrooms, including water and sanitation facilities, and education materials for 13,300 children and their teachers in refugee camps in the Kurdistan Region. In addition, three new schools are being built in camps, which will provide places for a further 2,160 children. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) co-financed the construction of two secondary schools in Domiz and Darashakran camps for 1,000 students, and provided training for teachers for both schools. In the area of water, sanitation and hygiene services, UNICEF provided assistance to 191,800 refugees, including provision of safe drinking water, emergency toilets and bathing units.

48. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) equipped camps with reproductive and maternal health units while the World Health Organization (WHO) provided pharmaceuticals to both governmental and non-governmental partners for the treatment of refugees in camps and in the host community. WHO also established within the camps an early warning system, a critical measure in view of

recent reports of cases of wild poliovirus in the Syrian Arab Republic. In September, UNDP initiated a reporting mechanism to track sexual and gender-based violence and trafficking regarding 25,000 women and girl refugees living in the camps. The reports will inform and guide policies of the Kurdistan Region's Directorate for Combating Violence against Women and the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs.

49. The United Nations country team continued to support the Government of Iraq in its efforts to address the root causes of inequality, poverty and marginalization. On 16 September, the Government of Iraq launched the National Development Plan for 2013-2017. The Plan notes strong growth in per capita income and progress against a number of the Millennium Development Goals but also the persistence of significant development challenges. The Plan calls for an investment of approximately \$370 billion, including \$88 billion from the private sector, to address those challenges. Some of the strategies proposed under the Plan include diversifying the economy and overcoming the high reliance on the oil sector by developing agriculture, energy and tourism; providing opportunities for private sector development; reducing unemployment to 6 per cent; further reducing the poverty rate; raising the level of net enrolment in primary, intermediate and secondary schools to 95 per cent, 45 per cent and 30 per cent respectively; upgrading health service delivery; broadening opportunities for women and young people; reducing the development gap between urban and rural areas; combating desertification; and ensuring more effective water management. The Government of Iraq has requested the United Nations to prepare a new development assistance framework to align with the Plan.

50. On 24 September, the Council of Ministers endorsed a five-year public sector reform package for 2014-2018, which aims at improving public service delivery and democratic governance in several sectors, including through gender-responsive budgeting, e-governance and overhaul of the national statistical system. Eight members of the United Nations country team — UNDP, UNICEF, WHO, UNFPA, UN-Habitat, UN-Women, UNESCO and the Economic and Social Commission for West Asia — are working together to support the reform package.

51. Working with the High Committee for the Reform of the Public Distribution System, the World Food Programme initiated a pilot programme on a national electronic public distribution system, which will enable beneficiaries to collect food allowances using smart cards, rather than relying on food distributions. Using this technology, 42,000 internally displaced persons and returnees benefited from a cash-for-assets project in the governorates of Baghdad, Diyala and Ninewa, during which participation in public works is paid through smart cards.

52. On 20 August UNDP inaugurated a legal aid help desk inside the Basra courthouse. At the desk, free legal assistance is provided, with a focus on assisting vulnerable women and victims of domestic and gender-based violence. Placing the legal help desk physically in the courthouse contributes to addressing issues related to accessing legal assistance. During the reporting period, three legal aid help desks established by UNDP in northern Iraq helped over 11,000 people with legal advice, guidance, and, in some cases, full legal representation. As part of its partnership with the private sector, UNDP and Shell Iraq Petroleum Development BV opened two newly rehabilitated schools on 1 October that will support the education of approximately 800 primary schoolchildren in Al-Nashwa community in southern Iraq. UNDP has supported the Office of the National Security Adviser in developing

a new national security strategy, including lessons learned from the previous strategy and advice to ensure that the process is participatory and inclusive of diverse stakeholders, including the Council of Representatives, academia and civil society organizations representing women and youth.

53. The United Nations continued to work with the Government of Iraq and neighbouring countries to encourage cooperation on the transboundary environmental issue of sand and dust storms. UNDP, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), UNESCO and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations are providing support to the Government of Iraq in addressing the three interlinked issues of drought, desertification, and sand and dust storms. UNEP opened lines of cooperation between relevant Iraqi institutions and the Spanish Meteorological Agency on dust modelling and assessment and with the Global Centre for Ecosystem Management in Beijing on dust storm mitigation strategies.

E. Security and operational issues

54. During the reporting period, an average of 30 security incidents per day occurred throughout Iraq, double the number during the same period in 2012. The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant claimed responsibility for a massive coordinated attack on 21 July on Abu Ghraib and Taji prisons, which resulted in the escape of up to 1,000 members of terrorist groups, the killing of at least 72 persons and wounding of dozens of others, including prison guards, detainees and assailants. According to the Ministry of the Interior, some 350 escaped prisoners have been re-arrested to date. The attack coincided with the first anniversary of the announcement by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant of its “Breaking the Walls” campaign. On 29 July, the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant launched a new campaign called “Harvest of the Soldiers”.

55. The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant also claimed responsibility for the attack on 29 September on the headquarters of the Asayish security services in Erbil, during which seven people were killed and 62 injured, the first major such incident in the Kurdistan Region since 2007. On 20 and 21 October, elements of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant paraded and temporarily seized government and security buildings in Falluja in Anbar Governorate. The activity of Shiite armed groups also increased during the reporting period, particularly in Baghdad and southern governorates, with the setting up of illegal checkpoints and targeting of Sunni civilians and mosques.

