



**Convention on the Elimination
of All Forms of Discrimination
against Women**

Distr.: General
14 April 2026

Original: English

**Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination
against Women**
Ninety-second session

Summary record of the 2182nd meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Wednesday, 4 February 2026, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Ms. Haidar

Contents

Consideration of reports submitted by States Parties under article 18 of the Convention
(*continued*)

Eighth periodic report of Iraq

This record is subject to correction. Corrections should be set forth in a memorandum and also incorporated in a copy of the record. They should be sent within one week of the date of the present record to the Documents Management Section (DMS-DCM@un.org).

Any corrected records of the public meetings of the Committee at this session will be reissued for technical reasons after the end of the session.



The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Consideration of reports submitted by States Parties under article 18 of the Convention *(continued)*

Eighth periodic report of Iraq (CEDAW/C/IRQ/8; CEDAW/C/IRQ/Q/8; CEDAW/C/IRQ/RQ/8)

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Iraq joined the meeting.*
2. **A representative of Iraq**, introducing his country's eighth periodic report (CEDAW/C/IRQ/8), said that, during the drafting of the report and the preparations for the dialogue with the Committee, consultations had been held with a number of civil society organizations that were in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council.
3. Iraq had faced enormous challenges in recent years, foremost among them security-related challenges, including the terrorist attacks carried out by Da'esh and the grave violations committed by that group, especially against women. In addition, there had been successive waves of displacement and climate challenges. Nonetheless, Iraq was focused on stability, reconstruction and development and had made remarkable progress in promoting the role of women in decision-making and their political participation. Eighty-four women had won seats in the 2025 parliamentary elections and 76 had won seats in the 2023 provincial council elections. In addition, 9 women had chaired parliamentary committees and 16 had served as deputy chairs during the last parliamentary session. There were three female ministers in the current cabinet, and women also held other senior positions such as heads of agencies, deputy ministers, ambassadors, judges and directors general. A national plan had been developed to support the participation of Iraqi women in elections.
4. The Supreme Council for Women's Affairs, chaired by the Prime Minister and composed of three women ministers, the Prime Minister's advisor on women's affairs and the Director General of the National Department for Iraqi Women, was responsible for formulating public policies on matters affecting women. There were 72 women's affairs units, present in all ministries, government institutions and governorates.
5. A number of national plans and strategies aimed at empowering and protecting women and strengthening their role in the political, economic, security, social and cultural fields had been adopted, including the National Strategy for Iraqi Women (2023–2030) and the National Strategy to Combat Violence against Women (2018–2030). With a view to implementing Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), the second (2021–2024) and third (2025–2030) national plans for the women and peace and security agenda had been adopted.
6. The Government had adopted a package of measures to promote employment opportunities for women in the public and private sectors, including the Economic Empowerment Plan for Iraqi Women (2020–2025), which aimed to create economic opportunities for women and promote their participation in the labour market. The necessary funds had been allocated to finance projects for more than 5,000 women under a Central Bank initiative, and a number of vocational training programmes for women had been implemented by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. In 2024, women had made up 55.51% of successful applicants appointed to government jobs in various ministries and agencies through the Federal Public Service Council.
7. The Government attached great importance to raising educational standards, improving the quality of education, promoting the value of knowledge and developing capacity-building programmes for educational and administrative staff in educational institutions and universities, particularly for women, and awarding study grants. There had been a focus on developing educational infrastructure and, between 2023 and 2025, a total of 3,701 schools had been built or renovated. In addition, the Government had launched the National Strategy for Education in Iraq (2022–2031), with support from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), under which compulsory free education was provided in accordance with Goal 4 of the Sustainable Development Goals. School enrolment rates among girls had increased at all levels between 2023 and 2025. Girls' enrolment rates were approaching those of boys in primary education and had surpassed those

of male students in higher education. The Ministry of Education had opened additional literacy centres for girls, especially in rural areas.

8. National plans and strategies had been adopted to promote the right to health through a comprehensive and non-discriminatory approach, targeting all levels of physical and mental health for all groups, with the highest priority given to women. The Government had worked on an integrated package of maternity care services in hospitals and primary healthcare centres and had expanded health coverage through mobile clinics to ensure easy access to services in remote areas, completely free of charge. The number of family planning centres had also been increased. As a result of the Government's ongoing efforts, the maternal mortality rate had fallen from 29.6 per 100,000 live births to 27.2 per 100,000 live births between 2023 and 2025.

9. **A representative of Iraq** said that significant progress had been made in increasing the representation of women in decision-making positions in the Kurdistan Region; the Speaker of the Kurdistan Parliament, three ministers and one provincial governor were women. Women also played a prominent role in the judiciary, making up 69 of the total 263 judges. More than 27% of prosecutors and 67% of judicial assistants were women, and efforts were ongoing to enhance women's representation on the Kurdistan Judicial Council. The adoption of a 30% quota had contributed to ensuring the effective representation of women in the Kurdistan Parliament; a total of 147 women had held seats over successive legislative terms, 65 of whom had chaired permanent parliamentary committees. A high-level committee had been set up to develop policies and procedures to ensure the protection of female candidates from defamation and abuse in the media and on social media during election campaigns.

