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Replies of Iraq to the list of issues in relation to its fifth periodic report*

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* The present document is being issued without formal editing.



1. The competent ministries and State agencies of Iraq work to ensure that the country's obligations under the international treaties to which it has acceded, including the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, are duly met in draft legislation. For its part, the Council of State, when reviewing draft laws submitted for it to examine, is careful to ensure that they include provisions taken from international human rights treaties and that they do not contain any provisions that run counter to those treaties.
2. Supreme Judicial Council Act No. 45 of 2017 states that the Council is to be independent from the legislative and executive authorities, its independence deriving from articles 47 and 88 of the 2005 Constitution of the Republic of Iraq. Moreover Iraqi courts daily apply the law in a manner that clearly demonstrates their reliance on the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, especially with regard to matters affecting the family, childhood, education and employment.
3. The principle of an independent judiciary is reaffirmed in article 19 (1) of the Constitution of Iraq, which reads as follows: "The courts are independent and are subject to no power other than that of the law." The Supreme Judicial Council and other authorities in Iraq are run according to that constitutional principle. In order to uphold the principle, judges receive appropriate economic recompense as well as the security measures necessary for their protection including court guards and personal bodyguards from the Ministry of the Interior's directorate for protecting public figures. Judges are also issued with weapons for personal protection. These measures can be kept up after judges go into retirement if necessary to protect their security. The procedures whereby judges are appointed are set forth in the Judicial Institute Act, which envisages a competitive process involving written and oral exams in order to enter the Institute. Cases of corruption or abuse of office by judges or members of the Office of the Public Prosecution are examined by a special disciplinary committee. If that committee finds that a judge has committed an offence, he or she is referred to the courts for a fair trial according to law.
4. Supreme Judicial Council Act No. 45 of 2017 regulates the judicial appointments mechanism so as to ensure that only qualified persons can be candidates to become a member or president of a court. The purpose of the Act is to regulate the formation, prerogatives and work of the Supreme Judicial Council in a manner consistent with recent developments in the Constitution, the law and the judiciary, thereby enabling the Council to carry out the functions assigned to it under the Constitution.

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Iraq has taken a number of steps towards post-conflict reconstruction, notably the following:

5. The Council of Ministers approved the 2021 national plan for the return of displaced persons to their liberated areas of origin. The plan incorporates the needs of the displaced persons themselves, the challenges posed by their return and proposals for programmes. It also envisages the formation of a higher committee for the relief of displaced persons, to be headed by the Minister of Migration and Migrants, which will have the task of supporting displaced persons, supervising them in times of emergency and overseeing their resettlement and reintegration. The committee is also responsible for implementing the national plan for the return of displaced persons to their liberated areas of origin. For its part, the "population and workforce" component of the national development plan 2018–2022 aims to achieve the voluntary return of 100 per cent of displaced persons and migrants to their homes.
6. The Ministry of Planning, in cooperation with the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), is running a pilot programme for areas that are emerging from situations of conflict. The programme is being run in three governorates (Nineveh, Salah al-Din and Anbar) and, in its first phase, is being implemented at the level of local institutions in the Hamdaniyah district in the governorate of Nineveh. At the same time, firm foundations are being laid from which to embark on the long path towards sustainable and equitable reconstruction and development.
7. Following the liberation of areas that had been under the control of Da'esh terrorist groups, the Government, with the support of local institutions and social organizations, has

begun reconstruction in those areas by opening roads, removing mines and remnants of war, encouraging a gradual return to work in government offices and reopening police stations and health and medical centres, the purpose being to promote a return to normal life to those areas. It also coordinated with international organizations, including the International Organization for Migration (IOM), with a view to renovating damaged houses in Nineveh, Salah al-Din and Anbar. In all, 4,100 homes have been renovated.

8. Between them the Ministry of Migration and Migrants and the Ministry of the Interior have set up a number of field committees to issue documents to displaced persons. Moreover, with the beginning of the displacement in Anbar and Nineveh, offices to replace civil status registries were opened there, and they have issued more than 430,440 official documents to displaced persons. The Ministry of Migration and Migrants has registered the return of 483,269 families from displacement, including 89,632 families who, until 15 March 2022, had been living in camps. In addition, the Ministry of Migration and Migrants has rolled out several psychosocial, economic and housing programmes to mitigate the effects and consequences of displacement, in addition to other programmes covering areas such as transportation, evacuation, temporary shelter, prolonged displacement, water, food and permanent shelter.

9. The Kurdistan Regional Government has granted displaced persons and refugees the right to work and to enjoy other rights on an equal footing with the rest of the inhabitants of the Region. In that connection, 63.5 per cent of displaced persons and 87.9 per cent of refugees are in employment.

10. Efforts towards post-conflict rehabilitation and reconstruction are continuing, and a special committee has been created to monitor projects to rebuild destroyed villages in the governorate of Kirkuk.

11. The level of many administrative units across the governorates of Iraq has been raised. New districts and subdistricts have been created, given an administrative rank and included in the Guide to the Administrative Units of the Republic of Iraq. In this way, optimal services can be provided in those areas.

12. The Ministry of Planning has been examining numerous applications for the creation of units in affected areas, drafting development reports and drawing maps of the new administrative units. The resumption of the units' activity is currently pending.

13. The Ministry of Planning has been examining an application to establish the governorate of Halabjah in Kurdistan Region, which was one of the areas worst affected by acts of genocide. A field visit has been made to the area, a development report written and administrative boundary maps drafted. The resumption of work to create the administrative unit is currently pending.

14. The obligation to implement United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) continues to be upheld, particularly in areas affected by conflict and violence.

15. As concerns the steps taken to address the impact of the armed conflict in Iraq on the economic rights of groups such as women, children, persons with disabilities, and ethnic and religious minorities, the Department for Human Development in the Ministry of Planning (which is part of the Child Welfare Authority) has cooperated with other ministries and agencies to develop the second action plan for the child protection policy (2022–2025). The aim is to protect children from violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect in situations of conflict and from the impact conflict has on their economic, social and cultural rights. This is to be achieved via a series of protective and preventive measures as well as via family and community rehabilitation and reintegration programmes. Strategic objective and goal 4.6 aim to meet the basic parameters of the action plan for child protection, which is to improve the economic and living standards of families in difficulty, including families with female breadwinners. Indicator 4.5.6 envisages the granting of loans to female heads of families with children to help them launch microprojects and thus empower them economically. The Department for Human Development in the Ministry of Planning was also involved in the development of the second national plan (2021–2024) for the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), which envisages activity in three areas: participation, protection and prevention. The “participation” component involves increasing the proportion

of women in the public and private sectors and enhancing the role they play in development. The 14 activities envisaged for the Ministry of Planning in that national plan are currently being implemented, in cooperation with other authorities involved in reconstructing liberated areas, improving security and implementing the national development plan 2018–2022.

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16. The Iraqi High Commission for Human Rights runs a number of different activities in the field with the aim of promoting and protecting economic, social and cultural rights. To that end it uses a variety of mechanisms and procedures such as courses and educational workshops for ministries and civil society organizations. Its activities include the following:

(a) The Council of Ministers approved a legal aid bill, which has been reviewed by the Council of State and referred to the Council of Representatives under articles 61 (1) and 80 (2) of the Constitution. The bill takes due account of observations made by the Legal Department of the Secretariat of the Council of Ministers and leaves open the possibility of linking the future legal aid centre with the High Commission for Human Rights.

(b) The High Commission for Human Rights works alongside the Ministry of the Interior and other stakeholders involved in capacity-building to run training courses, workshops and lectures on international treaties and covenants. Courses are also run periodically and systematically on rules of conduct for law enforcement officials as well as on basic human rights principles in the use of force and firearms. Those efforts are continuing to cover all officers and enlisted personnel in the emergency services, the police and the federal police who play a direct role in crowd control.

(c) Under its Decree No. 112 of 2021, the Council of Ministers approved the five-year national human rights plan (2021–2025). Under the same Decree and also in 2021, a ministerial committee was formed with the task of coordinating the implementation of the measures envisaged in that plan. The ministerial committee has an implementation and follow up mechanism that it operates conjointly with the High Commission for Human Rights, and a member of the Commission sits on the committee.

(d) The High Commission for Human Rights has organized visits to correctional centres, including those run by the Iraqi Department of Corrections and those run by the Department of Juvenile Corrections. A total of eight such visits were conducted between 2020 and 2021.

(e) The A status classification of the High Commission for Human Rights means that Iraq is able to enjoy full observer status on the Human Rights Council. Thus, the country can participate in Council sessions, submit written statements, participate in consultations on draft resolutions, submit reports to the human rights committees, organize events inside the Palais des Nations in Geneva, hold leadership positions on the Council and exercise other similar prerogatives.

(f) When drafting reports, the Republic of Iraq is careful to involve other stakeholders in an advisory capacity, including civil society organizations. In that regard, it should be noted that the national human rights plan was developed with the participation of the High Commission for Human Rights and three civil society organizations, taking due account of their particular fields of expertise and their presence on the ground. Those bodies continue to participate in the coordination and follow-up committee of the national human rights plan and have access to the information received by the secretariat of the national plan. In addition to this, there is cooperation and coordination with stakeholders via the exchange of information, the analysis of problems and challenges, and the proposal of solutions. The Human Rights Department at the Ministry of Justice is working to train representatives of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), making them aware of the mechanisms available and the skills they need to draft shadow reports for the treaty bodies. The Department also works to facilitate matters for human rights defenders and to prevent reprisals, in addition the measures already envisaged in the Iraqi Witness Protection Act.

(g) Civil society organizations play an active part in policymaking. Moreover, a group of civil society organizations participate, alongside the High Commission for Human Rights, in the national committee to protect journalists and combat impunity. They also

participate effectively in the operational mechanisms of the national committee for the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000).

(h) Articles 7 to 10 of the High Commission for Human Rights Act No. 53 of 2008 set forth the mechanisms and procedures for the selection of commissioners, which are intended to guarantee a high degree of transparency in the selection process. For its part, article 12 of the Act defines the powers of the commissioners and of the board of the Commission, while article 14 defines the sources whence the Commission is to be funded so as to guarantee its independence and impartiality. The Commission's financial resources consist of:

- (a) Allocations from the general State budget;
- (b) Resources from inside and outside Iraq, provided that there is no infringement of national law or of the independence of the Commission;
- (c) The Commission may accept the resources mentioned in subparagraph (b) only following approval by the Council of Representatives by an absolute majority;
- (d) The Commission's cash assets are to be placed in a special account at an Iraqi bank;
- (e) The accounts of the Commission are to be audited and overseen by the Federal Board of Audit.