56. The Government’s large-scale security campaign, termed “Revenge for the Martyrs” and undertaken in response to serious incidents, has included checkpoints and inspections, enhanced patrols along the border with the Syrian Arab Republic, interdiction of arms smuggling, and the capture of militants, prison escapees and others suspected of involvement in terrorism, as well as a tightening of security measures around and within the Green Zone in Baghdad.

57. UNAMI continued to expend a significant amount of resources and time in trying to overcome processes and procedures imposed by the Government of Iraq regarding customs and immigration. As a result, critical and life-saving equipment such as ambulances have remained at the Safwan border crossing point for almost a year awaiting customs clearance. Also, after a period of one year, UNAMI still

awaits approval by the Government of Iraq for the import of ammunition that is crucial for the training and operational capacity of its close protection officers. Visas are still required upon every entry for all United Nations Guard Unit personnel as well as consultants travelling on national passports, which restricts their deployment and movement.

58. It has not yet been possible to conclude and bring into force a status-of-mission agreement for UNAMI. Since my last report, the Government has reverted to the United Nations with proposed changes to the draft agreement, to which the United Nations responded with extensive clarifications and with proposed adjustments. With these clarifications and adjustments, it is expected that the agreement can be concluded in the near future, as the absence of an agreement continues to significantly hamper and impair the effectiveness of the Mission.

IV. Observations

59. I welcome the recent initiatives by the Iraqi political leadership to pursue national reconciliation, in particular within the framework of the National Conference for Social Peace. The resulting National Code of Honour with its set of principles for a national dialogue and reforms needs to be supported by all parties. It is crucial that the momentum around the Conference be further invigorated by empowering follow-up mechanisms to reduce tensions and establish a solid foundation for national reconciliation. Women, whose growing political marginalization is worrisome, should be meaningfully included in all political processes.

60. I remain deeply concerned by the resurgence of extremism and radicalization, which threatens Iraq's social cohesion and may disrupt the ongoing efforts for national reconciliation. I believe due attention should be paid to the creation of an environment conducive to addressing extremism and combating terrorism. In this regard, it is important to accelerate equitable political participation at the national and local levels, consolidate democratic processes and institutions, as well as civil society, and foster economic development, through job creation, delivery of services and fighting corruption. Political leaders on all sides have a clear responsibility for leading and facilitating decisive and inclusive action to that end. The United Nations stands ready to provide the necessary support.

61. I congratulate the Council of Representatives for adopting the law on the national parliamentary elections and commend the political leaders for their relentless efforts to reach an agreement to that end. I call upon all parties concerned to take further steps to ensure that elections are held as scheduled in a stable, safe and secure environment, and to guarantee the representation and meaningful participation of women and minorities in accordance with the Constitution. I also commend the members of the Board of Commissioners of the Independent High Electoral Commission, who have demonstrated maturity, technical capability and professionalism in conducting three successive electoral events this year. Under their leadership, the Commission continues to prepare for crucial elections ahead, including the national parliamentary elections. My Special Representative and the United Nations integrated electoral assistance team will continue to support the Commission.

62. While I welcome the smooth conduct of the parliamentary elections in the Kurdistan Region on 21 September, I am concerned about the postponement of the governorate council elections in the Region. While I welcome the recent progress made towards the adoption of a law on the governorate council elections in Kirkuk, I urge all parties to redouble their efforts to hold elections as soon as possible in Kirkuk and the three governorates of the Kurdistan Region and to ensure that citizens can exercise their legitimate right to choose their representatives.

63. I am pleased with the continuing improvement in relations between Iraq and Kuwait. I hope that this improvement in bilateral relations will result in even greater confidence and stronger economic, commercial and cultural ties between the two countries. I also hope that this positive development will lead to the improvement of Iraq's relations with other neighbours in the interest of regional stability.

64. I remain concerned about the adverse humanitarian, security and political impact on Iraq of the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic. I am grateful for the Government of Iraq's efforts and readiness to contribute to a political solution. Notwithstanding its legitimate security concerns, I urge the Government of Iraq to continue providing shelter to civilians fleeing the Syrian conflict. Although more resources are needed, I am pleased that there has been meaningful progress in terms of creating additional camps and delivering assistance to those who are settled outside camps.

65. On the use of the death penalty, I appeal again to the Government of Iraq to impose, as a matter of urgency, a moratorium on the implementation of the death penalty in accordance with relevant General Assembly resolutions.

66. I am encouraged by the cooperation extended by the Ministry of Justice to UNAMI by giving it access to prisons under its jurisdiction. I reiterate my appeal to the Ministry of the Interior to extend the same cooperation. I encourage the Government of Iraq to continue to reform the judicial system and processes. I also encourage it to amend the regulations governing demonstrations to ensure that any restriction placed on the peaceful exercise of the right to freedom of assembly fully complies with the Constitution of Iraq and Iraq's international legal obligations.

67. I strongly condemn the attack on Camp New Iraq on 1 September. I urge the Government to swiftly disclose the findings of its investigation and bring the perpetrators to justice. This tragic event underlines the urgency of relocating all Camp Hurriya residents outside of Iraq. I reiterate my appeal to Member States to contribute to a durable solution by accepting residents into their territories and contributing to the United Nations trust fund recently established for this purpose.

68. I call on the Government of Iraq's support in swiftly ensuring the finalization, signing and entry into force of the status-of-mission agreement without further delay. This necessary step will be mutually beneficial to the United Nations and the Government of Iraq.

69. Lastly, I would like to thank my Special Representative, Nickolay Mladenov, as well as all the United Nations staff for their hard work and dedicated commitment, often under challenging circumstances, to support the people and the Government of Iraq.