10. The Kurdistan Regional Government was committed to ensuring equality in the labour market. A total of 778 companies – mostly in the trade, services, tourism and technology sectors – were headed by female managing directors, reflecting the impact of administrative and legislative reforms to promote women's economic participation. A total of 41,953 local women workers and 5,239 foreign women workers had been registered in the social security system. Direct support had been provided through small loans to more than 1,198 women farmers.

11. Confidence in official mechanisms for reporting abuse was growing. The 119 emergency helpline for reporting domestic violence had received a total of 12,274 calls in 2024. Five shelters had been established to provide legal, social and psychological support to women who had experienced or were at risk of violence, serving more than 900 women annually. With regard to combating child marriage, the courts had reviewed 313 cases. Field teams had been set up in camps for refugees and internally displaced persons to deal with the issue, and public prosecutors initiated proceedings immediately upon receiving a report of underage marriage. Awareness-raising campaigns had achieved tangible results in terms of combating female genital mutilation.

12. In the education sector, there were now more than 872,000 female students, representing nearly half of the total number of students in the Region. Women played an increasingly prominent role in the media, as evidenced by the fact that there were 1,600 female journalists and 79 female editors-in-chief. More than 190 registered women's organizations were working to empower women in the political, economic and social spheres. A total of 1,261 women were serving in the Peshmerga forces, 132 of them as officers. There had been a 15% increase in the number of women joining the police force since 2021.

13. Pursuant to a decision by the Council of Ministers, a committee had been established to document the violations committed against the Yazidis by Da'esh terrorists as genocide. A budget had been allocated for the liberation of abducted Yazidis. More than 1,080 survivors had been transferred to Germany to receive psychological support, while more than 3,500 had received financial support.

Articles 1–6

14. The Chair said that, following the dialogue with the State Party in 2014, the Committee had recommended that article 41 of the Constitution should be repealed and that the draft Jaafari personal status law should be withdrawn because of the serious risks it posed

to the rights of women and girls. The Committee was therefore gravely concerned about the 2025 amendments to the Personal Status Act, in the form of the new Jaafari Personal Status Code, which opened the door to child marriage. Implementation of the Committee's earlier recommendations was an essential step to protect the principle of equality and ensure the fulfilment by Iraq of its international obligations and would not conflict with respect for pluralism and freedom of belief.

15. It appeared that, in Iraq, certain international conventions were presented in educational curricula as being contrary to societal values, rather than as tools for protecting human dignity and promoting justice, particularly with regard to women's and girls' rights. At the same time, women's rights defenders were subjected to systematic campaigns involving threats, defamation and abuse, particularly on social media. Such practices undermined freedom of expression and participation and constituted a real obstacle to any legal or social reform.

16. **Ms. de Silva de Alwis** said that, upon accession, Iraq had entered significant reservations to the Convention, including to article 2 (f) and (g), which required States Parties to modify or abolish discriminatory laws and penal provisions. The Committee wished to know whether the State Party would consider withdrawing its reservations to articles 2 and 16, as it had done with its reservations to article 9 in 2014 after amending its Constitution and laws to grant Iraqi women the right to confer their nationality on their children. One example of continuing discrimination in the law was article 41 of the Criminal Code, which granted husbands the right to punish or discipline their wives within limits set by law or custom, a provision deemed unconstitutional by the Federal Supreme Court in 2019.

17. In the light of the February 2025 amendment allowing couples to choose whether their marriage and family matters were governed by the 1959 Personal Status Act or the new Jaafari Personal Status Code, the Committee wished to know if that might result in husbands choosing to make such a change during marriage, thereby rendering their wives powerless in relation to inheritance, custody and divorce, and if there was a fear that interpretations of the law might be arbitrary.

18. While the Committee welcomed the adoption of the General Amnesty Act in 2025, which had temporarily halted executions, it would like to know whether the State Party was considering the complete abolition of the death penalty.

19. Despite the progress made following the adoption of the second and third national plans for the women and peace and security agenda and the Yazidi Female Survivors Act of 2021, the filing of a criminal complaint of sexual violence often led to stigmatization and retraumatization for female survivors. The Committee wished to know how the State Party intended to create a survivor-centred justice system and whether it would consider adopting the Global Code of Conduct for Gathering and Using Information about Systematic and Conflict-related Sexual Violence. It also wished to know whether reparation was in line with the Basic Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Remedy and Reparation for Victims of Gross Violations of International Human Rights Law and Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law and how many applications for reparation had been lodged under the Yazidi Female Survivors Act. The Committee would be interested to hear how reparation, healthcare and education were provided for children born as a result of rape by Da'esh fighters, and how many Da'esh fighters responsible for the rape and enslavement of Yazidi women had been tried on the basis of the Yazidi Female Survivors Act rather than the Anti-Terrorism Act. It also wished to learn how many members of the national network of female peace mediators were Kurdish or Yazidi.