17. The High Commission for Human Rights works alongside the Ministry of the Interior and other stakeholders involved in capacity-building to run training courses, workshops and lectures on international treaties and covenants. Courses are also run periodically and systematically on rules of conduct for law enforcement officials as well as on basic human rights principles in the use of force and firearms. Those efforts are continuing to cover all officers and enlisted personnel in the emergency services, the police and the federal police who play a direct role in crowd control.

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18. The national development plan 2018–2025 accommodates the principles of participation, accountability and non-discrimination in education-, health- and infrastructure-related development projects. Section IX – on human and social development – includes among its goals that of developing the education sector by making education generally available throughout the country, increasing the number of schools and improving their territorial distribution, increasing enrolment rates and reducing school dropout. The plan also focuses on the academic side and aims to increase the number of persons admitted to basic and higher education and to rebuild and renovate universities in liberated areas. Another goal of the national development plan is to promote the health sector by increasing the number of hospitals and health centres and improving their territorial distribution, increasing the number of staff and providing subsidized drugs and medical supplies for all groups within the population. As concerns infrastructure projects, the national development plan has set a goal to lengthen the road network in all its ramifications and to build a modern maintenance system for the entire network.

19. Rural development strategies have been rolled out in the governorates. Projects within those strategies are being selected and implemented with local-level involvement.

20. Comprehensive spatial development strategies have been drawn up, taking account of the advantages particular places offer and the strategic projects they can accommodate, at both national and local level.

21. Reports on spatial development gaps have been compiled, identifying national and local development needs.

22. When selecting sites for projects, the land allocation committee, which is part of the Department of Regional and Local Development in the Ministry of Planning, takes due account of the importance of creating a safe and healthy environment, which is itself linked to human rights standards.

23. Industrial, agricultural, commercial and tourism-related projects are monitored to ensure that they do not have a negative impact on the safety and well-being of citizens. The projects are classified according to the pollutants they emit and the seriousness of the effect they have on their surroundings. Housing and service projects are being rolled out with a view to providing an appropriate living environment based on human rights standards vis-à-vis a healthy environment. Such development projects have helped to provide new and diverse job opportunities in many areas.

24. The nature and location of projects are chosen in partnership with the investor concerned, who has freedom of choice in that regard. For its part, the Department of Regional and Local Development undertakes a feasibility study of locations and projects from the point of view of territorial planning and the fulfilment of development objectives.

25. There is cooperation and coordination with a civil society origination, the Turath Foundation, with a view to preparing and implementing a development plan for the historic centre of Baghdad.

26. The Department for Human Development in the Ministry of Planning – which is a member of the secretariat of the Iraq Reform, Recovery and Reconstruction Fund – proposes human capital-related projects. Such projects, in their turn, serve to uphold the rights enshrined in the Covenant, particularly the rights to education and health, thanks to innovative pilot programmes and targeted joint investments that complement or improve the effectiveness of government-run programmes, including programmes funded by the World Bank and a group of donor countries. The most significant projects in the field of education and health include the following:

(a) An “innovations for education” project being rolled out in less advanced governorates. The purpose of the initiative is to promote teaching and improve literacy and numeracy skills among disadvantaged students in primary education and in less developed governorates;

(b) A project to support education and skills development, which aims to strengthen capacities, provide educational services and develop human capital;

(c) A project to support higher education, which is intended to develop institutional capacities in areas of higher education that support national development priorities;

(d) External monitoring to ensure the promotion of equitable and high-quality COVID-19 vaccination delivery systems. The project aims to support efforts being made by the Government of Iraq to procure COVID-19 vaccines;

(e) As part of a plan for the economic empowerment of women, the Ministry of Planning, in cooperation with the Department for the Empowerment of Women of the Secretariat of the Council of Ministers, has joined with a number of civil society organizations to promote women’s participation in the labour market and to increase female involvement in the private sector. In addition, civil society organizations have been helping to review the programmes and activities envisaged in the COVID-19 response document and recovery plan, some of which are being implemented with the involvement of those organizations.

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27. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change envisages international financing mechanisms and funds, thanks to which the Ministry of the Environment and the National Centre for Climate Change were able to obtain funding for several projects. Some of those projects are being implemented while others are in the process of being launched. They include:

(a) The National Adaptation Plan, which is a scheme to build the resilience of the agricultural sector in the face of climate change in Iraq;

(b) A project to build the resilience of the agricultural sector, which aims to promote climate-resilient livelihoods for food-insecure populations in southern Iraq;

(c) The second Iraqi reporting project, the purpose of which is to register the plans and projects being implemented in the country to mitigate and adapt to the current and future impacts of climate change. The project covers sectors such as education, poverty and livelihood improvement as well as food security for poor and marginalized families, displaced persons and children;

(d) The technology needs assessment project seeks to identify requirements and to define a tangible set of activities and proposals that Iraq needs to implement in priority sectors – such as agriculture, energy and water – in the medium and long term;

(e) A project for an appropriate national-level mitigation plan so that Iraq can act as part of the international community to confront the effects of climate change and the major challenges it poses to its economy, food production and security, and to open the door for investment in the fields of renewable and clean energy and low-carbon mechanisms;

(f) A project to enhance the climate resilience of agricultural livelihoods at risk in rural communities in Iraq, which will help women and men in rural areas, as well as national and local institutions, to adapt to the negative impact of climate change.

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28. The reinvestment project of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has contributed to a number of development projects in Iraq. As of 2021, 297 projects – in fields such as education, electricity, health, resettlement, municipalities, roads and bridges, and water – had been implemented in governorates that had been the scene of violent incidents (Anbar, Mosul, Salah al-Din, Kirkuk, Diyala). Also in 2021, a total of 291 projects in the same fields were being rolled out in governorates affected by the actions of Da'esh. In 2022, 335 projects were being implemented in the same governorates.

29. International partners provide assistance to the State while respecting human rights and gender principles.

30. The Ministry of Planning cooperates with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), ESCWA, IOM and the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) which provide technical and logistical support for the implementation of the activities envisaged under annual national plans. These activities include technical aid provided by development organizations to the pilot programme for the institutional assessment of areas emerging from conflict. The purpose of the pilot programme is to raise the capacities of the local institutions involved with meeting the needs of displaced persons as they return to liberated areas. Specifically, it means ensuring that they are able to return to their damaged places of residence, restoring the social fabric and providing basic services to ensure livelihoods and achieve peace and stability. This is done with support from ESCWA and UNFPA. The national population policy document has been updated and World Population Day is celebrated on an annual basis. In addition, workshops are held to raise awareness to population-related issues, while IOM and ICMPD provide support for workshops and courses on topics such as migration, displacement, return, readmission and integration, and on the development of an integrated border strategy.

B. Issues relating to the general provisions of the Covenant (arts. 1–5)

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31. Act No. 2 of 2022 concerning emergency support for food security and development envisages a disbursement of up to 25 trillion Iraqi dinars (ID) in order to achieve food security, alleviate poverty and provide financial stability amidst alarming global developments. It also aims to achieve continuance in the provision of services to citizens, to raise standards of living once the Budget Act is no longer in force, create job opportunities, maximize the use of State resources for the benefit of Iraqis, advance development, restart projects that were stalled due to lack of funding and launch significant new projects. Public revenue generated through taxes in 2021 was as follows:

<i>Type</i>	<i>Amounts in ID (thousands)</i>
Income and wealth taxes	9 338 509 978
Excise duties and production fees	2 051 631 973
Fees	1 924 984 170

32. The spatial development strategy has been re-examined in the light of the issue of poverty and the causes of poverty, with a view to then making proposals to address the issue within a framework of economic and social justice for people in different governorates, according to their circumstances and possibilities.

33. The Central Bureau of Statistics has carried out a number of surveys, including the Iraqi Household Socioeconomic Survey.

34. The Government of Iraq introduced a state of “public health emergency” that allows it to issue decrees and apply exceptional and strict measures to reduce the spread of novel coronavirus. These steps were considered necessary to protect human rights, including the right to life and the right to health. The Ministry of Finance undertakes to make the necessary allocations to the Ministry of Health. The most significant measures taken include the following:

(a) Postponing the payment of instalments due for residential plots that were sold or leased to citizens who are not public-sector workers;

(b) Exempting tenants of commercial, industrial or other properties that belong to government institutions from their rent instalments;

(c) Extending payment deadlines – on rents, servitude or sale – for final demands that coincided with the lockdown;

(d) Extending the deadline for payment of sale fees for residential plots that were sold to citizens who are not public-sector workers;

(e) Exempting occupants and tenants of commercial, industrial or other properties that belong to government institutions or third parties from payment for cleaning services;

(f) Postponing payment of fees for advertising or for practising a business or profession;

(g) Supporting low-income citizens;

(h) Allocating emergency grants to families who were affected by the lockdown and none of whose members receive a government subsidy; according to an initial estimate the grant – of ID 30,000 per person – was given to 10 million persons for a period of two months;

(i) Adopting a mechanism approved by the Ministerial Council for the Economy wherewith to calculate the number of beneficiaries and distribute the grant through a universally available mobile phone app. The grant is administered by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs while the Central Bank has opened an account known as the “social solidarity account” in order to finance the project from the Government and donors;

(j) Entering into and providing funding for urgent contracts signed by the Ministry of Health and the Environment, particularly for respiratory devices and for protective equipment for medical staff;

(k) The Ministry of Health and the Environment has dealings with local private-sector industries with a view to benefiting from their production capabilities to manufacture equipment to protect against coronavirus;

- The Border Crossings Commission facilitates the entry of materials emanating from the private sector that are used in the manufacture of sterilizers;

(l) Opening a special counter for donations for the purchase of the preventive medical devices and supplies that doctors require under current health circumstances;

(m) Establishing field hospitals in various areas of Baghdad and the governorates, according to need. They consist of several large wards with beds and medical supplies to take in and treat people infected with coronavirus.

35. In 2020, a total of ID 3,965 billion was disbursed to tackle the COVID-19 epidemic. Government spending amounted to ID 2,577 billion, or 65 per cent of the total outlay, while the contribution of families was ID 1,387 billion, or 35 per cent of the total.

36. A total of ID 831,344,265,329 was allocated for the purchase of medicines and vaccines in 2021, and the full amount was disbursed.

37. A total of ID 1,750 billion has been allocated to the Department of Public Health, over and above the Department's own operating budget, to provide the central public health laboratory with the supplies it needs to conduct coronavirus tests.

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38. Iraq has approved a national integrity and anti-corruption strategy (2021–2024), which is based on the Federal Commission on Integrity Act and on the 2003 United Nations Convention against Corruption. In the wake of the success of some aspects of the first strategy, the Federal Commission on Integrity has been working to enhance anti-corruption efforts with a second strategy.

