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## Human Rights Council

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Agenda item 3

**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.

[17 February 2012]

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

## The plight of Iraqi Academics\*\*

\*\* 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),

On 11 April 2003, a number of Iraqi scientists and university professors sent an SOS e-mail complaining that American occupation forces were threatening their lives.<sup>1</sup> The appeal stated that looting and robberies were taking place under the watchful eye of occupation soldiers. These soldiers, the e-mail added, were transporting mobs to the scientific institutions, such as Mosul University and different educational institutions, to destroy scientific research centres and confiscate all papers and documents to nip in the bud any Iraqi scientific renaissance. The e-mail also noted that occupation forces had drawn up lists of the names, addresses and research areas of the Iraqi scientists to assist them in their harassment tasks in light of the anarchy that existed after the occupation.

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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, 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 Internazionalista- 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.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.islamonline.net/english/news/2003-04/12/article02.shtml>

### **The assassination campaign**

Among the many tragedies that have befallen Iraqi society as a consequence of the US-led 2003 invasion, has been the physical elimination of hundreds or thousands of Iraqi academics in what has every appearance of being a systematic campaign of targeted assassination.

Iraqi academics began to fall victim to well-organised teams of assassins who ambushed them as they went about their daily lives, typically killing them instantly. Such killings account for the substantial majority of recorded deaths.

Whilst some initial speculation suggested that the killings targeted scientists who had been involved in weapons programmes, the victims included many that could not have been<sup>2</sup>.

By May 2004 the Iraqi academic community had come to recognise itself as a targeted group<sup>3</sup>, and by September the Association of University Teachers (AUT), established by Issam al Rawi in June 2003, had recorded the deaths of some 250 academics that had been killed since the occupation began<sup>4</sup>. On 17 January 2005<sup>5</sup> Dr. Al Rawi, head of the Iraqi University Professors Union stated: “Approximately 300 academics have been killed (...) In a country with distinct political, ethnic and religious fault lines, the university killings seem to follow no pattern. The dead have been Shiites and Sunnis, Kurds and Arabs, and supporters of various political parties. They have a common thing: they are Iraqis». On the 30th of October 2006 Dr. Al-Rawi himself was assassinated. The occupation forces and the “Iraqi” Special Police Forces raided his office on 19 October 2006. He issued a communiqué on 28 October 2006, condemning the raid.<sup>6</sup>

The incident on Tuesday 14 November 2006, when paramilitary gunmen in the uniforms of Iraqi National Police commandos raided a building belonging to the Ministry of Education in Baghdad’s Karrada district and arrested around 100 members of staff from two departments and around 50 visitors, in broad daylight, 1km from the Green Zone, exposed the extent of the danger facing educators, and particularly those in higher education. An unknown number of those arrested was later found killed, and again, there was no investigation.<sup>7</sup> Again, there was ample evidence of involvement of Iraqi official bodies, creating chaos and mayhem instead of establishing security. It is equally clear that US authorities in Iraq had no interest in carrying out an investigation or restraining the killers.

Even beyond the loss of life and accumulated human knowledge that such loss represents, the effect of these killings on Iraq’s academic community has been catastrophic, with thousands fleeing the country and those who remain frightened into silence.

To date, the BRussels Tribunal has campaigned most actively to raise these killings as an issue and has kept a comprehensive database recording the killings of Iraqi university teachers and administrators<sup>8</sup>, which on 30 January 2012 contains 467 names. They established this list in order that mandated human rights authorities investigate the killings

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<sup>2</sup> “Death to those who dare to speak out”, AnniaCiezdlo, The Christian Science Monitor, 30 April 2004 – URL:<http://www.csmonitor.com/2004/0430/p11s01-woiq.html>

<sup>3</sup> “Iraqi intellectuals appeal for security”, Ahmed Janabi, Al Jazeera 19 May 2004 – URL: <http://www.brusselstribunal.org/pdf/AcademicsDossier.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> “Murder of lecturers threatens Iraqi academia”, Tabitha Morgan, The Times Higher Education Supplement, 10 September 2004 – URL: <http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/story.asp?storyCode=191084&sectioncode=26>

<sup>5</sup> [http://www.usatoday.com/news/world/iraq/2005-01-16-academics-assassinations\\_x.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/news/world/iraq/2005-01-16-academics-assassinations_x.htm)

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.brusselstribunal.org/AlRawi.htm>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.brusselstribunal.org/PressRelease221106.htm>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.brusselstribunal.org/academicsList.htm>

and find a way to protect Iraq's academic and cultural wealth. Despite serious attempts to try to make Human Rights bodies investigate these killings and take actions, nothing has been done to date and no case has been seriously investigated inside Iraq.