20. **A representative of Iraq** said that, while the Constitution guaranteed equal rights for women, many laws still needed to be reviewed to remove provisions that discriminated against them. Most of the discriminatory articles in the Criminal Code had already been repealed or amended. The Supreme Judicial Council had issued a set of guidelines, including on the prohibition on arresting women for unintentional crimes. The family courts had been restructured in 2021 to ensure the speedy resolution of domestic violence cases.

21. With regard to the Jaafari Personal Status Code, it should be noted that the minimum age for marriage under Iraqi law was 18. Judges could authorize the marriage of a girl aged 15 years or over provided that her physical maturity had been established, her legal guardian

had given his consent and the marriage was deemed to be necessary. Any marriage contract concluded in the absence of those guarantees would be considered null and void. Child marriage and forced marriage were not permitted under Iraqi law and, under article 376 of the Criminal Code it was an offence to enter into a marriage knowing that the marriage was invalid for any reason.

22. The aim of the February 2025 amendment to the Personal Status Act, based on article 41 of the Constitution, was to enable citizens to choose to be subject to the legal system that was compatible with their religious and sectarian beliefs, while preserving the diversity and freedom guaranteed by the Constitution. The Personal Status Act of 1959 remained in force, but there was now an additional option for those who wished to organize their personal affairs in accordance with sharia law. The amendment reflected the Government's respect for religious and sectarian pluralism and sought to guarantee individuals' freedom of choice within a legal framework that protected the rights of all. The amendment did not provide for the establishment of sharia courts but relied on the existing civil courts, and clerics were not granted legal authority but were consulted as experts only when necessary.

23. **A representative of Iraq** said that the Government was committed to achieving harmony between the customs and traditions of a diverse society and the country's international obligations. Article 41 of the Criminal Code on the disciplining of wives and children was no longer applied pursuant to the 2019 ruling of the Federal Supreme Court. Under article 412 of the Criminal Code, it was an offence to cause bodily harm to one's wife or child. The community police played a role in preventing such offences, which statistics from the Ministry of the Interior showed had declined significantly.

24. With regard to article 409 of the Criminal Code, under which reduced penalties applied if a man killed his wife or a female relative after catching her in the act of adultery, the mitigating circumstance was applied if it was shown that the element of surprise had affected the perpetrator's mental state such that he was unaware of his actions. However, in the case of a premeditated killing, the man would be held fully accountable. With regard to article 398, under which a man who raped a woman could avoid punishment if he married her, it should be stressed that the victim must give her consent to the marriage.

25. **A representative of Iraq** said that the Government took an inclusive approach to guaranteeing the right to health and took into account all groups, including minorities, displaced persons and persons with disabilities. The Public Health Act of 1981, as amended, applied to all persons without exception and emphasized the right to the highest standard of physical and mental health. The National Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health (2025–2030) had been launched in cooperation with the World Health Organization (WHO) and addressed violence from a healthcare perspective. In addition, a national plan had been developed to promote the principle of social justice in the health sector, including by focusing on vulnerable and marginalized groups and expanding access to primary healthcare in remote, conflict-affected and poor areas. Health centres had been set up in shelters for victims of violence in the Governorates of Kirkuk and Nineveh, and comprehensive psychological support services were provided to women and children who were victims of Da'esh. A ministerial committee had been established to deal with the cases of male and female survivors of Da'esh. The Government covered the cost of their treatment in healthcare facilities in Iraq or outside the country and they were issued with special health cards. Specialized staff trained in dealing with psychological trauma had been assigned to work in rehabilitation centres for Yazidi survivors. A range of services was also available free of charge for child victims of violence. A multisector referral guide and a standardized procedural guide had been prepared to address violence against women, children and vulnerable groups, including older persons and persons with special needs, in coordination with WHO.

26. **A representative of Iraq** said that a high-level committee had been set up under the Prime Minister's Office to search for abducted Yazidis and other groups covered by the Yazidi Survivors Act (No. 8) of 2021. A database of missing persons created by the General Directorate for Survivors' Affairs contained the details of 773 people – 250 females and 523 males. A 24-hour hotline had been set up to report missing persons and had been widely publicized through the media in neighbouring countries and in camps for displaced persons.

The Prime Minister had announced that anyone who provided information about an abducted person would receive a large reward.

27. A total of 2,216 survivors were currently receiving a monthly allowance of 800,000 dinars under the Yazidi Survivors Act. An online platform had been set up to simplify the application procedure for the allowance: wherever they were in the world, survivors could apply electronically and attend their hearings online without having to endure the hardship of travel to Iraq. More than 2,440 identity documents had been issued to survivors and their families in Iraq to replace lost documents. The first batch of 262 plots of land had been distributed to survivors in the districts of Sinjar and Tal Afar, and preparations were under way to distribute the second batch. A project to promote peace and stability in Sinjar had been launched at a cost of US \$3 million, in coordination with international organizations and under the direct supervision of the Prime Minister's Office.