39. The anti-corruption strategy has laid the foundations for future work in this field, notably by:

(a) Analysing the environment in which corruption occurs and the internal and external work environment while aligning the strategy with the priorities of the ministerial programme set by the Government;

(b) Establishing an institutional system founded on the principle of preventing corruption in the public sector;

(c) Ongoing periodic performance assessment and identification of shortcomings;

(d) Promoting initiatives and efforts on the part of public sector institutions and consolidating the principle of partnership in order to build a national front to combat corruption;

(e) Focusing on particularly important corruption cases, such as those involving oil smuggling, border crossing points, etc.;

(f) Interacting with other federal authorities such as the legislature, the judiciary and the police with a view to changing legislation, policies and regulations;

(g) Clarifying the role of public sector institutions by identifying realistic and achievable short- and long-term goals and providing the human and material resources necessary for their implementation;

(h) Setting a time limit for achieving each of the strategic goals and issuing periodic follow-up reports as well as annual reports to identify problems and obstacles, and ways to overcome them.

40. Advantages of the strategy include the following:

(a) It constitutes a first step towards strategic anti-corruption planning in Iraq;

(b) It embraces scientific anti-corruption principles;

(c) It clearly distributes and integrates the roles of the parties involved in the implementation of the strategy;

(d) It has a clearly defined monitoring mechanism;

(e) It clearly defines the negative effects of corruption and the extent of its impact.

41. The anti-bribery division of the Prevention Department at the Federal Commission on Integrity is responsible for following up on the implementation of a programme to foster transparency and protect public funds, both in ministries and in non-ministerial bodies.

42. The following table lists the cases of corruption that have been prosecuted over the previous five years (2017–2021) by the Federal Commission on Integrity. No data is currently available concerning corruption in internationally funded projects:

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Total
Reports	2 458	2 753	4 572	4 189	4 230	18 202
Denunciations	5 242	5 672	7 705	10 386	13 972	42 932
Criminal cases	12 980	12 398	13 886	13 483	18 964	71 710
Total	20 680	20 778	26 163	288 057	37 166	132 844

43. Under Act No. 58 of 2017 concerning the protection of witnesses, experts, informants and victims, a person providing information that proves to be correct can – by order of the competent investigating judge – be placed under protection if there is a danger to his life, physical safety or fundamental interests, or those of members of his family. For its part, Act No. 33 of 2008 concerning remuneration for informants aims to incentivize persons to come forward if they hold information that might lead to the recovery of funds or the detection of crimes involving public assets. The Act – which states that investigations are to be confidential – constitutes a remedy in cases of corruption that is in line with the United Nations Convention against Corruption.

44. The Commission on Integrity for Kurdistan Region has developed a national anti-corruption strategy for the Region (2021–2025), in coordination and cooperation with official institutions notably the Council of Ministers of the Region and international organizations. Thirteen investigators have been appointed to look into public-sector corruption cases in Erbil, Sulaymaniyah and Dahuk.

45. Kurdistan Region has established a regional level court – the anti-corruption court – to investigate and try all persons facing charges of corruption. It has achieved the following results:

(a) In 2020, a total of 69 corruption cases were heard, 21 persons were convicted and 48 were released;

(b) In 2021, a total of 116 corruption cases were heard, 43 persons were convicted and 73 were released, while 85 cases were appealed;

(c) Cases of corruption referred to the courts were as follows:

Corruption cases referred to the courts (2016–2018)	30
Corruption cases referred to the courts 2019	68
Corruption cases referred to the courts 2020	85
Corruption cases referred to the courts 2021	130

Non-discrimination (art. 2 (2))

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46. The Ministry of Migration and Migrants has included displaced women in small income-generating projects such as tailoring, women’s hairdressing and other initiatives. The Ministry has also run training courses from which 572 displaced women have derived benefit as well as discussion groups on topics such as understanding the concept of gender-based violence, women’s rights, domestic violence, protection during situations of conflict, integration of persons with disabilities, stability and sustainable development.

47. Decree No. 3 of 2020 of the Ministerial Council for Human Development underscores the need to abide by the provisions of article 14 of the Constitution. This means that no legislation can be enacted concerning a specific segment of the population that would give rise to any form of discrimination. Article 14 establishes the principle of non-discrimination,

stipulating that Iraqis are equal before the law without discrimination based on gender, race, nationality, origin, colour, religion, sect, belief or opinion, or economic or social status.

48. Gender equality is a key priority in the development plan 2018–2022, which aims to achieve the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. Goal 5 of the Sustainable Development Goals concerns empowering women and girls to realize their potential, which requires the elimination of the discrimination and violence they face, including harmful practices. It also means striving to enable them to access sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights, recognizing the work they do, increasing their access to productive resources and ensuring that they can participate in public, political and economic life on an equal footing with men. These issues are addressed in legislation and laws, in articles 24, 16 and 20 of the Constitution and in the national plan for human and social development (2018–2022).

49. The major themes of the national action plan consist in increasing the proportion of women involved in negotiations, in upholding civil peace and on committees for reconciliation and peaceful coexistence. Mechanisms have been developed wherewith to ensure the fair and proportional representation of women in positions of authority and decision-making posts. Women, moreover, have been involved in developing and administering humanitarian activities in conflict and post-conflict situations as well as in conflict-related decision-making, negotiations and resolution, and in peacekeeping agreements and initiatives. In addition to this, women from communities affected by armed conflict have participated in settlement processes and have become part of conflict resolution and prevention.

50. The Department for the Empowerment of Women has been set up as part of the organizational structure of the Secretariat of the Council of Ministers where it acts as a guarantor for the promotion and protection of women's rights and gender equality. It seeks to incorporate gender into government policies in order to achieve justice and equity in the development process and to advance the status of rural women. The Department develops female empowerment policies and seeks to raise awareness about the issue in all its aspects. It also reviews legislation that contains discriminatory provisions and has formed an administrative unit for the empowerment of women, tailored to the needs of each ministry.

Equal rights of men and women (art. 3)

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51. By order of the Supreme Judicial Council, a committee of judges was established to revise and amend domestic legislation, including the Criminal Code, with a view to bringing it into line with international treaties. The committee has completed its scrutiny of the Criminal Code and has referred the text to the Council of Representatives for it to be enacted. The Council of State has issued its comments on the bill to amend the Criminal Code and these are being scrutinized by the Secretariat of the Council of Ministers.

52. Part of the plan of action of the Department for the Empowerment of Women in the Secretariat of the Council of Ministers is to pursue legislative amendments by cooperating with international organizations to run workshops where discriminatory legal texts can be examined and discussed.

53. The Department for the Empowerment of Women in the Secretariat of the Council of Ministers has assembled a database of all the legal provisions that discriminate against women, so that they can be examined and recommendations made for them to be amended or abrogated.

54. The Council of Ministers has approved a national strategy to combat violence against women. Its purpose is to promote the rights of Iraqi women of all ages, protect them against negative discrimination and violence and limit the impact of those phenomena. The strategy – which covers four themes: prevention, care, protection and policies and their implementation – draws from sources such as treaties on women's and human rights as well as from the Constitution which contains numerous provisions envisaging equality of gender and equality before the law.

55. Kurdistan Region has endorsed a national strategy for the development of women with a view to advancing Kurdish society and promoting women in the region on a basis of civil democracy, respect for human rights and public freedoms and renunciation of all forms of discrimination. In addition, a high-level committee has been established to combat violence against women in the region.

56. The Council of Ministers has approved a national strategy for the advancement of Iraqi women and a high-level standing committee has been formed to promote it. The committee coordinates efforts to apply the outcomes of this strategy and of the strategy to combat violence against women, particularly in the field of legislation.

57. The national development plan 2018–2022 is one of the most important means of advancing development. It is guided by a body of policies and aims to achieve social harmony and socioeconomic development goals. It has four main themes: laying the foundations of good governance; building up the private sector to provide an enabling environment for investment; post-crisis reconstruction and development in the governorates; and reducing multidimensional poverty to achieve strategic objectives. Those objectives include raising rates of economic growth and increasing real per capita income so as to provide security for vulnerable groups. A special committee has been formed to monitor the success of the plan, identify any shortcomings, recognize the obstacles to its implementation and apply appropriate solutions.

58. The Government has launched its second national plan for the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security, as well as its plan for the implementation of the Joint Communiqué of the Republic of Iraq and the United Nations on Prevention and Response to Conflict-Related Sexual Violence. Both plans focus on protecting women and girls affected by armed conflict and gender-based violence, and aim to ensure that perpetrators do not go unpunished. They have three objectives:

- Protecting women and girls, particularly in camps, displacement sites and areas of return;
- Ensuring accountability and justice, and preventing impunity;
- Protecting women and girls affected by armed conflict and gender-based violence, and reintegrating them into society.

59. Some of the more significant protection-related activities envisaged under the plan for the implementation of resolution 1325 are listed below:

- Providing health, legal, psychosocial and other services to meet the needs of women;
- Opening channels for reporting and investigating violence;
- Creating safe spaces for women, which they can administer themselves in their own communities;
- Establishing shelters for victims of violence and their children.

60. The “women’s empowerment” component, which is part of the human development section of the national development plan 2018–2022, has been aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals that are relevant to women, notably Goals 5 and 16. This has been achieved by incorporating the following objectives: 2. Empowering women economically; 3. Empowering women in the field of health care; 4. Empowering women in areas affected by terrorism; 5. Increasing the involvement of women in the private sector. These steps are consistent with Goal 5 of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, which envisages gender equality, and with Goal 16, which aims to “promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels”.

61. Programmes for the socioeconomic empowerment of women have been set up and are being monitored to ensure the fair and proportional female participation on reconciliation committees and in peacebuilding negotiations.

62. A programme for the economic empowerment of Iraqi women in the private sector has been adopted with support from the World Bank and in cooperation with the Department

for the Empowerment of Women in the Secretariat of the Council of Ministers and other stakeholders.

63. Women are specifically targeted as part of the programmes and activities being run under the Recovery Fund plan.

- Loans have been granted to rural women, 190 such applications having been approved in 2020.

64. A national plan for persons with disabilities (2022–2024) has been developed by the Commission for the Care of Persons with Disabilities and Special Needs, which is part of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. The plan targets persons with disabilities of both sexes and different age groups.

65. The National Council for Women’s Affairs was set up, headed by the Prime Minister and with members drawn from the competent government bodies and civil society organizations. The Council works to support and empower women by formulating policies, discussing the conditions women have to face, issuing decrees and recommendations, evaluating the situation of women and coordinating with the Arab Women Organization.

