

# IRAQ HUMAN RIGHTS NGO TRAINING PROJECT

REPORT ON THE FIRST MEETING  
WITH POTENTIAL NGO PARTICIPANTS

JANUARY 2009



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## BACKGROUND

The Iraq Human Rights NGO Training Project is a 24-month project managed by the International Human Rights Law Institute (IHRLI) of DePaul University that provides focused training on human rights documentation and analysis for a select group of Iraqi NGOs. The project is funded by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Human Rights Labor and Democracy.

IHRLI has spent the past three years developing a methodology, training interviewers and collecting and analyzing thousands of testimonies on human rights violations in Iraq. This project will help ensure that key skills and lessons learned from IHRLI's work are integrated into the activities of a small, but significant group of Iraqi human rights NGOs.

While many groups have received valuable training in international law and key human rights issues over the past five years, there is a pressing need for these groups to direct their energies towards engaging in concerted human rights documentation and analysis. This project provides context-appropriate mentoring to build NGO capacity for professional human rights research, analysis, and advocacy.

## EVENT OVERVIEW

In order to identify target organizations, IHRLI engaged in a detailed review of a large number of potential participants. Iraq-based staff reviewed lists of NGOs provided by the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), personal contacts, and NGOs that IHRLI has worked with in the past. Twelve organizations were selected and invited to participate in the initial meeting for this project.

On January 4-5, 2009, IHRLI held the selection and training meeting for the Iraq Human Rights NGO training Project at the main office in Sulaimaniya. Nine of the twelve identified organizations were able to participate.

At the meeting/training IHRLI staff presented an overview of different Institute projects in Iraq. This included a detailed discussion of IHRLI fieldwork methodology and data analysis. In addition, staff conducted individual sessions with each representative to discuss the current status of each participating organization and the ways in which this project may support capacity building.

The event was covered in two televised reports broadcast by KurdSat TV and Gali Kurdistan TV on the evening of January 4<sup>th</sup>, 2009.

## ATTENDEES

This meeting was attended by nine representatives from participating organizations as well as five Institute staff members. Three of the invitees were unable to attend.

### Organization Representatives:

- Mr. Ali Raheem Al-Asadi, Iraq Foundation.
- Mr. Haider Nassar, Iraq of Tomorrow Humanitarian Cultural Association.
- Mr. Uday Abdul-Fattah, Al-Rawabi Humanitarian Organization.
- Mr. Nawzad Muhammad Pirmusa, Aland Organization for Youth Development.
- Mr. Izzeddin Ahmed Aziz, Ayinda Center for Youth Causes.
- Mr. Ali Kareem, Kurdistan Institute for Human Rights.
- Mr. Husam Abdullah, Association of Ezidi Brotherhood and Solidarity.
- Ms. Amira Ameen, Amna Suraka National Museum.
- Mr. Yasir Dhia Saeed, Islamic Organization for Human Rights.

### IHRLI Staff Members:

- Kurdistan Daloye, Iraq Country Director
- Ahmed Majeed, NGO Trainer
- Ahmed Kareem, NGO Trainer
- Sirwan Anwer, NGO Trainer
- Zahir Altayi, National Administrative Coordinator

### Individuals/organizations invited but unable to attend:

- Mr. Mohammed Saeed Al-Ani, Larsa Center for Legal Studies and Human Rights.
- Ms. Widad Jabbar, Al-Forat Al-Awsat Media Center.
- Mr. Hawrie Jumaa, Organization for Future Studies and Human Rights.

## MEETING WELCOME AND OVERVIEW

Following registration and a welcome reception, Ms. Kurdistan Daloye, IHRLI's Chief-of-Party opened the meeting by thanking all the NGO's representatives for their participation and providing a brief overview of IHRLI's goals and activities in Iraq. She highlighted IHRLI's cultural sensitivity and understanding of Iraq, evidenced by the fact that all of IHRLI's in-country project staff are Iraqi. She also drew attention to IHRLI's commitment to using field-based research to gather detailed information on human rights violations in Iraq. Ms. Daloye concluded by focusing on the importance of professional, independent human rights NGOs for the future of Iraqi civil society.

Mr. Zahir Altayi, IHRLI's National Administrative Coordinator, discussed IHRLI's activities in Iraq from late 2003 through 2006, particularly the Raising the Bar project that worked with Iraqi law schools. He also provided an overview of various achievements, seminars and publications produced by IHRLI.



ORGANIZATIONAL REPRESENTATIVES  
GATHERED FOR THE TRAINING SESSION

Then, IHRLI staff presented an overview of current IHRLI projects, including: the NGOs Training Project, the Iraq History Project, and the Current Violations Project. IHRLI staff discussed the methods for documenting the human rights violations, pointing out that several NGO's in attendance will likely benefit from gaining a more detailed understanding of best practices in collecting field documentation. Mr. Ahmed Majeed, Mr. Sirwan Anwer and Mr. Ahmed Kareem, the NGO trainers, answered several questions from the participants concerning IHRLI research, analysis, methodologies and the experience gained from documenting past and present human rights violations in Iraq. The opening session closed with each participant providing a brief description about their respective organizations and their activities.