### **US occupation's responsibility**

Iraqi professors direct most of their ire towards the U.S. occupation. "Iraqi professors are being killed by everyone, and nobody has told us if any killers have been caught. Nothing has been done," Dr.Saad Jawad, an Iraqi professor of political science said. "One U.S. soldier was kidnapped and Baghdad is on full alert, but the killing of an Iraqi professor? Nothing happens."<sup>9</sup>

Omar Al Hajj, a professor at the University of Technology said: "Death squads accused of killing Iraqi professionals and scientists are the same forces that invaded Iraq, looted its museums and stole its banks. They are also the same parties, which abduct businessmen and foreigners for high ransoms."<sup>10</sup>

### **All academic disciplines targeted**

The killings were widely dispersed by geographic area and by academic discipline and that the rate of killings of academics has increased over time.<sup>11</sup> Very high proportion of senior academics have been killed, with the bulk of victims having attained PhDs and over two thirds holding the positions of rector/chancellor, dean or vice dean, department head or professor. In the vast majority of cases it appears that the victims have been specifically singled out, either as the immediate target of professional assassins or as the object of so-called kidnappings, which resulted in their deaths.

A former general described the pattern in the following terms: "Many of them get killed near their houses or on the way to their work, and others get kidnapped, and we find their dead bodies in the street. When you follow these crimes you will be sure that the criminals have special training and their purpose is to make Iraq empty of any professionals."<sup>12</sup>

### **Death threats**

Alongside the targeted assassinations of academics have come explicit and implicit threats of assassination. Such threats have taken a variety of forms. Although no statistics are available, it appears that the threats are most commonly issued in the forms of letters. The letters are typically pushed under doors or even delivered through the internal mail within academic institutions<sup>13</sup>.

### **Religious fundamentalism**

The climate of fear within universities is also exacerbated by the incursion of religious fundamentalism, which can take a variety of forms. One form is for demands to be issued by anonymous or unknown groups for students to be segregated by gender and for the

<sup>9</sup> [http://www.diverseeducation.com/artman/publish/article\\_6690.shtml](http://www.diverseeducation.com/artman/publish/article_6690.shtml)

<sup>10</sup> [http://archive.gulfnews.com/articles/print\\_friendly\\_version.jsp?global\\_name=/channels/gulfnews\\_com/articles/06/7/29/10055723.html](http://archive.gulfnews.com/articles/print_friendly_version.jsp?global_name=/channels/gulfnews_com/articles/06/7/29/10055723.html)

<sup>11</sup> [www.brusselstribunal.org/pdf/alJalili170607.pdf](http://www.brusselstribunal.org/pdf/alJalili170607.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> "White-collarIraqistargetedbyassassins", Brian Conley andIsam Rashid, Asia Times, 3 March 2006 – URL: [http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Middle\\_East/HC03Ak01.html](http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Middle_East/HC03Ak01.html)

<sup>13</sup> "Lecturing in the Iraqi war zone", John Akker, The Guardian, 17 November 2006 – URL: <http://education.guardian.co.uk/higher/comment/story/0,,1950824,00.html>

institution to stop teaching ‘Western ideals’<sup>14</sup>. Students are reported to have felt such pressures to the extent that thousands have requested transfers to campuses where their sect is in the majority<sup>15</sup>. Such incursions also contribute to undermining the non-sectarian and essentially secular character of the Iraqi system of higher education.

### **Forced emigration**

The number of prominent Iraqi academics and professionals who fled the country surpasses 20,000. Of the 6700 Iraqi professors who have fled since 2003, the Los Angeles Times reported in October 2008 that only 150 of them had returned<sup>16</sup>. But it’s not safe to return. The BRussells Tribunal warned already on 26 April 2009 that “those academics who return are finding jobs few and the welcome far from warm”<sup>17</sup>. The statement further alarmed the academics who are invited or forced to return, to be aware of criminal acts like kidnappings or assassinations.<sup>18</sup>

Iraq’s US Administrator Paul Bremer’s de-Baathification policy disembowelled the middle class that cemented Iraqi society, and thrust some 15.500 researchers, scientists, teachers and professors into unemployment.