66. The question of ownership of property on the part of women is addressed in article 23 of the 2005 Constitution, which stipulates: “1. Private property is protected, and owners have the right to benefit from, exploit and dispose of private property within the limits of the law. 2. The expropriation of property is not permissible except for the public good and in return for just compensation, in accordance with the law. 3. Iraqis have the right to own property anywhere in Iraq.” Under this constitutional provision, the right of women to own property is upheld and protected.

67. Numerous directives have been issued with a view to protecting the right to own property, including one to property registries not to release dossiers or records except in the presence of the owner. This serves to ensure that only copies of entries or certificates are issued and only on the basis of an official application submitted by the owner, with due verification of the applicant’s identity.

68. In order to ensure that valid documentation is submitted, the General Department for Property Registration has directed registries to demand authentication of the documents they receive, to ensure they are submitted by a duly authorized person and to demand witnesses to verify the identities of the contracting parties.

69. In order to ensure that original dossiers are preserved, registries have been directed to send only certified copies to the General Department or the courts, if requested.

70. Registries issue circulars in regard of the dossiers they hold. In that connection, the Prevention Department at the Federal Commission on Integrity coordinates with the General Department with a view to reducing the number of falsified dossiers. Audit committees have been formed to issue recommendations to preserve public and private property and to address, by legal means, the removal of pages from property registers.

71. The Ministry of Planning has updated the national strategy to combat gender-based violence to accommodate all the changes made since 2014 and to respond to Goal 5 of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, which aims to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls, and gender-based violence.

Issues relating to the specific provisions of the Covenant (arts. 6–15)

Right to work (art. 6)

Paragraph 11 of the list of issues

72. The spatial development strategy has been re-examined in the light of the issue of unemployment and its levels in the different governorates, with a view to then making proposals and recommendations to address the problem as part of efforts to achieve economic and social justice.

73. Unemployment and economic activity rates in 2018:

Unemployment rate (persons aged 15)	13.8%
Unemployment rate (persons aged 15–19)	27.3%
Unemployment rate (persons aged 20–27)	27.6%
Economic activity rate	42.8%

74. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs recently announced the registration of more than 1 million unemployed persons of various categories, including graduates of the Ministry of Higher Education and the Ministry of Education.

75. Job seekers and registered persons who entered the database in 2022, disaggregated by gender:

Number of registered unemployed for the year 2022

<i>Total</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
12 587	9 047	3 540

Right to just and favourable conditions of work (art. 7)**Paragraph 12 of the list of issues**

76. A minimum wage for all workers, including migrant workers, is envisaged in articles 62 and 63 of the Labour Code according to which workers' wages are to be stipulated in a contract of employment and that such wages must not be less than the minimum wage for the profession in question, as set forth in law. A committee formed by order of the Minister is responsible for making proposals on a periodic basis in regard of minimum wages. The proposals are submitted to the Council of Ministers and are taken into account when determining the needs of workers and their families, the general level of wages in the State, the cost of living and the changes it undergoes and economic factors such as economic development requirements, productivity levels and the desire to achieve and maintain a high percentage of employment. The minimum wage, then, is to be adjusted from time to time in order to reflect the cost of living and other economic circumstances. Employers violating the minimum wage provisions set forth in law are liable to prosecution.

Paragraph 13 of the list of issues

77. Act No. 104 of 1981 was repealed under Prisoners and Detainees Reform Act No. 14 of 2018. Article 20 of the Act states that all prison inmates and detainees who are over the age of 15 have the right to work, each according to their abilities, in return for a wage, to which end workshops, facilities and equipment are made available. The overall purpose is to provide them with vocational qualifications and training and give them a means of sustenance once they have completed their sentence. Forced labour is prohibited by law, and work in correctional departments is for rehabilitation purposes only and is not part of the punishment. The Ministry of Justice has designated a special committee to set limits, in accordance with international standards and national legislation, on how inmates can be employed, either inside prison or on government-run projects outside prison.

78. Child labour is prohibited under the Constitution of Iraq, article 29 of which states: "All forms of economic exploitation of children are prohibited, and the State is to take the measures necessary for their protection." For its part, article 37 (3) of the Constitution reads: "Forced labour, slavery, the slave trade, trafficking in women and children and the sex trade are all prohibited."

79. The same subject is addressed in the provision of the Labour Code concerning hazardous work. In fact, article 95 (1) of the Code stipulates: "Juveniles may not be employed in work the nature or conditions of which could be harmful to their health, safety or morals, nor may they be introduced into sites where such work is being conducted."

80. Article 6 (3) of the Labour Code concerns the “effective elimination of child labour” while article 7 indicates that “the minimum working age in the Republic of Iraq is to be 15 years”. In that regard, the Code does not differentiate between children who work with their own families or who work with third parties. Penalties for violations of these provisions are set forth in article 11 (2) of the Code: “Anyone who violates the provisions in this section concerning the employment of children, discrimination, forced labour or sexual harassment, depending upon the case, is liable to a term of imprisonment of up to 6 months and/or a fine of up to ID 1 million.”

Paragraph 14 of the list of issues

81. Labour inspection mechanisms for occupational health and safety have been strengthened through:

(a) Monitoring occupational health and safety procedures in private-sector employment thanks to labour inspection visits conducted by the labour inspection section of the Department for Labour and Vocational Training;

(b) A programme being run by occupational health and safety departments with other institutions, agencies and ministries in Iraq. The programme serves to promote the role of labour inspection in occupational health and safety by appointing focal points in ministries and in non-ministerial bodies. The focal points are to create a structure for occupational health and safety departments within those institutions then to act as a link between the institutions and the National Centre for Occupational Health and Safety and to apply other relevant programmes. This will serve to disseminate and enhance a culture of vocational health and safety which, in the final analysis, will be reflected in the health and safety of the staff in those institutions by providing a safe working environment and reducing accidents and injuries;

(c) Advisory visits to hazardous workplaces, which are conducted at the request of the body concerned. They serve to identify the risks to which workers are exposed and to make appropriate recommendations with a view to the application of health and safety standards. Such visits are the result of joint efforts by the occupational health and safety departments and the public sector;

(d) Field visits to the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and its structures in Baghdad in order to monitor the extent to which occupational health and safety procedures are being applied.

82. Workplace injuries, disaggregated by gender:

Workplace injuries, disaggregated by gender 2021

<i>Total</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>
3 593	3 496	97

Workplace injuries, disaggregated by gender 2020

<i>Total</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>
427	407	17

83. Deaths due to workplace injuries, disaggregated by gender for the years 2020–2021:

Deaths due to workplace injuries, disaggregated by gender 2021

<i>Total</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>
4	3	1

Deaths due to workplace injuries, disaggregated by gender 2020

<i>Total</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>
0	0	0

Paragraph 15 of the list of issues

84. Workers' access to remedies is addressed in articles 10 and 11 of the Labour Code. They can file complaints with a labour tribunal if they suffer forced labour, discrimination or sexual harassment during the exercise of their profession. Employers who violate the Code render themselves liable to imprisonment and a fine while workers can bring legal action to claim their rights under a contract of employment and to demand compensation for any harm they have suffered.

85. In 2019, the Supreme Judicial Council issued a decree setting standards wherewith to address cases of sexual harassment in public spaces, government departments and places of work.

86. As concerns protection for women who work, Iraq is examining the possibility of acceding to the International Labour Organization (ILO) Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190).

Trade union rights (art. 8)**Paragraph 16 of the list of issues**

87. Act No. 52 of 1987 regulates trade unions and envisages mechanisms and procedures to govern their activities. The purpose of the Act is to increase production; protect workers' rights; develop their political, cultural and professional awareness; consolidate a spirit of respect for the labour system; and seek to ensure that that system is implemented contentiously, freely and fairly. According to article 28 of the Act, all workers over the age of 18 have the right to join a union committee or a professional trade union. This comes about by submitting a request to the body concerned (art. 29). They also have the right to resign from a trade union (art. 31).

88. Article 1 (22) of the Act defines a labour organization as a free organization of workers that is financially and administratively independent and has legal personality, and that represents workers' interests, defends their rights, seeks to improve their working conditions and represents them before various institutions, in accordance with the law.

89. The Labour Code makes specific reference to the role of trade unions in protecting workers' rights and defending their interests. Iraq acceded to the ILO Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87) under Act No. 87 of 2017.

90. As concerns the right to strike, article 162 (1) of the Labour Code states: "If the steps taken to resolve the conflict of interests come to an end without agreement, the workers' organization – or the workers' elected representatives in the absence of a trade union organization – has the right to resort to peaceful strike action for the purpose of defending the professional, economic or social interests of members." According to article 162 (2), the workers' organization – or the workers' elected representatives in the absence of a trade union organization – that intends to take strike action is to send written notice to the Ministry before the date of the strike, and the strike itself must be peaceful. Workers and their trade union organizations may not strike if they work in areas in which a cessation of activity could imperil the life, safety or public health of the population. Employers may not penalize workers in any way for calling or participating in a strike, nor may they replace striking workers with other workers engaged on a permanent or temporary basis.

Right to social security (art. 9)

Paragraph 17 of the list of issues

91. The most significant activities and achievements for 2021, as per financial and administrative indicators for Baghdad and the governorates, include an increase in the number of businesses and workers within the social security system who are covered by Pensions and Social Security Act No. 39 of 1971. Indicators also show an increase in the number of workers who have retired due to old age or physical or mental disability. Efforts are being made to extend the coverage of the social security umbrella with requests to the legislative authorities to enact the new Pensions and Social Security Act. This will have a great impact on the living conditions of the working class as it envisages new forms of voluntary social security; unemployment benefits, including for the informal sector; maternity coverage for working women; and other benefits that redound to workers' advantage.

92. Act No. 2 of 2022 concerning emergency support for food security and development envisages an allocation of ID 678 billion to ensure that persons with special needs are given social protection, which is to be allocated according to population distribution across the governorates.

93. In the Kurdistan Regional Government, Pensions and Social Security Act No. 39 of 1971 as amended by Act No. 74 of 2012, seeks to ensure the welfare of workers and their families, both during and after their careers, within a framework that envisages pension services, health and injury insurance and other social services.

Protection of the family and children (art. 10)

Paragraph 18 of the list of issues

94. The executive and the legislature are responsible for monitoring the representative of the public institution – the Public Prosecution Service – in accordance with article 2 (6) of Public Prosecution Act No. 49 of 2017, which states that the purpose of the Act is “to contribute to the protection of the family and children”. For its part, article 6 of the same Act states: “The Public Prosecution Service is to appear before civil status courts and other civil courts in cases involving minors, persons who lack full legal competence, persons of unknown whereabouts, missing persons, divorce, separation or families who abscond and leave destitute children, or any other case in which the Service feels it is necessary to intervene in order to protect families and children. The Service, moreover, has the right to appeal any judgments or rulings emanating from those courts.”