28. The conditions had been created for the return of displaced persons through the reconstruction of cities, the resolution of security issues and support for displaced persons. Eighty-nine projects were being implemented in Sinjar and Nineveh Plains to support the return of survivors. In cooperation with the International Organization for Migration, some 200 survivors had been provided with small grants to develop income-generating projects. Workshops had been held to help survivors build their skills and reintegrate into society, and steps were being taken to ensure that children could return to school. An educational centre offering remedial courses for all school levels and literacy classes had been opened in Sinjar. Psychological centres had been opened to provide treatment to female survivors of Da'esh, and a request had been made to the Supreme Judicial Council for criminal investigations to be conducted by female investigators and judges to avoid embarrassment for complainants who might not wish to talk about their experiences in front of men.

29. **A representative of Iraq** said that one of the key themes of the National Strategy for Iraqi Women (2023–2030) was the role of women in addressing climate challenges. A national women's team had been formed to support sustainable energy consumption and other climate challenges. As part of the Climate Wise Women project, 596 women had benefited from training from agricultural advisors. The Climate Change Risk Insurance Project, a pioneering project in the Middle East, provided microinsurance products for smallholder farmers and agricultural producers.

30. **The Chair** said that, as a woman from Lebanon, she was all too aware of the negative impact of sectarian personal status laws on gender equality. The concerns expressed by the Committee following its dialogues with the State Party in 2014 and 2019 regarding personal status laws remained. The Committee was particularly worried about the amendments made to the Personal Status Act in relation to the age of marriage, which reportedly meant that girls as young as 9 years old could marry, and to women's inheritance, property and custody rights. It was also concerned about the textbook issued by the Ministry of Higher Education that described the Convention as a tool for dismantling the family.

31. **Ms. de Silva de Alwis** said that she would welcome more information on survivor-centred justice. She would also be interested to hear the delegation's comments on the fact that few Da'esh fighters were tried for offences of rape and sexual violence rather than simply terrorism-related offences.

32. She wished to know whether article 41 of the Criminal Code would be repealed given that the Federal Supreme Court had ruled it unconstitutional. She wondered whether the State Party might follow the example of other countries in the region in repealing provisions that allowed for the nullification of rape charges if the rapist married his victim and that provided for mitigating circumstances in so-called honour killings.

33. **Ms. Toledo Vásquez** asked how the requirement to swear on the Qur'an in court proceedings applied to plaintiffs or witnesses who were not Muslim.

34. **A representative of Iraq** said that there was no standardized human rights curriculum; instead, each university that offered human rights training developed its own. He was not aware of a specific textbook such as the one mentioned by the Chair, but any such material would certainly be unacceptable to the Ministry of Higher Education. With regard

to article 41 of the Criminal Code, that provision would not be repealed until the ongoing revision of the Code was completed.

35. **Ms. Jarbussynova** said that, despite the steps taken, efforts to implement article 3 of the Convention remained weak and fragmented. Since the abolition of the Ministry of Women's Affairs, responsibility for gender equality had been dispersed across institutions. The Committee wished to know what was being done to establish or strengthen a centralized high-level national machinery for the advancement of women with a clear mandate and adequate financial and human resources. In the light of persistent and widespread gender-based violence, including domestic violence, conflict-related violence and harmful practices, the delegation might explain what measures were being taken to adopt comprehensive legislation on violence against women and to ensure effective prevention, protection, investigation and accountability. The lack of effective monitoring mechanisms and sex-disaggregated and intersectional data limited the State Party's ability to assess progress in advancing women's rights and adopt evidence-based policies. The delegation might comment on how the State Party intended to address that situation.

36. **Ms. Akia** said that, as women and girls remained underrepresented and disadvantaged in areas including technology, education, diplomacy, the labour market and political and public life, the Committee would be interested to know what steps the State Party was taking to effectively implement national legislation, the Convention and the Committee's general recommendations No. 40 (2024) and No. 25 (2004) in order to achieve gender parity in all areas and whether it monitored compliance with existing quotas and would consider increasing them. The Committee would appreciate information on temporary special measures implemented to support the political and economic participation of marginalized groups, including Yazidi women, rural women and women with disabilities.

37. **A representative of Iraq** said that, in accordance with article 3 of the Constitution, Iraq was a country composed of multiple nationalities, religions and sects. Non-Muslims in Iraq were therefore not required to swear on the Qur'an in legal proceedings. Regarding the country's human rights machinery, the High Commission for Human Rights, established pursuant to Act No. 53 of 2008, was fully operational; work was under way on the appointment of the members of its board.

38. **A representative of Iraq** said that the High Council for Women and Development had been established, alongside the Supreme Council for Women's Affairs. The latter comprised 72 sections representing ministries without portfolio and governorates. Programmes and activities to promote women's political participation had been implemented through those mechanisms, as well as in the context of the plans and programmes developed by the National Department for Iraqi Women.

39. **Ms. Rana** said that, in the light of reports that violence against women and girls remained widespread, was significantly underreported and often went unpunished, she would welcome clarification of the expected timeline for the adoption of the bill on protection from domestic violence, along with information regarding any plans to repeal article 409 of the Criminal Code, which continued to allow defence of honour to be considered a mitigating factor in killings. She also wondered how the authorities intended to strengthen monitoring mechanisms and improve data collection on gender-based violence, including domestic violence.