### **Sectarianism and corruption**

On July 4 2011, a blaze started in the certificates office of the Ministry of Higher Education.<sup>19</sup> Iraqi Newspaper Azzaman reported on 8 October 2011: “More than 30,000 Iraqi civil servants, among them high-level officials, have obtained their jobs on fake certificates and degrees, according to the parliamentary commission on integrity and transparency.”<sup>20</sup> Officials at Iraq’s ministry of higher education have been singled out for blame, the ministry having also licensed a string of shadowy universities in recent years.<sup>21</sup>

On the early morning of 31 July 2011, a group of unknown armed men assassinated the Director-General of Administration in Iraq’s Ministry of Higher Education & Scientific Research—Dawood Salman Rahim and his son, Hassanein—as they drove in their car in west Baghdad’s Ghazaliya district.<sup>22</sup> Dr Rahim told his friends that he might get killed because he refused a request of Iraq’s Minister of Higher Education & Scientific Research Ali Al-Adeeb to equate the Shia Hawza religion certificates with the Scientific PhD certificates. The minister threatened him to force his collaboration in this issue. Security officers of the Ministry raided his house two days before his assassination, and took his car registration certificate, and his rationing ticket. He was assassinated by silencer gun two days after the raid. The equation of the diplomas has recently been authorized.

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<sup>14</sup> “Iraq Losing its Best and Brightest”, Howard LaFranchi, The Christian Science Monitor, 21 September 2004 Edition – URL: <http://www.csmonitor.com/2004/0921/p06s01-woiq.html>

<sup>15</sup> “Mandatory university attendance in unstable Iraq angers many”, McClatchy Washington Bureau, 20 December 2006 – URL: [http://minstrelboy.blogspot.com/2006\\_12\\_17\\_archive.html](http://minstrelboy.blogspot.com/2006_12_17_archive.html)

<sup>16</sup> James Petras in <http://forum.prisonplanet.com/index.php?topic=128725.0>

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.brusselstribunal.org/Al-Tikriti.htm>

<sup>18</sup> See the list of assassinated academics: <http://www.brusselstribunal.org/academicsList.htm>

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.iraq-businessnews.com/tag/corruption/>

<sup>20</sup> <http://www.azzaman.com/english/index.asp?fname=news%5C2011-10-08%5Ckurd.htm>

<sup>21</sup> <http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2011/1039/re8.htm>

<sup>22</sup> [http://en.aswataliraq.info/Default1.aspx?page=article\\_page&id=144042&l=1](http://en.aswataliraq.info/Default1.aspx?page=article_page&id=144042&l=1)

### **Virulent sectarian policies**

The current Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research is Ali al-Adeeb, a senior member of the Islamic Dawa Party. He returned from Iran to Iraq in 2003 immediately with American invasion.

Iraqi sources claim that even Ali Al-Adeeb's diploma has been forged. His diploma certificate was issued on 30-09-2010, after his appointment as minister, and it shows that he had graduated from the College of Education/Baghdad University on 30/06/1965, meaning he was 19 years old, as he was born in 1946, and this is impossible in Iraq.

### **Ongoing harassment of Academics**

On 26 January 2011, Iraqi security forces arrested more than 100 intellectuals from the Province of Diyala. Among those arrested are four top medical professors teaching at the Diyala University's Medical College, professors Mazen Razzouqi, Adel al-Hussaini, Ali al-Husaini and Bahaa Abed. It is not clear why Iraqi security forces arrested those intellectuals.

The President of Tikrit University resigned on 14 October 2011 after the sacking of 300 university lecturers by Minister of Higher Education Ali Al-Adeeb, 140 employees and professors at the University of Tikrit alone<sup>23</sup>. The President of the University stated that they were all very good lecturers. Iraqi sources claim that the minister has discharged some 1.200 lecturers since he became a Minister. He also wanted to impose Islamic law in Iraqi universities through the imposition of sectarianism and the veil and the separation of the sexes, leading to discontent in university circles.

The current Iraqi authorities has a policy of excluding experienced professors, and replace them with people with party affiliations, or some other ignorant people with fake university qualifications. Many Iraqi academics are obliged to retire against their will because the government orders them to do so, while they are at the height of their capacities. The situation of the Iraqi academics abroad is also dire, because the ones who live in Europe, the US and Asia lost their retirement rights in Iraq.

### **Independent international investigation is necessary**

To this date, there has been no systematic investigation of this phenomenon by the occupation authorities. Not a single arrest has been reported in regard to this terrorization of the intellectuals.

The starting point for any investigation into the killings of Iraqi academics is with those forces and their political leaders themselves.

### **Recommendation by the NGOs signatories to this statement:**

- Ensure that all human rights violations in Iraq during 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.

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.aknews.com/en/aknews/8/274009/>

- 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.
  - Request the Special Rapporteur on the right to education, and the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, to focus on this matter in the future reports.
-