95. As concerns the repeal of discriminatory or harmful provisions, articles 128, 130 and 131 of the Criminal Code under which offenders can claim “defence of honour” as a mitigating factor are general provisions that come under the heading of “legal pretexts and attenuating grounds”, and they are applicable, not merely to a single offence, but to all offences. Legislators have left it to judges' discretion to decide to what extent those provisions should be applied depending upon the circumstances of each case. In Kurdistan Region, articles 128, 130 and 131 have been amended and “defence of honour” is no longer considered grounds to attenuate an offender's punishment in cases of murder.

96. Honour-related motives are considered a mitigating factor, but the Iraqi judiciary interprets this as including all honour-related motives and not just “purification of dishonour”, in which the victims are invariably women. The same applies to article 409 of the Criminal Code. Amendments to the articles in question are currently under consideration.

97. Attention is drawn to the bill to amend the Criminal Code. In fact, according to article 398 of the Code, if a person accused of rape concludes a valid contract of marriage with the victim, the prosecution, investigation or any other related procedure is dropped or, if a sentence has already been handed down, its enforcement is suspended. Under the proposed amendment, a valid contract of marriage between perpetrator and victim would no longer

constitute grounds for suspending the enforcement of sentence or for dropping the investigation or prosecution. This is consistent with human rights standards.

Right to an adequate standard of living (art. 11)

Paragraph 19 of the list of issues

98. The Iraqi Household Socioeconomic Survey and the social protection programme have provided the Ministry of Planning with comprehensive information about poverty and marginalized and disadvantaged groups in the country.

99. The national development plan 2018–2022 is one of the most important means of advancing development. It is guided by a body of policies and strategies that aim to improve the quality of life in a safe and stable environment, notably by developing health care. The aim of the plan is to achieve social harmony and socioeconomic development goals. It has four main themes: laying the foundations of good governance; building up the private sector to provide an enabling environment for investment; post-crisis reconstruction and development in the governorates; and reducing multidimensional poverty to achieve strategic objectives. Those objectives include raising rates of economic growth and increasing real per capita income so as to provide security for vulnerable groups. A special committee has been formed to monitor the success of the plan, identify any shortcomings, recognize the obstacles to its implementation and apply appropriate solutions.

100. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs has taken several measures to alleviate poverty, including the following:

- Disbursing cash subsidies to persons (both women and men) under social protection; as of the end of 2020, a total of 1,389,961 families were covered by social protection;
- Granting loans – 83 in all – as part of the 2020 strategic programme to alleviate poverty.

101. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs has taken several measures to alleviate poverty, including the following:

- Implementing special programmes to restore and rehabilitate damaged infrastructure in the governorates of Anbar and Salah al-Din in 2018 and 2019, with a completion rate of 100 per cent;
- Ensuring higher and sustainable income for poor persons;
- Improving the health-care situation;
- Providing suitable housing and a needs-responsive environment;
- Providing effective social protection for poor persons;
- Undertaking emergency responsive activities;
- Establishing a social fund for development to provide basic services to poor areas, particularly rural areas;
- Providing job opportunities for young people, especially girls;
- Investing in human capital, especially education and skills, with a focus on reducing the gender gap;
- Improving the targeting and coverage of social protection;
- Participating in the modernization of the national strategy for the advancement of Iraqi women;
- Rolling out the “women’s empowerment” component of the national development plan 2018–2022.

102. The Ministry of Health has been working to implement the health-related national strategy to combat poverty. It has conducted several activities in that connection, including the construction of a number of primary health-care centres.

103. One of the most important national goals the Ministry of Health has set itself is to improve the nutritional situation throughout Iraq so as to ensure a healthy and vigorous society. To that end, it has developed a national strategy for nutrition 2019–2022 which has begun to be rolled out in order to alleviate the health burden that comes from malnutrition and micronutrient deficiencies, as well as from overweightness and obesity. The purpose is to achieve the six global nutrition targets by 2025, to build the capacities of persons involved in health education, to encourage breastfeeding, to support nutrition for children and adolescents, to promote the concept of healthy food and to provide nutritional advice. The strategy entails a comprehensive review of policies, laws, rules and guidelines regarding nutrition and food security. It also envisages the provision of sufficient safe and healthy food that is accessible to all members of society whenever they need it. The Ministry, in cooperation with other ministries, is to review the nutritional indicators that emerged from the 2012 national micronutrient survey of women of reproductive age, children under 5 years of age and children of school age, as well as the outcomes of the 2016 analysis of food security and vulnerable groups and of the 2017 survey of mothers and newborn children.

104. A culture of community health is being promoted via courses and seminars, with a focus on health in schools.

105. Preventive group treatment against intestinal parasites – in particular soil-borne worms – is offered on an annual basis to primary school students. Such parasites are considered to be problems that affect health in communities where living conditions are inadequate, including displaced persons and poor persons. In agreement with the World Health Organization (WHO), preventive group treatment campaigns have been run for primary school students in areas with the highest rates of infection. Measures taken by the State to improve food security include the following:

- (a) Rolling out the Iraq national food security strategy 2022–2023;
- (b) Updating, on an annual basis, information on the data form concerning 2030 food security and sustainable development;
- (c) Holding periodic meeting of the national committee for food security.

106. The following data and indicators concerns children under the age of 5:

- (a) Wasting 3 per cent;
- (b) Stunting 12.3 per cent;
- (c) Underweight 3.9 per cent.

107. Awareness-raising campaigns about disease have been run also with a focus on preventive measures such as physical distancing, mask wearing and protocols for patients and their contacts, in health institutions and public areas in health departments in Baghdad and the governorates.

108. The Sustainable Development Agenda was adopted in 2015, and the period up to 2030 is covered by an integrated development plan that includes 17 goals intended to eradicate poverty.

109. Act No. 2 of 2022 concerning emergency support for food security and development envisages a disbursement of ID 5 trillion to the Ministry of Commerce to facilitate the purchase of items included on the ration card, with the priority to be given first to the local wheat crop then to imported goods, Anbar rice, strategic reserves and agricultural entitlements from previous years.

110. Act No. 2 of 2022 concerning emergency support for food security and development envisages an allocation of ID 300 billion to help provide job opportunities for persons whose contracts with the military or security agencies have been terminated.

111. Act No. 2 of 2022 concerning emergency support for food security and development envisages the following allocations:

- (a) ID 162 billion to contract persons holding baccalaureates and diplomas to work in different capacities in governorate departments and in the local administration of governorates not incorporated into a region; 1,000 persons will be contracted in each

governorate at a monthly salary of ID 300,000 each for a period of three years, for training and development purposes;

(b) ID 1 trillion to the Council of Ministers and the Ministry of Finance to bring lecturers, administrators, contract holders and meter readers in ministries and in non-ministerial bodies under Decree of the Council of Ministers No. 315 of 2019, as amended by Decree of the Council of Ministers No. 337 of 2019. The Ministry of Finance is committed to appointing top graduates and graduates holding high-level degrees.

Paragraph 20 of the list of issues

112. As concerns strategies and policies to meet the need for housing units, the first and second stages of the poverty alleviation strategy include a specific outcome relating to housing, in the light of which a number of housing units have been made available to poorer persons free of charge in the governorates of Muthanna, Diwaniyah, Wasit, Anbar and Kirkuk. It is hoped that further units will be made available, once they are ready, in the governorates of Babil, Kirkuk, Wasit, Diyala, Salah al-Din, Diwaniyah and Nineveh. As concerns the availability of housing for internally displaced persons, a housing unit application form has been drawn up, which enables the claims of applicants to be compared. The form includes a special section for displaced persons, which gives them a certain priority when applying for housing units.

113. The Council of Ministers issued Administrative Order No. 40 of 2021, which envisages the formation of a supreme committee for the relief of displaced persons. The committee, which is to be headed by the Minister of Migration and Migrants, provides assistance to displaced persons, monitors them in situations of emergency and seeks to resettle and reintegrate them when they return to their homes. The committee is also responsible for implementing the national plan for the return of displaced persons to their liberated areas of origin. The committee is made up of 16 governmental representatives, including the Deputy Secretary of the Council of Ministers; 11 ministerial representatives ranking no lower than undersecretary; the head of the Reconstruction Fund for Areas Affected by Terrorism; and representatives from the National Operations Centre, the Civil Defence Directorate, Joint Operations Command and the Department for Labour and Vocational Training in the Ministry of Labour.

114. The Ministry of Migration and Migrants has implemented a number of measures for the benefit of displaced families who first left then subsequently returned to their areas of residence. Those measures can be summarized as follows:

(a) Issuing a decree for all returning displaced persons to be included in relief programmes for returnee families, for a period of one year following the date of their return;

(b) Collecting information and data on returning displaced persons who had been living in camps in the hope of being able to include them, as a matter of priority, in future financial grants;

(c) Working in coordination with international organizations on the issue of return and returnee settlement;

(d) Rolling out plans and programmes to address the problems and obstacles that prevent the voluntary return of displaced families; the Ministry runs the programmes in coordination with security agencies, Governorate Operations Command, partners from international organizations and specialized agencies;

(e) Providing buses and lorries to transport displaced persons;

(f) Conducting a comprehensive survey of displaced families living in camps to determine their willingness to return voluntarily.

115. New projects are being implemented with a view to achieving a better standard of living for people in rural areas. The projects cover several areas, including education, health, housing and infrastructure.

116. Progress has been made in improving housing conditions for internally displaced persons, including the reconstruction and restoration of destroyed homes. This task has been

entrusted to the Ministry of Planning and is being funded by the Reconstruction Fund for Areas Affected by Terrorism.

117. Act No. 2 of 2022 concerning emergency support for food security and development envisages the following allocations:

(a) ID 50 billion to the Ministry of Migration and Migrants for the relief of displaced persons;

(b) ID 500 billion to the Ministry of Construction and Housing for the implementation of new projects;

(c) ID 150 billion to the Martyrs' Foundation for the purchase of land, the construction of residential complexes and the excavation of mass graves;

(d) ID 750 billion to the Reconstruction Fund for Areas Affected by Terrorism and to the Dhi Qar Reconstruction Fund;

(e) ID 300 billion for the implementation of Act No. 20 of 2009, concerning compensation for persons affected by military operations, military errors and terrorist activities, as amended;

(f) ID 4 trillion to the Ministry of Electricity to pay its external debt and to meet the costs of buying and importing gas and energy;

(g) ID 500 billion for the development of the regions.