40. As the legal framework appeared to offer limited protection from violence against women, leaving survivors vulnerable to further violence, she would be grateful for information on any plans to expand access to women's shelters and protection centres and to ensure that such facilities were adequately funded and operated within a clear legal framework. In addition, details would be appreciated of efforts to provide specialized training for police and judicial officials to address cases of gender-based violence through a survivor-centred approach. She also wished to know whether the State Party envisaged amending article 25 of the Personal Status Act, which restricted women's freedom of movement by making marital maintenance conditional on obedience, and whether it would prohibit the invoking of religious interpretations to justify discriminatory stereotypes.

41. The Committee had received reports of a growing backlash against gender equality in Iraq, including official restrictions on the use of the term "gender" in public policy and of

gender-equality terminology more generally in official documentation, along with the introduction of legislative amendments framed by religious doctrine. She wondered how the State Party intended to address that backlash. She would also welcome information on the measures in place to address gender-based violence in the digital sphere, including online publications that reinforced discriminatory gender norms, and on the steps taken to ensure accountability and effective access to justice in that context.

42. She wished to know what steps the authorities took to ensure that awareness-raising initiatives aimed at tackling discriminatory stereotypes and harmful practices were translated into concrete legal reforms and accountability measures. She would also welcome information on engagement with religious and community leaders to address patriarchal norms. Lastly, she wished to know whether the State Party was aware of reports of the high prevalence of female genital mutilation in certain rural parts of the country and what measures were envisaged to ensure its complete elimination.

43. **Ms. Dettmeijer-Vermeulen** said that she wished to know whether the State Party planned to amend the Anti-Human Trafficking Act to introduce a non-punishment clause that would protect victims from being prosecuted or penalized for unlawful acts resulting from their exploitation, and to ensure that evidence of force, fraud or coercion was not required in order to establish a child-trafficking offence, in accordance with the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.

44. She would welcome information on the progress made in implementing commitments to criminalize *mut'ah* marriage – temporary, fixed-term marriage concluded under contracts ending automatically without divorce – and close offices facilitating the registration of such arrangements, in the light of credible reports that they were used as a cover for sexual exploitation and trafficking in persons. In addition, she would welcome details of the measures in place to ensure the impartial investigation and prosecution of officials implicated in trafficking-related misconduct or corruption. She wondered whether those measures had produced tangible results, given persistent reports that certain officials had engaged in or facilitated trafficking and that prosecutions and disciplinary measures in such cases were lacking.

45. She would be grateful for information on the steps taken to establish a national data-collection system on trafficking and clarification of the reasons for the apparent lack of collaboration with civil society in strengthening data-validation and reporting mechanisms. In that connection, she wondered whether the State Party was considering removing the legal restrictions that prohibited non-governmental organizations (NGOs) from operating shelters, particularly given that State-run facilities often faced capacity constraints.

46. While the Committee welcomed the adoption of new standard operating procedures for victim identification and the training of specialized investigative judges and frontline officials, it wondered whether consideration was being given to expanding victim-identification authority beyond the judiciary. Lastly, she would appreciate details of the measures taken to ensure that Yazidi women, including those who had been displaced, were effectively protected from trafficking and further abuse, given their heightened vulnerability to trafficking and re-trafficking.

47. **A representative of Iraq** said that the Ministry of the Interior had established the Directorate for Family and Child Protection, which was responsible for receiving complaints and responding to cases involving violence against women and children. The Directorate operated specialized units and offices across the country, receiving in-person complaints and emergency calls on a 24-hour basis. Cases where domestic violence was suspected or reported were documented and referred to the competent judicial authorities, and coordination was maintained with hospitals, schools and other governmental institutions.

48. Victims were received and interviewed in dedicated rooms and were immediately referred for medical examinations, the results of which were recorded in official reports. The Ministry's 911 emergency hotline served as a channel for reporting incidents, obtaining legal information and receiving guidance on how victims and survivors could access protection services. Psychological and legal support were provided, together with assistance aimed at

facilitating the reintegration of victims into society. The confidentiality of sensitive cases was ensured and the police followed up on all reported incidents.

49. Legal protection was available to all citizens, including women activists, through established complaint-submission mechanisms. The Human Rights Directorate of the Ministry of the Interior exercised oversight over the handling of complaints of rights violations. The Ministry had strengthened its response to electronic blackmail and cybercrime. Such cases were assessed and distributed among specialized units according to their nature and complexity. Incidents in which the perpetrator was unknown were handled by the Directorate for Combating Cybercrime, whereas cases involving identified perpetrators were generally handled by the Directorate of Community Police.

50. Pursuant to the Anti-Human Trafficking Act, the Government had established a central anti-trafficking committee chaired by the Ministry of the Interior and composed of representatives of all relevant government bodies. The committee prepared national action plans, issued operational guidance and submitted reports on trafficking trends, while also proposing measures to improve victim protection and assistance. Through the implementation of the National Plan to Combat Trafficking in Persons and the work of law enforcement agencies, including crime investigation directorates in Baghdad and other provinces, trafficking networks had been disrupted and victims of exploitation identified and provided with protection services and access to rehabilitation programmes. A government-run shelter provided support to trafficking victims, with a focus on social reintegration.