## VISIT TO THE AMNA SURAKA NATIONAL MUSEUM

The guests and trainers visited the *Amna Suraka* National Museum. They met Ms. Amira Ameen, the Museum Director, who gave a welcoming speech and a brief explanation on the work and activities of the museum. The NGO representatives commended the efforts made by the management and staff to maintain the building as it was in 1991, preserving it as a living memorial to the victims of the torture and atrocities committed there.

The guests called for establishing similar museums to document the atrocities committed by the former regime in every provinces in Iraq.



PARTICIPANTS CONSIDER AN EXHIBIT  
AT THE AMNA SURAKA NATIONAL MUSEUM

## INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS WITH ORGANIZATIONS' REPRESENTATIVES

IHRLI staff, including Ms. Kudistan Daloye; Mr. Sirwan Anwer; Mr. Ahmed Kareem; Mr. Ahmed Majeed and Mr. Zahir Altayi, met with each organization's representative individually. During these sessions, the NGO representatives discussed their organization's activities and provided brochures, books, magazines, photos and other publications illustrating their work.



IHRLI STAFF REVIEW INFORMATION PROVIDED BY PARTICIPANTS  
AND CONDUCT INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS

The following are notes from the individual organizational meetings:

### Iraq Foundation

*Representative: Mr. Ali Raheem Al-Asadi*

*Website: [www.iraqfoundation.org](http://www.iraqfoundation.org)*

*Overview:*

- Worked with RTI International, Alliance Defense Fund (ADF) and Ministry of Human Rights
- Primary source(s) of funding: various grants
- Work in different parts of Iraq
- Headquartered in Washington DC. Their management is tentatively scheduled to visit Iraq next February.
- Signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Iraqi High Electoral Commission
- Experienced in working with Martus software
- Have contacts with trainers in Lebanon that may be beneficial for future programming

*Programs and Projects:*

- Held extensive courses on Human Rights
- Concentrated on electoral education and rehabilitating schools
- Supported other NGOs by providing grants, collaborating with 18 Iraqi NGOs
- Supported Women's Rights initiatives (as a sub-contractor with ADF)

- Conducted a program to train widows to become either kindergarten caregivers or tailors

*Communication and Outreach:*

- Publish an e-newsletter
- Had a weekly radio program
- Presented a 5-year Human Rights strategy for Iraq

*Iraq of Tomorrow Humanitarian Cultural Association*

*Representative: Mr. Haider Nassar*

*Website: [www.chifo.org](http://www.chifo.org)*

*Overview:*

- Been active in the electoral field since 2005 when they monitored the elections
- Primary source(s) of funding: the National Democratic Institute (NDI), the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), the Ein Network, ADF, the British Council and the Iraqi Parliament
- Work is concentrated in Najaf and adjacent counties
- Two of the organization's members are with the Ministry of Human Rights
- Document through interviews and photos, and they have three phases of categorization
- Cooperated with the British Council and the UN
- Assist other organizations' in building their capabilities

*Projects and Programs:*

- Worked with Ein Network for monitoring elections
- Worked on electoral education, mobile clinics, IDP relief (with concentration on IDP children), anti-corruption programs and visited prisoners and detainees
- Organized about 280 Human Rights lectures
- Assisted in conducting a National reconciliation conference in Najaf

*Al-Rawabi Humanitarian Organization*

*Representative: Mr. Uday Abdul-Fattah*

*Overview:*

- Has worked in the areas of relief, human resources, and human rights
- Primary source(s) of funding: self-financing
- Staffed entirely by volunteers
- Activities are only in Basra, and some Basra governorate counties
- Received letters of acknowledgements from several National and International organizations.
- Has a strong relationship with the Sunni Endowment in Basra.

*Programs and Projects:*

- Conducted lectures on Human Rights

### *Aland Organization for Youth Development*

*Representative: Mr. Nawzad Muhammad Pirmusa*

*Overview:*

- Works with youth
- Established in Duhok in 2006
- Have offices in 3 counties
- Do not serve all Iraqi ethnicities and sects

*Programs and Projects:*

- Participated in a conference on Kurdish Genocide
- Stage educational plays and conduct other human rights educational programming

### *Ayinda Center for Youth Causes*

*Representative: Mr. Izzeddin Ahmed Aziz*

*Overview:*

- Primary funding source(s): income from two clinics
- Headquartered in Erbil and have offices in 5 other provinces, including Baghdad.
- Originally part of Iraqi Hope Society
- Collaborated with Heartland Alliance, NPA, as well as different UN organizations.
- Have database systems, but need to train current staff on its use
- Looking to train their interviewers

*Programs and Projects:*

- Has conducted approximately 60 projects since 2007
- Has sent 167 trainees outside Iraq
- One focus of their work is combating white slavery (This focus area was unique to the Ayinda Center among the participating organizations)
- Participated in the “Ambassadors of Democracy” project
- Organized meetings between state officials and citizens

### *Kurdistan Institute for Human Rights*

*Representative: Mr. Ali Kareem*

*Overview:*

- Primary areas of focus are: women’s rights, child’s rights, handicapped people’s rights, political rights, IDPs and prisoners
- They have offices in 5 Northern provinces
- Established 2005 with a license from Baghdad. Received Kurdish permission in 2008
- Concentrated on freedom of press, freedom of opinion and national reconciliation.
- Have representatives in Europe and the US, as well as in many Iraqi provinces.
- Collaborated with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID)



- Supportive of human resource development and coexistence
- Projects and Programs:
- Worked as human rights advisors and trainers
  - Conducted seminars on their focus topics
  - Engaged media, focusing on how it can serve human rights.