Paragraph 21 of the list of issues

118. Firstly, as concerns sanitation:

The Ministry of Water Resources is making every effort to monitor the multiple sources of pollution affecting rivers and watercourses, including untreated wastewater, and it is following up with the competent authorities with a view to putting an end to such infractions. To that end, the Ministry is:

(a) Preserving and protecting hydric resources by ensuring that wastewater is discharged only after it has been fully treated so that the resulting discharge conforms to existing environmental standards;

(b) Utilizing treated wastewater to irrigate green belts around cities, forests, clumps of trees planted as windbreaks, green traffic islands and suburban parks; this is a way of using a non-traditional source of water, particularly in current circumstances when Iraq is suffering from a water shortage;

(c) Ensuring that all governorates in Iraq have treatment plants that employ the latest technology, to ensure that the discharge water they produce conforms to environmental standards;

(d) Requiring ministries responsible for activities that pollute waters (rivers and watercourses) to ensure that a priority of their future plans is to set up treatment plants, also with the help of reliable companies that have experience in that field. Currently, in fact, certain parties, as a temporary solution, discharge untreated polluted water directly into watercourses and the Al-Masabb al-Amm channel; the Ministry thus takes certain measures as, due to water scarcity, the waters from the Al-Masabb al-Amm channel are currently being used in agriculture and fisheries in the areas where the channel passes;

(e) Acting to implement the provisions of Regulation No. 3 of 2021, which concerns national standards for the use of treated wastewater in agricultural irrigation. This includes:

- Preventing the use of wastewater in a manner that, directly or indirectly, affects public health, damages surface and groundwater resources or leads to soil degradation or pollution in such a way as to affect production capacity and the food chain;
- Making optimal use of treated water as a non-traditional water source.

The use of treated wastewater for agricultural irrigation requires the approval of the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of the Environment and the Ministry of Water Resources, as well as the agreement of the authorities concerned.

119. Secondly, as concerns engagement with neighbouring countries to ensure the fair and equitable use of the river courses:

(a) With its Turkish counterparts, the Ministry has held a number of meetings and organized technical discussion sessions concerning shared waters. The Minister of Water Resources has been appointed as representative of the Prime Minister, with the envoy of the President of the Republic of Türkiye as his counterpart, with a view to entering into negotiations and resolving the water-related problems between the two countries. Both sides will certainly speak with one voice regarding the principle of the fair and equitable use of shared river courses, as stipulated by international law and custom. In that connection, a memorandum of understanding on water, signed between Iraq and Türkiye in 2014, has entered into force and there is currently coordination with the Turkish side, via the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, to put it into effect. Among its more significant provisions, the memorandum envisages an assessment of water resources in the light of increasing use in agriculture, industry and the municipalities, and as drinking water, and in the light of climate change, and the obligation of Türkiye – on the basis of the assessment – to release a fair and reasonable quantity of water from the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers into Iraq. The Ministry has also drawn up a draft protocol regarding cooperation between Iraq and Türkiye in administering the waters of the Tigris River. The protocol contains a proposal for a plan to operate the Ilisu Dam in such a way as to guarantee the water-related rights of Iraq and to meet its hydric needs. Türkiye is currently examining the draft protocol and Iraq is awaiting comments from the Turkish side before convening a meeting to discuss those comments.

(b) As concerns Iran and the problem of interrupting the river courses and the shared valleys, Iraq has called for bilateral technical meetings with the Iranian side with a view to reaching an agreement that would guarantee the water-related rights of Iraq in those rivers and valleys, despite the fact that there are persistent discrepancies between the two sides regarding their legal view of the issue.

120. Thirdly, action to address the water crisis, taking account of the impact of climate change:

(a) The strategy for water and land resources in Iraq focuses particularly on ensuring access to drinking water, expanding the number of water treatment facilities and improving the network of conduits that deliver water to municipal and industrial water users in Iraq. As a minimum, water treatment has to meet the drinking-water standards set forth in specification No. 417 of 1974, which is included in the Iraqi Measures and Standards of 2000 and which, in some cases, are more rigorous than the WHO guidelines for drinking-water quality. All this lies at the heart of the efforts being made by municipal departments across all the governorates.

(b) The aforementioned strategy contains a number of proposed sub-strategies intended to prevent or mitigate the impact of drought. Drought prevention and mitigation measures in Iraq revolve around the more effective management of water reservoirs, through:

- Conducting monthly calculations of quantities stored in reservoirs, in order to ensure the supply of appropriate allocations of water to overcome drought or flood conditions with minimum losses;
- Dividing reservoirs in Iraq into three levels of oversight with corresponding reductions in the amount of water that can be used during drought conditions;
- Allowing reservoir operators to plan the appropriate amount of water for release; if this is properly communicated to farmers and others who rely on the water, the type and amount of crops can be tailored to the amount of water available in a given season.

121. Act No. 2 of 2022 concerning emergency support for food security and development envisages an allocation of ID 700 to the Ministry of Agriculture for the purchase of seeds, fertilizers, fodder, pesticides and veterinary medicines, as well as for irrigation systems, crop-spraying aircraft and combating desertification.

122. Act No. 2 of 2022 concerning emergency support for food security and development envisages an allocation of ID 100 billion to the Ministry of Water Resources.

123. According to the Central Bureau of Statistics in the Ministry of Planning, beneficiaries of drinking-water services in Iraq are as follows:

<i>Indicator</i>	<i>2017/18</i>	<i>2018/19</i>	<i>2019/20</i>
Percentage of the population served by the drinking-water network	82.6	83	83.4
Percentage of the urban population served by the drinking-water network	91.7	91.9	91.7
Percentage of the rural population served by the drinking-water network	63.3	64.2	65.6

Right to physical and mental health (art. 12)

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124. The national strategy for reproductive, maternal and child health aims to ensure that primary health-care services are comprehensively available to children under 5 at all primary health-care centres. Such services are to be available and accessible in all rural and urban areas as well as in areas affected by armed conflict, with special activities specifically intended to improve the health of children under 5.

125. As concerns family planning programmes, the “m-health” service has been rolled out in seven health departments to provide remote family planning services.

A fast-reaction family planning service has been launched regarding postnatal care and abortions in all maternity departments in hospitals.

126. As concerns pregnancy care programmes, the “m-health” service has been rolled out in seven health departments to provide remote care for pregnant women and mothers, including postnatal care in health institutions throughout Iraq.

127. Medical examinations are available for new students as well as regular check-ups for school students and for students enrolled in the “Your Right to Education” schools, which are located in governorates affected by armed conflict and terrorism.

128. A helpline is available for adolescents who can call a free number for advice on various health-related topics affecting them, such as nutrition, reproductive health, smoking, mental health and others.

129. Capacity-building and training take place on a continuous basis, operating manuals are updated and capacity-building is provided in their use; moreover, antenatal care and family planning services are available via mobile, service providers are provided with capacity-building and training manuals are drafted.

130. There is an ongoing commitment to preventive action through education and awareness-raising, the distribution of posters and the training health coordinators and focal points in health departments; at the same time, a training manual is being drafted regarding the measures to be taken for pregnant women infected with COVID-19.

131. Advice on family planning and family planning devices are available in 70 per cent of the principal health centres. A total of 462,022 women benefited from those services in the first quarter of 2022 and 44,000 in the last quarter of 2021.

132. Life-saving drugs for cancer treatment (chemotherapy, biotherapy) and for chronic and acute ailments, as well as anaesthetics, blood components and routine vaccines have all been provided, and the full amount allocated for medicines in the budget of the State Company for Marketing Drugs and Medical Appliances has been disbursed; i.e. ID 1,349,407,783,000 in 2021. Any increase in the supply of drugs and of routine vaccines requires an increase in budgetary allocations.

133. In the public expenditures of 2020, the Ministry of Health had expenses amounting to ID 2,846 billion, which represented 96 per cent of government health spending. In addition, the Ministry of Health was funded from the emergency budget and from other ministries to the tune of ID 91,107 million, which accounted for the remaining 4 per cent and was distributed to health departments in Baghdad and the governorates to address the COVID-19 pandemic.

134. A total of ID 2,760 billion was paid out to curative health-service providers. That amount, which accounted for 70 per cent of total expenditure on the pandemic, was distributed as follows:

- (a) Hospitalization, ID 400,427 billion, 15 per cent;
- (b) Outpatient clinics, ID 467,772 million, 17 per cent;
- (c) Day care ID 477,702, 17 per cent;
- (d) Intensive care, ID 21,075 million, 1 per cent;
- (e) Laboratory tests conducted outside hospitals and clinics, ID 465,568 million, 16 per cent;
- (f) Diagnostic radiology performed outside hospitals and clinics, ID 96,726 million, 4 per cent;
- (g) Medicines supplies used by patients outside hospitals and clinics, ID 132,459 million, 1 per cent;
- (h) Expenditure by families within health institutions (as part of the health financing project), ID 32,102, 1 per cent;
- (i) Medicines taken by patients outside hospitals and clinics, ID 626,713 million, 23 per cent;
- (j) Other external expenses, ID 132,459 million, 5 per cent.

135. A total of ID 1,205 billion was paid out to preventive health-service providers. That amount, which accounted for 30 per cent of total expenditure on COVID-19 in 2020, was distributed as follows:

- (a) Information and guidance programme, ID 272,260 million, 23 per cent;
- (b) Immunization programme ID 200,628 million, 17 per cent;
- (c) Early detection programme, ID 680,651 million, 56 per cent;
- (d) Other activities, ID 51,549 million, 4 per cent

136. Act No. 2 of 2022 concerning emergency support for food security and development envisages an allocation of ID 150 billion to the Ministry of Health for the purchase of drugs to treat cancer and hereditary anaemia.

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137. Awareness-raising campaigns about the disease have been run also with a focus on preventive measures such as physical distancing, mask wearing and protocols for patients and their contacts, in health institutions and public areas in health departments in Baghdad and the governorates.

138. Seminars have been held to raise awareness about preventive measures, and brochures and posters have been distributed in ministries and in non-ministerial bodies.

139. Awareness-raising posters and videos on preventive measures have been developed and published via the website and social media sites of the Department of Public Health and on satellite channels.

140. Television programmes on preventive measures have been shown on satellite channels.

141. Lectures have been given to raise public awareness about COVID-19.

142. Tours of inspection have been conducted in isolation sites to ensure that preventive measures are being duly implemented and to monitor the health-care services being provided to confirmed and suspected cases of COVID-19.

143. Activities in health departments in Baghdad and the governorates are constantly monitored via the quarterly statistics those departments provide.

144. The authorities participate in online workshops, seminars and meetings with international organizations.

145. Epidemiological surveillance of COVID-19 has been improved thanks to the adoption of standardized definitions of suspected, probable and confirmed cases, as per WHO guidelines.