51. **A representative of Iraq** said that a number of shelters had been established in different provinces of the country to meet the needs of women victims of violence. Those shelters were operated in cooperation with international organizations and local NGOs, which provided social and humanitarian support services, under the supervision of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. Women could be admitted to a shelter following referral from the police, the courts or humanitarian organizations. Direct admission was also possible. Upon arrival, a confidential needs assessment was conducted to determine the support required, medical examinations were arranged to identify injuries and referrals were made to specialized treatment centres and hospitals in coordination with the Ministry of Health. Women received legal advice and representation and were accompanied when submitting complaints to the police or appearing before the courts, including in cases involving divorce related to domestic abuse. The shelters also provided psychological and social support, including counselling sessions conducted by psychologists, to help women cope with the trauma that resulted from violence. In addition, there were programmes for economic empowerment and professional reintegration. For example, temporary financial assistance could be provided to support the establishment of micro-businesses or to facilitate entry into the labour market, along with training in small-business development.

52. **A representative of Iraq** said that the National Strategy to Combat Violence against Women had been updated for the period 2023–2030 and a multisectoral national team had been established to support its implementation by preparing reports based on information from relevant government entities. Among the main achievements under the Strategy were the reinstatement of family courts and the review of legal provisions that contained discriminatory elements affecting women. Guidelines had been developed to prevent the unnecessary arrest of women in cases of gender-based violence, and the capacity of prosecutors to investigate cases involving such violence had been strengthened through training and workshops. Special hospital units had been set up to provide psychosocial care for women survivors of violence.

53. In order to create an enabling environment for the reporting of gender-based violence, several government institutions, including the Ministry of the Interior, had adopted codes of conduct that included rules designed to protect women. A code of conduct had been introduced for the internal security forces, including provisions concerning women and criminal justice, while the Ministry of Justice had developed guidelines on the treatment of female detainees. The Communications and Media Commission had issued guidance aimed at protecting women in the media.

54. **A representative of Iraq** said that the Kurdistan Regional Government had taken various steps to strengthen the promotion and protection of women's rights in the Kurdistan Region. For example, it excluded so-called honour crimes from eligibility for regional amnesty. With regard to the liberation of Yazidis subjected to crimes committed by Da'esh, thousands of abductees had been freed, over 1,000 victims had been formally registered and approximately 2,000 women had been recorded as having suffered serious human rights violations. Complaints continued to be filed and processed. Complaints relating to gender-based violence had increased by approximately 30% in the Region as a result of awareness-raising campaigns, with about 13,000 cases reported by the end of 2024. A regional moratorium on the death penalty was in place; 577 individuals remained on death row with their sentences suspended. Three regional psychiatric hospitals had been built. Concerning transnational organized crime, almost 400 cases had been registered in the Kurdistan Region in 2025, of which over 250 had already been resolved. There were currently 400 women with disabilities identified as residing in the area.

55. **A representative of Iraq** said that a committee had been established to review and amend existing legislation on trafficking in persons, including the Anti-Human Trafficking Act. In addition, work was under way to amend legal provisions addressing cyberextortion, with a focus on combating cases affecting women.

56. **Ms. de Silva de Alwis** said that she wondered how the authorities would ensure that the new digital platform being developed to combat online extortion and other cybercrimes addressed and prevented the use of social media by groups such as Da'esh to target and recruit women belonging to minority communities. She also wished to know whether the State Party cooperated with other States undertaking prosecutions in relation to crimes committed against the Yazidis under the principle of universal jurisdiction.

57. **Ms. Akia** said that she would welcome details of the temporary special measures currently in place to support the political and economic participation of Yazidi women in the country.

58. **Ms. Jarbussynova** said that she wished to know what level of authority the High Council for Women and Development possessed with respect to other government bodies and what budget and staff were currently allocated to it. She would welcome clarification as to whether there was a concrete plan to reform the national human rights institution in order to bring it fully into line with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the Paris Principles). In addition, she would appreciate an explanation of the specific indicators used by the State Party to measure progress in advancing women's rights.

59. **A representative of Iraq** said that, under article 14 of the Constitution, all Iraqi citizens were equal before the law without discrimination on grounds such as ethnicity, colour, sex or religion; Yazidi women were therefore able to stand for election. They already occupied a significant number of positions in the public sector, including seats in the Council of Representatives, the parliament of Iraq. A call for candidates for election to the High Commission for Human Rights had been opened and approximately 3,000 curricula vitae had been received, of which 100 had been shortlisted. Members of the Commission would soon be elected.

60. Following the termination of the mandate of the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (UNITAD), the National Centre for Mutual Judicial Cooperation had been established to work with international organizations and States in exchanging relevant information on related issues. A comprehensive database had been transferred from UNITAD to the Centre, containing an electronic archive of crimes committed by Da'esh. The Iraqi Martyrs Foundation and the Forensic Medicine Department had established several committees to search for missing persons and to locate and excavate mass graves.