Association of Ezidi Brotherhood and Solidarity

Representative: Mr. Husam Abdullah

Overview:

- Areas of focus: minorities, youth, women, constitution, elections and media
- Primary funding source(s): unconditioned donations and self-funding
- Established in 2003 and headquartered in Baashiqa
- Not exclusive to Ezidis, considering the possibility of renaming the organization to reflect this
- Members have attended a course on minorities in Indonesia and courses on human rights documentation in Istanbul.
- Fully independent organization
- Collaborates with several other NGOs

Programs and Projects:

- Have concentrated on documenting violations against minorities in Mosul
- Proposed method for documentation is manual data entry into a database. Received training on Martus, but haven't implemented it yet
- Presented a suggestion for taking religion off the Iraqi national ID
- Worked on projects concerning education and media

Communication and Outreach:

- Issue a monthly magazine about human rights

Amna Suraka National Museum

Representative: Ms. Amira Ameen

Overview:

- Specialize in gathering information on the violations committed at the *Amna Suraka* security complex
- Provide help for victims of human rights violations at facilities such as *Amna Suraka*, the Anfal and Abu Ghraib prison

Islamic Organization for Human Rights

Representative: Mr. Yasir Dhia Saeed

Overview:

- Established in 2003 in Mosul by a group of lawyers
- Primary funding source(s): *Adala* (Justice) Network, *A Bridge to Baghdad* Italian organization, and other international funders
- Organization now includes law professors as well

- Human Rights Watch considered them as one of their reliable sources in Iraq.
- Received recognition for their work from many international organizations including Frontline Iraq, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and other Swiss and Danish organizations.
- Have collaborated with International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)
- Cover IDP issues
- 7 members of the organization have been killed in the conflict since 2003.

#### Projects and Programs:

- Monitors and documents Human Rights violations
- Worked on Iraqi detainees in US custody since 2004, with a concentration on the battle fronts such as Najaf and Falluja.
- Visited US & Iraqi prisons.
- Filed a complaint against US Army before UK courts one month before the Abu Ghraib scandal.
- Cooperated with Iraqi Ministry of Human Rights regarding following-up on detainees' names and conditions

#### Communication and Outreach:

- Issued a human rights magazine in 2003
- Wrote many reports about Iraqi Armed Forces violations.
- Participated in many international conferences in Dublin, Geneva, Brussels and elsewhere.

## CONCLUSIONS

After careful review of the provided paperwork and detailed individual discussions, IHRLI staff decided the following:

- IHRLI decided not to work with the Iraq Foundation, the Ayinda Center for Youth Causes and the Association of Ezidi Brotherhood and Solidarity.
- IHRLI also decided not to include the Iraq of Tomorrow Humanitarian Cultural Association because their work is concentrated primarily on relief efforts, rather than human rights projects, and the Al-Rawabi Humanitarian Organization due to their lack of formal infrastructure.
- IHRLI staff selected the Kurdistan Institute for Human Rights, the Amna Suraka National Museum and the Islamic Organization for Human Rights for participation in this project.
- The Aland Organization for Youth Development has been identified as an alternate for participation, pending further discussions with other potential participant organizations.
- IHRLI staff began making plans for an additional invitational meeting in Sulaimaniya. The meeting will include Mr. Hawrie Jumaa from the Organization for Future Studies and Human Rights as well as other NGOs to be selected.
- Mr. Zahir Altayi will contact Dr. Wasfi Al-Sharaa and Prof. Buraq Al-Hamidy who are both NGO activists and have previously worked with IHRLI in Basra.
- This meeting was very useful for the project development and provided important information to the IHRLI staff. We also culled some best practices that will help us conduct similar meetings in the future.
- Each participating organization will receive an e-mail informing them of the results of our selection.

## Appendix A: Meeting Agenda

Date: 04-05 January 2009

Venue: IHRLI Office, Sulaimaniya

Program Details Time

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### **4 January**

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| I. Registration and Welcome Reception                            | 9:30  |
| II. Introduction and Overview of IHRLI Projects                  | 10:00 |
| III. Brief Discussion of Documentation Methods Used in IHP & CVI | 10:30 |
| IV. Introduction of Participant Organizations                    | 11:00 |
| V. Lunch   | 12:30 |
| VI. Individual Meetings with Organizations' Representatives      | 13:00 |
| VII. Visit to <i>Amna Suraka</i> National Museum                 | 15:00 |

### **5 January**

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|---|-------|
| VIII. Individual Meetings with Organizations' Representatives | 10:00 |
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