146. A central plan for acute respiratory diseases, including COVID-19, has been updated and circulated to all health departments in the governorates. It includes the following:

- (a) A standard definition of the disease, as per WHO guidelines;
- (b) A special COVID-19 questionnaire;
- (c) A follow-up form for contact tracing;
- (d) A classification of cases as slight, moderate, severe and critical, with information on how to handle each case;
- (e) Guidelines and conditions for ending the isolation of patients, both those at home and those in hospital, as well as protocols for the end-of-isolation PCR test;
- (f) Monitoring the supply of coronavirus treatment drugs by health departments to patients in home isolation, thanks to coordination with the State Company for Marketing Drugs and Medical Appliances; this is done using the mechanisms envisaged for health departments and as part of the coronavirus treatment protocol;
- (g) Training medical staff and health-care personnel at units in health departments in Baghdad and the governorates;
- (h) Updating and distributing treatment protocols;
- (i) Constant monitoring of infected persons and their contacts, using the special forms for that purpose;
- (j) Coordinating with WHO and vaccine-producing companies in order to ensure the supply of COVID-19 vaccine;
- (k) Organizing seminars for medical staff and health-care personnel in hospitals on how to prevent and control COVID-19;
- (l) Identifying the needs of COVID-19 isolation wards in hospitals;
- (m) Monitoring and equipping isolation wards in general hospitals and children's hospitals;
- (n) Coordinating with the State Company for Marketing Drugs and Medical Appliances for the supply of Virkon disinfectant and personal protection equipment;
- (o) Coordinating with the immunization unit to identify at-risk groups for COVID-19 vaccination;
- (p) Vaccines have been provided to inmates and staff at places of detention in all governorates with 43,544 inmates out of a total of 85,075 and 14,050 staff being vaccinated as of the end of May 2022.

147. The Ministry of Health joined the COVAX Pillar as soon as it was set up. Thanks to this, Iraq managed to secure sufficient doses of COVID-19 vaccine to cover around 20 per cent of the population. In addition, the Ministry of Health signed a memorandum of understanding with vaccine producers who are not part of the COVAX Pillar in order to obtain additional doses of vaccine and thus ensure that all relevant groups could be vaccinated.

148. In order to ensure the fair and safe distribution of vaccines, the Ministry of Health has developed a vaccine-distribution plan for Iraq. In doing so, it took account of the available data and of recommendations of WHO and other reliable international organizations and agencies. The plan was duly approved in January 2021 by the supreme coordinating committee for the introduction of emergency vaccines, and the Department of Public Health in the Ministry of Health and the Environment launched its vaccination service as soon as the first shipment of vaccines arrived in Iraq, in March 2021. The plan has since been constantly updated and an emergency support plan was integrated into the original vaccine-distribution plan in August 2021. It envisages multiple strategies intended to accelerate the process of achieving herd immunity.

149. Multiple types of COVID-19 vaccines produced by many different companies have been provided. The following WHO-approved vaccines have been used: Pfizer, AstraZeneca, Sinopharm.

150. Persons aged between 12 and 18, and pregnant women, have been included in the group to be vaccinated with the Pfizer vaccine.

151. Vaccination centres have been opened and multiple vaccination strategies being rolled out as part of the COVID-19 mass vaccination campaign.

152. Internally displaced persons and refugees living in camps have also been included in the COVID-19 vaccination campaign and have been vaccinated at health centres located in the camps or by field vaccination teams, which were formed to facilitate the vaccination process for this category of persons.

153. Health care and medical tests in prisons and detention centres are carried out at clinics located inside the prisons and centres themselves, with the Ministry of Health supplying medical staff, drugs and medical equipment, particularly – in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic – masks and gloves. Healthy food, bedding and clothing are also provided, and prisoners are given at least one hour a day in the sun and open air. Health care is also made available to female detainees who are pregnant and to their children, and they are able to give birth in hospital.

154. The Ministry of Justice cooperates with the national anti-tuberculosis programme with a view to controlling and eliminating that disease in places of detention. It provides diagnostic and therapeutic services to tubercular patients and it has administered 1,474 doses of influenza vaccine.

155. A ministerial committee, including representatives from the Department of Public Health, the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of the Interior, has been set up to oversee the preventive measures put in place to curb the spread of COVID-19 in places of detention. Moreover, all the preventive and treatment measures decided by the Department of Public Health have been duly applied in places of deprivation of liberty and are applied in all cases of infection among inmates or staff.

156. Medical teams have been formed to oversee preventive measures in places of detention in Baghdad and the governorates.

157. The Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of the Interior have provided educational materials, and drafted COVID-19 guides for circulation in places of detention.

158. A weekly report on COVID-19 infections and deaths in places of detention is being drafted, in coordination with health departments in Baghdad and the governorates.

159. There is direct coordination with relevant officials in the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of the Interior regarding testing and contact tracing for persons suspected to be infected with the virus. These activities are conducted by medical and laboratory teams in the primary health-care sector, who provide health-care services in places of detention.

160. Wards in hospitals run by departments of health in Baghdad and the governorates have been set aside for prison use, where cases of serious infection can receive the treatment they require. In addition, isolation cells for infected persons have been opened in correctional schools.

161. Prisons and correctional centres coordinate with the Directorate of Civil Defence to ensure that their facilities are periodically cleaned and sterilized.

162. The authorities coordinate directly with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to obtain technical and logistical support for primary health care centres in detention facilities.

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163. The national strategy for reproductive, maternal and child health aims to ensure that primary health-care services are comprehensively available to children under 5 at all primary health-care centres. Such services are to be available and accessible in all rural and urban areas as well as in areas affected by armed conflict, with special activities specifically intended to improve the health of children under 5.

164. As concerns family planning programmes, the “m-health” service has been rolled out in seven health departments to provide remote family planning services, including postnatal care, in health institutions throughout Iraq.

165. Medical examinations are available for new students as well as regular check-ups for school students and for students enrolled in the “Your Right to Education” schools, which are located in governorates affected by armed conflict and terrorism.

166. A helpline is available for adolescents who can call a free number for advice on various health-related topics affecting them, such as nutrition, reproductive health, smoking, mental health and others.

167. A fast-reaction family planning service has been launched regarding postnatal care and abortions in all maternity departments in hospitals.

168. The Ministry of Health has adopted health-care programmes the aim of which is to improve the health of mothers, newborn infants, children and adolescents. They include:

(a) A programme for the care of pregnant women and mothers, during their pregnancy, at childbirth and in the postnatal period; the programme envisages training for health-care personnel and medical staff who work in that field to ensure that they provide high-quality services, as well as coordination with other departments of the Ministry for the provision of drugs and medical supplies;

(b) A basic health-care programme for newborn infants, which aims to provide fundamental care services to newborns in delivery wards and neonatal units in health institutions, with a view to reducing morbidity and mortality rates among that age group.

169. A national strategy for family planning and pregnancy spacing has been launched. It includes:

(a) Broadening efforts to increase community awareness, particularly among women of childbearing age, through educational campaigns run by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and by women’s NGOs;

(b) Rolling out preventive and curative health-care services for children under 5 who visit primary health-care centres, as part of an integrated strategy aimed at maintaining the health of children and newborn infants;

(c) Health Insurance Act No. 22 of 2020 envisages the creation of a health insurance authority – with its own Health Fund – within the Ministry of Health, the aim being to ensure comprehensive health coverage, achieve social solidarity and social justice, reduce the financial burden on citizens and combat poverty;

(d) The Ministry of Health has been working to implement the health-related national strategy to combat poverty. It has conducted several activities in that connection, including the construction of a number of primary health-care centres.

170. One of the most important national goals the Ministry of Health has set itself is to improve the nutritional situation throughout Iraq so as to ensure a healthy and vigorous society. To that end, it has developed a national strategy for nutrition 2019–2022 which has begun to be rolled out in order to alleviate the health burden that comes from malnutrition

and micronutrient deficiencies, as well as from overweightness and obesity. The purpose is to achieve the six global nutrition targets by 2025, to build the capacities of persons involved in health education, to encourage breastfeeding, to support nutrition for children and adolescents, to promote the concept of healthy food and to provide nutritional advice. The strategy entails a comprehensive review of policies, laws, rules and guidelines regarding nutrition and food security. It also envisages the provision of sufficient safe and healthy food that is accessible to all members of society whenever they need it.

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171. The Mental Health Act No. 1 of 2005, issued pursuant to an order of the Coalition Provisional Authority, applies to patients suffering from one or more mental or nervous disorders, or other disorders diagnosed by a medical specialist. Patients are considered to have acted voluntarily if, of their own will, they seek treatment at a health-care institution.

172. Article 7 (1) of the Act states: “Patients may not be detained against their will and subjected to compulsory treatment, unless they constitute a danger to themselves or others.”

173. Article 7 (2) of the Act reads: “A specialist doctor can cause patients to be placed in a closed treatment unit for a period of 72 hours if they constitute a danger to themselves or others.” The Act seeks to strike a balance between the rights of the patient and the stability of society.

174. According to article 24 of Public Health Act No. 89 of 1981, natural health lies in the integration of body and mind into an integral whole, and citizens have the right to health in both its physical and mental aspects. The Ministry is committed to pursuing a health policy that ensures preventive and curative health-care services and treatment for mental deficiencies, dementia, aging and epilepsy.

175. In Kurdistan Region, Act No. 8 of 2013 was issued promulgating the Mental Health Act for Iraqi Kurdistan. It is applicable to patients with mental disorders, to public and private hospitals and clinics that deal with psychiatric conditions and to mental health units in local and foreign health centres and in private outpatient clinics licensed under the present Act. Moreover, a mental health council is to be formed, headed by the Minister of Health and with members from the competent bodies, which has the task of developing public policies on mental health and drawing up plans to safeguard the rights and well-being of mental patients. The rights of patients are enshrined in articles 34 and 35 in chapter VI of the Act.

176. A new mental health bill that is consistent with international standards for the protection of the rights of persons with mental disabilities is in the process of being drafted and discussed. An evaluation is taking place to ensure service quality for patients and to protect their rights, using WHO instruments for mental health systems.

177. Operating via psychosocial health units in health-care centres, the Mental Health Division seeks to educate and raise awareness about the importance of mental health, reduce social stigmas surrounding mental disorders, combat domestic violence and detect suicidal thoughts in patients.

178. Eighteen medical rehabilitation centres, two medical rehabilitation hospitals and 17 prosthetic-limb producers seek to ensure that persons with disabilities have the medical aids, equipment, prostheses and supports they require. The disability prevention and rehabilitation unit coordinates with other competent bodies to meet the vital needs that serve to facilitate the integration into society of persons with special needs. The unit also coordinates with the office of the national mental health adviser regarding the provision of mental health care via psychological rehabilitation sections in disability prevention and rehabilitation units. Services available include psychotherapy sessions for victims and for anyone else who needs psychological support.