61. **A representative of Iraq** said that the High Council for Women and Development was chaired by the Prime Minister and included a number of female ministers among its members. It set policies and programmes relating to women's rights. For example, a national day for Iraqi women had been established in March. The High Council provided support to enable women to assume leadership and senior positions and had facilitated awareness-

raising campaigns and the establishment of a training centre. An account had been opened for the High Council to finance its activities and programmes. Budget allocations had also been provided to ministries and departments without portfolios to support women's activities.

62. **A representative of Iraq** said that there was extensive cooperation between the authorities responsible for combating trafficking in persons and civil society organizations, particularly in the areas of education, awareness-raising and training workshops. Cooperation also took place with a number of international organizations. International economic challenges had, however, reduced available funding and consequently limited the activities of those organizations.

63. The delay in the consideration of the bill on protection from domestic violence did not signify that perpetrators of such violence could evade punishment. The relevant bodies had continued to carry out their duties under the Criminal Code without restriction. The bill had been submitted to the parliament, with the expectation that it would be adopted during the forthcoming parliamentary term.

64. **A representative of Iraq** said that five permanent women's shelters – three regular shelters and two emergency shelters – had been established in the Kurdistan Region. Women were admitted on the basis of court orders. The shelters' expertly trained staff provided comprehensive services, including psychosocial, medical and legal support and rehabilitation, to approximately 900 women per year. In addition, a hotline had been established for persons under the age of 18 in order to provide protection and support in cases of child abuse. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the Kurdistan Regional Government was in the process of allocating approximately 9,000 housing units to low-income families in two phases, the first for young persons without guardians between the ages of 18 and 24 and the second for women who had experienced violence, were residing in shelters and had been rejected by their families.

65. The Kurdistan Regional Government had conducted a campaign to combat stereotypes and harmful practices, including female genital mutilation. More than 5,000 disadvantaged women and girls had received legal and psychosocial support under the campaign and informational materials had been widely disseminated. Available data indicated that the prevalence of female genital mutilation in the Region had more than halved in recent years. The Ministry of Education of the Kurdistan Regional Government promoted gender equality at all levels of education and had adopted policy, legislative and administrative measures to ensure a safe learning environment. During the 2024/25 academic year, 48% of the 144,883 students enrolled in education had been girls.

66. Of the cases of trafficking in persons and irregular migration recorded in the Kurdistan Region in 2024, six had involved the trafficking of children. Sixty-five foreign nationals had been arrested in connection with trafficking offences. Efforts to address the issue included awareness-raising videos produced by the Region's Ministry of Culture and Youth and capacity-building activities, including specialized training courses organized in 2024 for officials of the competent authorities in coordination with international organizations.

67. **A representative of Iraq** said that a commission had been established in the Kurdistan Region to carry out activities pursuant to United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 (2000). The commission was tasked with developing a national plan to protect women's rights during conflict and wars and strengthening women's participation in peace and security decision-making. The Region's Ministry of the Interior had organized an intensive training programme comprising more than 300 training sessions across various sectors to strengthen the participation of women in the social, economic and governance spheres.

68. Efforts were under way in the Kurdistan Region to combat hate speech against women through the education and training of religious leaders. Between 2021 and 2025, more than 50 training courses had been organized for approximately 1,200 participants with a focus on promoting tolerance and gender equality. Social protection measures had been extended to persons with special needs. Between 2016 and 2025, the number of beneficiaries of the social protection network in the Kurdistan Region had exceeded 314,000. There were currently 370 orphanages in the Region.

Articles 7–9

69. **Ms. Draz** said that, while she welcomed the progress made in promoting women's representation in public office, she wished to know how the State ensured that the quota established in article 49 of the Constitution, under which a quarter of members of the Council of Representatives must be women, did not function as a ceiling for women's representation. She also wished to know what mechanisms were in place to ensure the inclusion of women from minority communities, rural areas and women with disabilities in elected office. In addition, she wondered whether there were any mechanisms enabling women to chair parliamentary committees, which would strengthen their role in defining the legislative agenda.

70. In the light of data suggesting that women continued to face barriers to access to campaign financing and party leadership structures, as well as risks to their personal safety, she wished to know whether the State Party was considering financial incentives, such as reduced registration fees or public funding bonuses, for political parties that were close to achieving gender parity in leadership and resource allocation. She would also appreciate information on any measures taken to address digital violence as a barrier to women's participation in political parties. Were there any plans to criminalize online hate speech and the use of "deepfake" technologies and to ensure the effective implementation of the protective measures provided for in Administrative Order No. 32 of 2021?

71. According to the information available to the Committee, women's representation in executive and senior leadership positions remained well below parity, which the Committee had established as the standard for women's participation in its general recommendation No. 40 (2024) on the equal and inclusive representation of women in decision-making systems. She wondered whether the State Party planned to put in place temporary special measures to address that situation and whether it had developed strategies to promote women's leadership in the judiciary, academic and research institutions and major corporations in both the public and private sectors.