179. The strategic plan for gender-based violence envisages a sustainable and consistent response on the part of the health-care sector in Iraq, and the Ministry of Health is committed to providing high-quality health services to survivors of such violence. The strategy has the following aims:

(a) Providing comprehensive and well-coordinated health-care services at the three levels of health facilities (primary, secondary and tertiary) to address gender-based violence;

(b) Raising awareness in the community about the need to prevent gender-based violence and to address the stigmas associated therewith;

(c) Making interventions to prevent gender-based violence part of emergency health and humanitarian response programmes, by intensifying the support, planning, implementation, coordination, follow-up and evaluation of interventions.

180. The national plan for the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) has been launched. It envisages a series of activities, including mapping economic opportunities and ensuring that female survivors of violence during conflict are not stigmatized and can be reintegrated into society. The plan also aims to provide health, legal and psychosocial services for women; health care for female survivors of violence, including rape victims; access to safe and legal abortions; and protection for women and girls in camps, displacement sites and areas of return. Procedures for enacting a law against domestic violence are being accelerated.

181. Investigating authorities have taken all necessary measures to facilitate and encourage reports from women concerning cases of violence and rape. In order to simplify the process, complaints and reports of crimes of violence and rape can now be filed at all judicial investigation departments at investigating courts, at centres run by the Family and Child Protection Department in the Ministry of the Interior or at police stations throughout Iraq.

182. Yazidi Female Survivors Act No. 8 of 2021 sets forth the responsibilities vis-à-vis the care of such persons. The goals of the Act are to rehabilitate and care for survivors, develop means for their reintegration into society and provide care to the relevant groups. The Act also includes provision for the opening of health and psychological rehabilitation centres for survivors and of clinics inside and outside Iraq.

Right to education (arts. 13–14)

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183. The spatial development strategy and the report on spatial development gaps served to provide indicators relating to education in Iraq, identify deficit levels and propose solutions to address the current deficit and meet the future demand for education, in accordance with planning standards, the purpose being to ensure that the entire population can fairly exercise their right to education.

184. The Ministry of Planning has formulated the national strategy for education, which incorporates a comprehensive vision of education and of the country's social and economic development and takes due account of the Constitution and the national laws regulating education in Iraq, according to which basic education is to be compulsory and free of charge. This is consistent with the international obligations of Iraq as concerns education and with Goal 4 of the Sustainable Development Goals. The competent authorities, such as the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and the Commission for the Care of Persons with Disabilities and Special Needs work together on the provision of primary and secondary education. The following tables contain statistical data on school enrolment, dropout and educational achievement.

(a) Dropout rates disaggregated by sex and governorate for the academic year 2019/20

	Primary (%)			Secondary (%)			Vocational (%)		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Total	1.8	1.9	2	2.3	2.2	2.3	2.2	3.3	2.5

(b) Net enrolment rates disaggregated by sex and governorate for the academic year 2019/20

	Primary (%)			Secondary (%)			Vocational (%)		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Total	91	89	90	45	46	46	1.5	0.6	1.1

Net enrolment refers to the total number of students enrolled in a specific level of education, based on age group.

(c) Gross enrolment rates disaggregated by sex and governorate for the academic year 2019/20

	Primary (%)			Secondary (%)			Vocational (%)		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Total	105	101	2103	76	67	72	3.4	1.33	3.2

Gross enrolment refers to the total number of students enrolled in a specific level of education, irrespective of age, and it is expressed as a proportion of the population in the age group corresponding to that level of education; thus, the proportion for primary education is measured against the total number of the population of primary-school age.

185. “Your right to education” centres were opened to attract children in the 10–15 year age group in displaced persons camps and host communities, in the school years 2016/17 and 2017/18.

186. A number of literacy centres have been opened in displaced person camps.

187. Courses have been delivered via the Internet for students affected by the armed conflict.

188. Examination procedures have been simplified for displaced students.

189. The table below contains statistical data on school enrolment, dropout and educational achievement for Kurdistan Region, disaggregated by age, sex, location, ethnicity, origin, nationality and socioeconomic status.

Dropout rate between first and ninth grade

<i>No. of dropouts</i>	<i>No. of enrolled students</i>	<i>Proportion (percentage)</i>
9 029	272 317	6.91

190. Act No. 2 of 2022 concerning emergency support for food security and development envisages an allocation of ID 125 to the Ministry of Development for the maintenance of school buildings.

Cultural rights (art. 15)**Paragraph 27 of the list of issues**

191. Article 2 (b) of the Constitution guarantees full rights to freedom of religious belief and practice for all individuals, including Christians, Yazidis and Sabeans. Article 3 of the Constitution affirms that Iraq is a country of multiple nationalities, religions, sects and cultures, which operates on the basis of the principles of equal citizenship, mutual understanding, social cohesion and civil peace. All minorities and religious sects are able to exercise their rights regarding marriage and related rituals, which are protected by law. Inter-marriage between national minorities and religious sects is common. The law protects the rights of all groups within Iraqi society, without exception or discrimination in practice. Special protection is provided for the rights of minorities, as they are a part of Iraqi society and the Government is responsible for their safety, including by ensuring respect for the

practice of religious and social rites particular to minority groups, taking all safety measures necessary to protect the areas in which they live and preventing attacks against or violations of their rights. The army protects populated areas while the security services, each within their own jurisdiction, perform their national duty to defend all Iraqis regardless of religion or nationality, treating civilians in accordance with human rights standards and on the basis of the principle that terrorism has no religion. In many cases, terrorists target religious minorities; the Government has therefore taken action to protect and rebuild places of worship in liberated areas.

192. Yazidi Female Survivors Act No. 8 of 2021 was issued to address the harm and negative effects associated with the crimes committed by Da'esh and to ensure that Yazidis were able to exercise their legal rights, including to rehabilitation, social reintegration and compensation. The Act applies to areas formerly under Da'esh control, where employees of the Ministry of the Interior are being taught to respect the rights and identity of minorities, and their status as Iraqi citizens who possess all the rights and freedoms set out in the Constitution. To that end, regular training sessions, workshops and seminars are held, in collaboration with the competent offices in the Ministry of the Interior, including the High Commission for Human Rights and civil society organizations.

193. In 2021, Pope Francis met with His Eminence Al-Sayyid Ali Al-Sistani. Pope Francis also visited various areas of Iraq, including the governorates of Dhi Qar and Mosul, and Kurdistan Region; in doing so, he promoted a message of peace among peoples and an end to hatred and racism.

194. The Supreme Yazidi Spiritual Council manages the religious and practical affairs of the Yazidis. It includes the Office of the Baba Sheikh (the highest spiritual leader of the Yazidis), which oversees the social and religious affairs of the Yazidis.

195. There are 27 Yazidi religious sites in Sinjar, Bashiqa and Bahzani in the governorate of Nineveh, and in Shekhan and Sharya in the governorate of Dohuk.

196. There are 11 religious institutions and places of worship for Sabians.

197. There are 13 recognized Christian institutions, and each denomination has its own subsidiary churches and monasteries.

198. The Council of Representatives is examining a bill to amend Iraqi Supreme Criminal Tribunal Act No. 10 of 2005 to grant the court jurisdiction to hear cases of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes committed by Da'esh in Iraq and abroad, and to facilitate the work of the Investigative Team established pursuant to Security Council resolution 2379 (2017).

199. The Directorate for the Protection of Antiquities and Heritage has branches throughout Iraq, through which it carries out a number of activities to protect antiquities and archaeological sites:

(a) Collaborating with provincial police chiefs to put in place security plans for the protection of archaeological sites;

(b) Restricting entry to archaeological sites and erecting protective barriers around ancient cities;

(c) Preventing the removal of artifacts from archaeological sites except by archaeologists for the purpose of academic research;

(d) Participating in sessions hosted by the European Union to discuss methods for protecting archaeological and heritage sites;

(e) Accompanying and protecting local and international excavation projects and preventing the destruction of archaeological and heritage sites;

(f) Establishing a unified database of protected and unprotected archaeological and heritage sites and of stolen and smuggled artefacts, and keeping a record of relevant domestic and international lawsuits.

200. The joint committees for the prevention of abuses work with the Section for Combating the Smuggling of Artefacts within the Anti-Smuggling Directorate. In 2021, the success rate was 70 per cent.

201. Iraq is working with international organizations, including the ALIPH Foundation, to maintain heritage buildings in the governorates of Mosul and Basra. In 2021, the success rate was 50 per cent.

202. The Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Antiquities surveys and documents heritage buildings in Baghdad and the governorates. The number of survey teams has been increased in an attempt to prevent the destruction of heritage buildings. By 2021, 70 per cent of sites had been documented.

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203. With the exception of Kurdistan Region, the level of fixed-line telephone coverage in Iraq has decreased, dropping to 6.2 per 100 individuals in 2020. The governorates of Diyala and Najaf have the highest rate of fixed-line telephone coverage, with 11.1 and 10.3 lines per 100 individuals respectively, up from 6.3 per 100 individuals.

204. The fixed-line telephone exchange capacity increased by 1.2 per cent between 2019 and 2020, from 2,126 per 1,000 lines in 2019 to 2,151 per 1,000 lines in 2020.

205. In 2020, 88.8 per cent of all operational telephone lines were located in residential properties, 6.4 per cent in offices and commercial buildings and 4.8 per cent in government buildings, and the overall number of lines decreased slightly in 2020 with respect to 2019.

206. The number of towers decreased from 369 in 2019 to 361 in 2020, representing a drop of 2.2 per cent. There were 280 fixed-line telephone exchanges in 2019 and 2020.

207. The National Centre for Management Development and Information Technology maintains a database of research and studies as a searchable record.

208. The Journal of Informatics and Management Development publishes academic research in the areas of management, law and information technology.

209. The preliminary review of research submitted for publication is carried out by a central committee within the National Centre for Management Development and Information Technology.

210. Funding is available for research projects and for research centres and units at universities and other entities to support the renovation and fitting out of laboratories, the construction of modern infrastructure, the dissemination of scientific research and the building of scientific capacities through access to research tools. Numerous projects are under way to build scientific capacities, including:

(a) Implementing research projects for teaching staff, students and higher education professionals in the areas of engineering, medical sciences, pure sciences, agricultural and veterinary sciences, humanities, and management and economics;

(b) New and renewable energy;

(c) Medicinal plants and herbal medicine;

(d) Medicines and pesticides.

211. Universities provide financial and non-financial support to research centres. Research can be submitted to the applied research platform managed by the Research and Development Department of the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research for potential use by government agencies and ministries.