72. While the Committee commended the State Party for adopting the Third National Action Plan on Women and Peace and Security, which had been recognized as a leading regional model, it would welcome further details on career advancement mechanisms for women in the diplomatic service and on the effectiveness of their participation in international delegations and forums. She would also appreciate disaggregated statistical data on the proportion of female diplomats in leadership positions, together with information on efforts to establish formal monitoring systems and fast-track initiatives to enhance women's representation in diplomacy, in line with general recommendation No. 40.

73. **Mr. Safarov** said that, despite ongoing efforts to modernize documentation systems, persistent procedural barriers, as well as legal constraints, continued to impede women's access to civil documents, particularly in the case of women – widows, female heads of household and displaced women – whose spouse was deceased, missing or imprisoned, thereby increasing the risk of legal exclusion and statelessness. Those barriers also affected children born of unregistered marriages or in formerly Da'esh-controlled areas, who frequently struggled to obtain birth certificates and legal identity, limiting access to education, healthcare, social benefits and inheritance or property rights. In that connection, he wished to know whether the State Party planned to reform its legislation on nationality and citizenship, including by amending the Nationality Act and the Personal Status Act to guarantee equal access to citizenship rights for women and men, and whether procedures would be streamlined to ensure that all women and all children, irrespective of parental status, could obtain birth certificates and legal identity. He would welcome information on measures adopted to prevent *tabri'ah*, a process under which families must renounce relatives suspected of Da'esh affiliation. He would also appreciate data on undocumented women and children living in Iraq, together with information on steps taken to establish comprehensive data-collection systems on civil documentation, including data relating to internally displaced persons and electronic records concerning women. Lastly, he wondered whether the State Party had plans to accede to the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness.

74. **A representative of Iraq** said that the Government had made significant efforts to enhance women's political participation and expand their role in decision-making, including

through the establishment in 2021 of a high committee to support the political participation of Iraqi women, which remained active. The frameworks and procedures supporting women's political participation had been reviewed, and women's protection in the political sphere had been strengthened through the application of laws and regulations designed to safeguard female candidates and their electoral campaigns from violence and abuse.

75. In addition, efforts had been made to build women's capacities and empower them to engage in political activity and electoral processes by strengthening their electoral knowledge and skills and by promoting greater societal awareness. In that context, training programmes had been implemented in coordination with the Media and Communications Commission. Text messages had been disseminated to raise awareness of the importance of women's participation, and 1,118 female candidates had received training in preparation for elections. A memorandum of cooperation had been signed with the United Nations Population Fund to establish a specialized centre tasked with protecting female candidates from abuse, defamation and online blackmail, including through the removal of harmful online content.

76. In accordance with the Constitution, any vacant seat in the Council of Representatives or in local councils allocated to a woman must be filled by another woman. The Political Parties Act granted both men and women the right to establish or join political parties and required female representation on the boards of parties. At present, two political parties were headed by women. Regulations and instructions issued by the Independent High Electoral Commission were being revised to provide for positive discrimination in favour of women. Revisions already made had included the reduction of fees payable by women, particularly independent candidates, to participate in the political process.

77. The number of female ambassadors had increased with the most recent appointments; six women currently served in the diplomatic corps at ministerial rank. Efforts were under way to ensure that women holding the rank of minister plenipotentiary could assume senior diplomatic positions as opportunities arose.

78. The Government remained committed to enhancing the role of women within the executive branch, while emphasizing the importance of competence, professional capacity and leadership ability in appointments to senior positions. Currently, 108 Iraqi women held positions at the level of director general across various ministries, three women served as undersecretaries and there were 138 female judges. The Judicial Institute was headed by a woman. Through the National Data Platform for Women, efforts were under way to measure the gap between women and men in administrative and senior positions.

79. **A representative of Iraq** said that there was no objection to women chairing parliamentary committees, although appointments depended on specialization and experience in parliamentary work. Many women elected to the current parliament were expected, as they gained experience, to assume such leadership positions.

80. **A representative of Iraq** said that article 3 of the Nationality Act provided that any person born to an Iraqi father or an Iraqi mother was considered Iraqi, recognizing the mother's nationality as an independent source of original citizenship equal to that of the father. Citizenship was thus granted on the basis of descent from the mother regardless of the father's nationality and without restrictions or conditions, and it was conferred by operation of law rather than according to the will of the individual. The relevant legal framework also addressed circumstances such as disappearance or murder of the father and established specific procedures in such cases, leaving no legal gaps.

81. Children born as a result of sexual violence were guaranteed protection under the Constitution, the Nationality Act and relevant international conventions, in accordance with the principle that a child should not bear responsibility for the circumstances of his or her birth. With regard to documentation, the Ministry of the Interior applied simplified and exceptional procedures in humanitarian cases, particularly those arising from conflict situations, while consistently applying Iraqi law. The Directorate of Civil Status, Passports and Residence played a central role, registering civil events, receiving applications and coordinating with the competent civil courts and other relevant authorities. Strict attention was given to the protection of confidentiality and privacy, particularly in sensitive cases, in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.

82. **A representative of Iraq** said that accession to international conventions entailed a number of procedures beginning with the drafting of a bill for consideration by various committees; following their assessment, the bill was transmitted to the Prime Minister and subsequently to the parliament. The process required considerable time.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.